Wilson County Agricultural Article from Ruth Correll, Agricultural Extension Agent

Lawn and Gardening Tips for March

Spring is just around the corner and this is a very busy time for agriculture. Farmers are thinking about fertilization of pastures and hay fields, homeowners are thinking about what they need to do to their lawns and gardeners are in “seventh heaven” thinking about all the fun things they are going to get to do very, very soon. The word for those wanting to plant their vegetable garden is PROCEED WITH CAUTION...the March weather can be very uncertain.

There are still plenty of things to do in March. Early March is still a good time to transplant trees, shrubs and hardy vines. If you do not get these things done early in March, you may want to wait until the fall.

It is also a good idea to fertilize your trees and shrubs if you did not do this in February. Use an acid type fertilizer to feed evergreens, conifers, broad leaf evergreens, rhododendrons, azaleas, and camellias. Use an all-purpose fertilizer to feed roses and other deciduous trees and shrubs. If you use the granular type of fertilizers, be sure to water it in thoroughly.

This is a good time to finish pruning your fruit trees. Pruning trees according to recommendation will allow better sunlight penetration and air circulation which will improve the chances of producing better fruit and may even lessen the need for sprays. Good fruit tree management is important to successful fruit production

Winter’s alternating thawing and freezing temperature can heave plants right out of the ground. If you notice any plants that have heaved, lightly tamp them back into the ground with your foot. It is also a good time to divide and transplant clumping perennials such as daylily and hosta’s.

It’s a good time to cut back ornamental grasses to just above their growing crown. You also may want to divide any overgrown clumps and relocate. You can fertilize established grass as soon as new growth appears.

Lawn care includes recommendation to repair damaged areas and overseed. You may need to dethatch, rake or aerate your lawn. Apply dolomite lime if a soil test indicates it is needed. Most lawns will need some spring fertilization, but be sure to dethatch first. Now through April is an ideal time to apply a combination slow-release fertilizer and pre-emergent herbicide for crabgrass control. You want to apply this combination before dandelions reach the puff ball stage but do not to apply any pre-emergent herbicide to newly seeded areas. Be sure to follow label directions.

March is the time for planting cool-season annual vegetables. Spinach, head and leaf lettuce, collards, turnip greens, onions, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, eggplant and radishes can be direct seeded or transplanted into the garden. You can protect them from frost by using a floating row cover at night. Aphids and caterpillars can be especially bad on early crops so watch and treat as they appear.

Finally, if you are growing your own summer annuals, early March is when many summer blooming annuals should be sown indoors. Just follow the seed package or catalog directions.
Agricultural Market Summary

Cattle Market Trends
There is an expectation of a strong run of calves with the warm weather and sunshine. Lightweight calf prices are not expected to sustain current levels through the entirety of the spring. Feeder steers $2 to $7 higher, $162.00-$385.00. Feeder heifers $1 to $6 higher, $151.00-$330.00. Slaughter cows $1 to $4 higher, $94.00-$119.00. Slaughter bulls steady to $1 higher, $121.00-$143.00.

Grain Market Trends
Corn, cotton, and soybeans were down; wheat was up for the week. Corn – cash price, $3.73-$4.16. May futures closed at $3.80 a bushel, down 6 cents. Soybeans – cash price, $9.65-$10.17. May futures closed at $9.74 a bushel, down 11 cents. Wheat- cash price, $4.42-$4.59. May futures closed at $5.02 a bushel, up 20 cents.

For additional information on these and other topics, contact the UT Extension Office, 925 East Baddour Parkway, Lebanon, TN 37087, 615-444-9584 or acorrell@utk.edu. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in all programs. Visit the UT/TSU Extension webpage at http://utextension.tennessee.edu/wilson or look for UT & TSU Extension, Wilson County on Facebook.

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