

Hi Everyone,

Don't know about you all, but the weeds that have appeared in our plantings are numerous. I have diligently started pulling them and will put down Preen so I do not have to see them again. The winter has played havoc with our plantings and my hopes are that they will revive themselves. Remember - do not remove your plants that look so sad until end of March...just remove the dead branches, but not the planting. To see if the branch is dead - scrape the bark: if it is brown under the bark - the branch is dead but if you see green - then the branch and possibly the plant will be ok. It has been very hard for all of the plantings with this difficult winter. Let's hope they make it.

By the end of February you should have:

- Fertilized shade trees, shrubs, and limed where necessary.
- Limed vegetable garden.
- Planted and transplanted plants.
- Applied herbicides for crabgrass.
- Mowed tall fescue grass.
- Pruned to 1/3 ornamental grasses, butterfly bushes, lantana, and roses (1/4" above healthy bud) and remove dead wood from base.
- Mulched around plants.
- Crepe Myrtles - *Do Not Pollard your trees*. You can prune dead branches out back to trunk or prune-up. Leave their graceful shape. They will still bloom beautifully for you.
- Divide hostas, daylilies, phlox, and shasta daisies.
- Can take hardwood cuttings now.
- Check houseplants to see if they need re-potting (use pot only one size bigger) and check for insects.

Tip: On broadleaf houseplants with scale - wipe under and top of leaves with rubbing alcohol. Works great!

After weeding put down a pre-emergence such as Preen. Will take care of the area for months.

Lawn:

- Apply herbicide for crabgrass.
- Don't fertilize warm season grass before it greens up.
- Mow cool season grass as needed leaving 3". Roses: give each plant 4 tablespoons of Osmocote.

Camellias: clean-up all leaves on ground to prevent fungus.

Roses: give each plant 4 tablespoons of Osmocote.

A wonderful plant that I have just discovered is called: Osmanthus heterophyllus 'Goshiki' or 'Goshiki' False Holly. This is a slow growing tree that grows into a dense, handsome shrub, 4 to 10' tall and wide. The leaves are not too prickly and are variegated with cream, pale yellow, and green swirls. It is deer-proof, drought tolerant and has no pests. Needs full sun to partial shade and requires average soil. I am going to have to buy one.

I have been getting many calls this winter on the Master Gardener Helpline about moles. Landowners are having a terrible time with them. The important thing to remember is that moles go after grubs. Grubs are in the soil and usually in your grass. You can use mole knots to get rid of them (it is now lawful to kill them in NC) or a better idea is to treat your lawn in July for grubs. Another idea is to stomp on the tunnelling. It has worked for us and it is good exercise.

Any questions please contact me at: EquineBRC@aol.com or call the Master Gardener office which will be open from March through October from 10 to 12 week-day. Phone number: 910-947-3188.

Enjoy!
Barb