



March in the Garden

This month in your garden:

- **Prune roses.** Now is the time to begin applying rose food on a monthly basis. I.e. Rose Glo, an organic fertilizer.
- **Prune trees and shrubs** while dormant. Don't butcher your crepe myrtles!. Prune spring-flowering shrubs such as azaleas, spireas, and redbuds after they've bloomed. Feed with Nutri Star or Micro-life, once after they bloom and then again in June
- **Birds** -Clean birdbaths and feeders. Keep feeders full!! Our feathered friends are hungry.
- **Hummingbirds** -Put out hummingbird feeders. It is migration time! To keep birds at your feeder, maintain a fresh nectar supply, and empty and wash the feeder each time you refill. Hummingbirds remember where they find a reliable food source and will return year after year.
- **Feed** Hibiscus, Bougainvillea, Plumeria, with *Nutri Star*. This will help plants to put out new lush growth and plenty of blooms
- **Mulch** -Spread a fresh layer of mulch around trees, shrubs, and beds to protect roots, retain moisture, and prevent weeds.
- **Pests** -Apply dormant oil to smother insects before they become a problem. Apply to hollies, magnolias, and camellias for scale.
- **Houseplants** -In mid-March, move houseplants outside into shade and repot if necessary. Feed with fertilizer.
- **Plant veggies** -peppers, okra, cucumbers, eggplant, climbing spinach and more.
- (check vegetable planting calendar for Harris County <https://harris.agrilife.org/hort/publications-links/veggies-herbs/>)
- **Plant fruit trees, shade trees, and ornamental trees.** Be sure to apply mulch around the root zone to keep moist and avoid weeds. Make sure trees are watered regularly during first few years of growth, while tree acclimates. Add mycorrhizae to planting hole to also aid establishment of the tree. Use *Super Thrive* or *Root Stimulator* every few weeks for the first three months after planting.
- **Plant shrubs such as roses and azaleas.** Use a Root Stimulator every two weeks for the first few months after planting.
- **Plant Sun Perennials** – examples include Shasta daisy, rudbeckia, gaillardia, verbena, coreopsis, lantana, perennial salvias, bee balm...
- **Plant colorful Shade Perennials- examples include** firespike, shrimp plant, Persian shield, leopard plant, cat whiskers, ruellias, turk's cap, sweet potato vine...
- **Plant color annuals** such as marigolds, petunias, osteospermum, perilla, coleus, dusty millers, annual phlox, geraniums, impatiens, begonias...
- **Plant herbs** – basil, rosemary, thyme, oregano , chives

Save The Date* All our meetings and field trips are on the NFWC calendar

March –

Meeting – Thursday, March 9th
NFC Clubhouse 1:00
guest speaker- *John Panzerella*
Panzerella Citrus
Growing Citrus in Houston

Field Trip – Thursday, March 23rd
Enchanted Gardens Nursery
11:30

Garden Workshop – Thursday, March 30th
Location: *NFC* 12:00
Make a Terrarium

April –

Garden Workshop – Thursday, April 6th
Rock Painting*
Location: *Barbara's garden**
*Working on this and timing

Meeting – Thursday, April 13th
Holly Saunder's garden 1:00
guest speaker- *Marti Graves*
The Lonestar Chapter of the American Hibiscus Society
Hibiscus 101 – heat loving beauties

Field Trip – Thursday, April 27th
Atkinson Farm
10:00 – Pick Your Own *Strawberries*

Garden Happenings this Month–



Hummingbird Nectar Recipe

Materials:

- 1/4 cup refined white sugar
- 1 cup boiling water
- Bowl
- Spoon

Note: Please do not substitute honey, which can promote dangerous fungal growth, or use red food coloring, which is not necessary and could also prove harmful to birds.

Steps:

1. Mix sugar and boiling water until sugar is dissolved.
2. Cool and fill feeder.
3. Hang up your feeder outside and wait for the hummingbirds to come.

<https://jfgarden.org/budding-out-plant-festival/>



BUDDING OUT PLANT SALE AND FESTIVAL

Join The John Fairey Garden on Saturday, March 18th, for our annual Budding Out Plant Sale and Festival, a premier plant sale that offers rare and hard to find plants from The John Fairey Garden nursery and other select plant vendors from the region. We will offer rare plants suitable for the most discerning plant collector or distinctive plants for the beginning gardener. Additional offerings will include art, ceramics, jewelry, food, music, and other entertainment for the whole family.

SHOP MERCER!

2023 PLANT SALES

IN-PERSON PLANT SALES	VIRTUAL PLANT SALES
March Mart March 23 VIP ONLY March 24 – 25	February 17 & 18 Tomato & Fruit Tree Sale
October 14 Pollinator Plant Sale	May 5 & 6 Mother's Day Sale
	July 21 & 22 Beat the Heat Sale
	November 10 & 11 Camellia & Winter Color Sale

Members shop early!
Join today!

Shop virtual sales at
FriendsOfMercer.com

FRIENDSOFMERCER.COM
713-274-4166

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March for Monarchs

March 18, 2023

Nature & Conservation

March for Monarchs will take participants on a journey through the Garden designed to mimic conditions along the route the butterflies follow on their northern migration from Mexico to their summer breeding grounds...

[Learn More](#)

SAT, MAR 25: HERB FESTIVAL AT THE WYNNE HOME. Texas Thyme Unit, Herb Society of America. 8am-2pm. 1428 11th St., Huntsville. texasthymeunit.org, 936-891-5024

<https://hbg.org/events/march-for-monarchs-2023-03-18-10-00/>



2023 Green Thumb Gardening Series

Third Tuesday, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.

Harris County Public Library Facebook Live

No reservation required. Watch on Facebook –
facebook.com/harriscountyppl/live

Third Tuesday of each month

March 21 – Benefits of Growing Native Plants

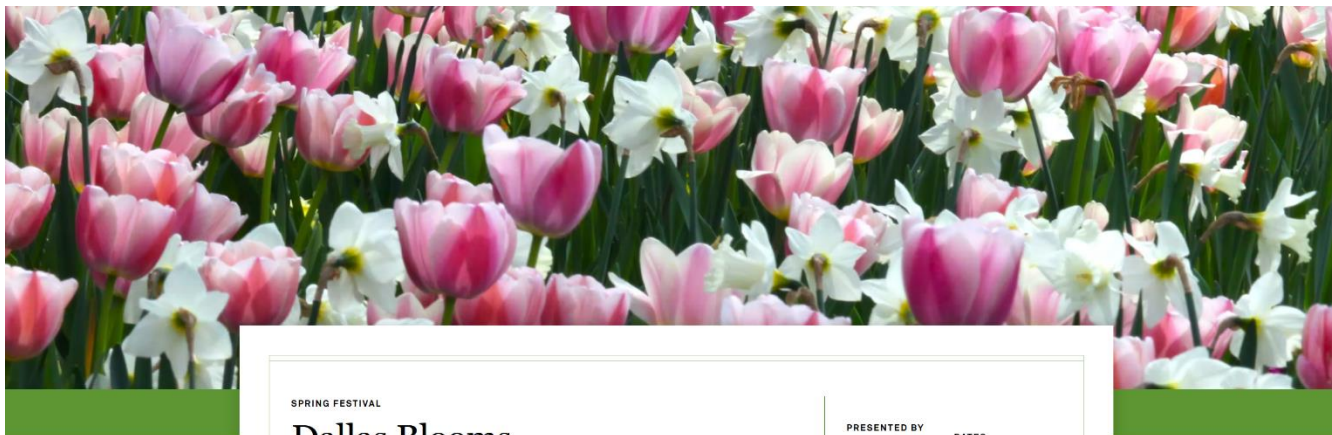


We've been tucked away going through our own metamorphosis, renovating our butterfly rainforest from the skylight to the soil. Now we're ready to fly. Join us for the reopening and you'll get your very own butterfly to release into its new home!

Two Events: March 10th and March 11th 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Crafts • Food trucks • Cash bars • And endless strolls among the butterflies

<https://www.hmns.org/cockrell-butterfly-center/cockrell-butterfly-center-grand-reopening/>



SPRING FESTIVAL

Dallas Blooms

The Great Contributors

PRESENTED BY


VERITEX
COMMUNITY BANK

DATES

February 25–April
16, 2023

<https://www.dallasarboretum.org/events-activities/dallas-blooms/>


Garden to Kitchen – Add some versatile swiss chard to your garden

Swiss chard is a leafy vegetable that's closely related to beets. It can be green or red, and the stems too can be vibrant yellow or bright red. In fact, the vibrant colors of swiss chard are a beautiful addition to the landscape in the cooler months here in Houston – it isn't just for the kitchen garden.

If you've cooked with beet greens before, you'll find that chard has a lot of similarities. The mature leaves are lush and relatively coarse when they're raw, but they wilt down beautifully when they're braised or sautéed. Their earthy flavor pairs really well with garlic, nuts, dried fruits like currants and raisins, and acids like lemon juice and vinegar. Chard stems are edible, too, so don't toss them when cooking the leaves! Simply add the stems to the pan a few minutes before adding the leaves so that they have a chance to soften. They also pickle nicely, so they're a great way to add crunch to salads, sandwiches, and bowls.





Apart from the texture and colors, it is worth adding to your garden or landscape for the nutritious value alone!


Take a green step...  stepintomygreenworld.com

WEIGHT LOSS APPROVED

Swiss Chard

 rich in antioxidants

 anti-inflammatory

 blood sugar regulation

Did you know?
Swiss chard is very low in calories, and high in dietary fiber, making it a weight loss approved food!

Provides...

- vitamin K
- vitamin A
- vitamin C
- magnesium
- manganese
- potassium
- iron
- vitamin E

Swiss chard is rich in cancer fighting antioxidants.

Swiss chard is an excellent source of vitamins C, E, beta-carotene, manganese, and zinc. Chard contains key phytonutrients like lutein, and zeaxanthin, while also providing flavonoids like quercetin and kaempferol. These antioxidants are well known for their anti-inflammatory benefits.

Bone health
Swiss chard provides a very good supply of calcium, and an excellent supply of magnesium. Swiss chard is extremely rich in vitamin K, providing eight times the required daily value. These ingredients are great for the bones.

© JF Gicquel facebook.com/stepintomygreenworld pinterest.com/mygreenworld

Swiss chard is often found in salads and recipes for salads with swiss chard are common. Chard is also often sauteed. Yet there are other ways to cook it up. Below are some recipes with a Mediterranean twist so you can add this healthy green to your diet as well, as a link in case you want to learn more – Yum!

The following 2 recipes are from [The Foods and Wines of Spain](#) by Penelope Casas.

Potaje de Acelgas y Garbanzos

(Swiss chard and Chickpea Soup)

Serves 6

START PREPARATION ONE DAY IN ADVANCE

1pound chickpeas
½ head garlic, unpeeled, in 1 piece
1 bay leaf
1 whole onion, peeled
Salt
1 pound swiss chard
1 tbs. Olive oil
2 slices French-style bread, ¼ inch thick
1 garlic clove,peeled
Few strands saffron
4tbs. Diced cured ham (prosciutto or pancetta works)*
2tbs. Minced parsley



*This can be omitted for a vegetarian version and chopped hardboiled eggs can be added as garnish when serving

Soak chickpeas overnight in water to cover. Drain and place in a pot with water to cover. Add the ½ head of garlic. Bay leaf, whold onion and salt. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer until the chickpeas are tender, about 1 1/2 – 2 hours. Discard garlic and onion.

Wash the swiss chard well, remove stems and coarsely chop the leaves. Do not dry. Place the still wet chard in a pot, add salt, and cover and cook slowly until tender.

In a skiller, heat the oil and fry the bread and garlic clove until both are golden. Transfer to a processor or blender, leaving the remaining oil in the skillet. Blend the garlic and bread in the processor with the saffron. Gradually pour in about 1 cup of the cooking liquid from the chickpeas and blend until smooth. Add this mixture to the chickpeas. Salt to taste. Stir.

Reheat the reserved oil in the skillet, add the chard, ham, and parsley and saute lightly for a minute. Add this mixture to the chickpeas, stirring so that the chard separates and mixes in well. Cover and cook 10 minutes more. Serve in soup bowls – there should be some liquid, but the potaje should be thick. Potatoes may be boiled with the chickpeas for the last 30-40 minutes of cooking.

Acelgas y con Pasas y Pinones (Greens with Raisins and Pine Nuts)

- a specialty from Catalonia, the area around Barcelona

Serves 4

3 tlbs. Raisins
1 pound Swiss chard
Salt
3 tbs. Olive oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 tbs. Minced onion
3 tbs. Pine nuts
Freshly ground pepper



Soak the raisins in warm water while preparing the greens. Place the greens in boiling water for 5 minutes; drain. Return the greens to the pot, cover with water, add the salt and 1 tablespoon of salt and 1 tablespoon of the oil. Return to a boil and cook 10 minutes, or until tender. Drain and chop coarsely. Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in a skillet. Sauté the garlic and onion until the onion is wilted. Add the greens and the raisins, drained, the pine nuts, salt, and pepper. Cook five minutes. The greens may be eaten right away, but gain in flavor when left several hours and then reheated.

The following recipes add swiss chard to pasta recipes – another way to get your greens.

Rigatoni with Greens



Recipe courtesy of Giada De Laurentiis

Show: *Giada Entertains* Episode: *Impromptu Party*



Level: Easy

Total: 30 min

Active: 30 min

Yield: 6 servings

Ingredients:

Kosher salt

1 pound mezzì rigatoni pasta

1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil

One 15-ounce can chickpeas, rinsed and drained well on paper towels

2 cloves garlic, smashed

1/2 teaspoon chile flakes

3 tablespoons capers, rinsed

1 bunch Swiss chard (or baby spinach), stemmed, leaves chopped into 1/2-inch strips

1 3/4 cups freshly grated Parmesan

1 teaspoon grated lemon zest (from 1 lemon)

Directions:

1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta and cook until just short of al dente, 8 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 1/4 cups of the pasta water.

2 Meanwhile, heat 1/4 cup of the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chickpeas and cook, stirring often with a wooden spoon, until golden brown and crispy, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic, chile flakes and capers and cook until fragrant, 1 minute. Stir in the Swiss chard and 1/4 teaspoon salt; cook until wilted, 3 minutes. Add 1/4 cup of the reserved pasta water and simmer for 1 minute. Add the drained pasta and sprinkle with 1 1/2 cups of the Parmesan and the lemon zest; toss well to coat. Add 1 cup more of the reserved pasta water and the remaining 1/4 cup olive oil. Simmer until the pasta is al dente, the sauce has thickened and the flavors have come together, 2 minutes. Top with the remaining 1/4 cup Parmesan and serve.



<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/giada-de-laurentiis/rigatoni-with-greens-3607377>

Recommended by Garden Girls TX...

martha stewart

Swiss-Chard Lasagna

★★★★★

Prep: 30 mins

Total: 1 hr 30 mins

Servings: 4



Ingredients

3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 medium onion, coarsely chopped (about 2 cups)
1 pound Swiss chard, stems and leaves separated, thinly sliced
Coarse salt
4 cloves garlic, minced (about 2 tablespoons)
1/2 teaspoon red-pepper flakes
1 can (28 ounces) whole peeled plum tomatoes with juices
8 no-boil lasagna noodles (9 ounces)
1 pound whole-milk mozzarella, shredded (about 4 cups)

Directions

Step 1

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2 tablespoons oil, onion, and chard stems. Cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 4 minutes. Stir in chard leaves, season with salt, and cook until tender, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Wipe skillet; return to medium-high heat. Add remaining 1 tablespoon oil, garlic, and pepper flakes. Cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add tomatoes with juices and simmer, breaking into pieces, until thickened, about 3 minutes. Season with salt.

Step 2

Spread 1/2 cup tomato sauce in the bottom of an 8-inch square baking dish. Top with 2 lasagna noodles, 3/4 cup sauce, one-third of chard mixture, and 1 cup cheese. Repeat layering twice. Top with remaining noodles, sauce, and cheese. Loosely cover with parchment-lined foil. Bake 30 minutes. Uncover and bake until bubbly, about 15 minutes. Let cool 20 minutes, then slice and serve.

Buying and Storing Swiss Chard

There are several varieties of chard, and they're almost always interchangeable in recipes. It's their stalks, not their leaves, that differentiate varieties. Swiss chard usually refers to chard with white stems. Red-stalked varieties are rhubarb (different from the [rhubarb](#) used to make pies), red, or ruby Chard. Rainbow chard has multicolored stalks. For this recipe, use any variety.

Choose chard with crisp, deep green leaves and stems that are firm. Don't buy wilted chard or chard with leaves with holes in them. To keep it fresh, store dry chard at home before wrapping in paper towels in an air-tight zipper bag for up to 7 days.

READ MORE: [What is Swiss Chard and How to Cook It](#)

<https://www.simplyrecipes.com/what-is-swiss-chard-and-how-to-cook-it-5198028>

Can You Freeze Swiss Chard?

Freeze uncooked Swiss chard by separating the leaves from the stems. Blanch the stems for 3 minutes and the leaves for 1 minute, then shock in an ice bath. Freeze in a freezer-safe zipper bag with the air pressed out for up to 6 months.

Or you can prepare this recipe, let it cool, and freeze it for an instant side dish.

GARDEN CREATIONS - *Create Your Own Small Herb Garden*



Most herbs are smaller plants with shallow root systems. The planter, pot, or container you pick to grow your herbs in needs to be at least 6 inches deep, but it is even better to use something that's a foot deep, especially if you're growing herbs in the Apiaceae family like cilantro, dill, and parsley, which grow a large taproot. It is best to pick a container at least a foot wide so that you can grow several different types of herbs in one container.

1) Get a Container

For this herb garden a 3/5 gallon Behrens steel container was used – these are easily found at hardware stores like Ace.

Note: If you purchase a steel tub that has a sticker on it, those things can be a difficult to remove. Goo gone can be used to get all the sticky residue off or try to using a heat source right over the label to remove the glue before peeling off the sticker. Holding a hairdryer close to the label for about 30 seconds should do the trick.



2) Add Drainage Holes

If your container doesn't have good drainage holes in the bottom, be sure to add some with a drill. Herbs do not like sitting in extra water. The surest way to kill an herb is to overwater it in a container with bad drainage!

3) Pound Out Rough Edges

After drilling check the holes to see if metal is sticking out. If so, pound them down so they will not



poke



out.

4) Put a Weed Barrier at Bottom of Container

Before filling your container with soil, put a landscape cloth, weed barrier cloth, or a coffee filter inside the bottom of the container to keep the soil from leaving the container every time you water.



5) Put In Some Drainage Material

A layer of packing peanuts can be used to help make a layer on top of weed barrier to help make sure herbs' roots do not sit in water.

Rocks can be used as well but packing peanuts are lighter.



6) Add Soil

Fill container with a well draining soil.

The Ground Up on Brittmore has a special Blend for veggies and herbs.



7) Mix in Some Worm Castings for Extra Boost of Nutrients

Buchanans carries a local brand.



8) Top Off With a Good Quality of Compost.

Ace Carries Nature's Way Resources Leaf Mold Compost. This is a very good quality compost, not only good for herbs, but for all plants and lawns.



9) Rake All the Goodness Together

Level your mixture out.

10) Plant Herbs

When deciding which herbs to plant together in a container, the most important consideration is water preferences. Group herbs that have similar water needs. Also it is important to think about future size – some types of rosemary, for example, grow to a bush and would not last long in a small container. Herbs such as thyme, oregano, sage, & marjoram have less water requirements than dill, cilantro, parsley and basil. Time of year is another important consideration in Houston. (Check Planting calendars later in this newsletter) Cilantro, dill, and parsley are cooler weather herbs.



11) Add Finishing Touches

Labels are a nice addition. These can be hand painted rocks. (Rock Painting workshop coming up in April). Or there are ones available on ETSY. Care instructions labels are yet another useful touch. These can be the tags that come with herbs from the nursery, or diy labels. A magnet herb label can be added on the outside of your container.



12) Find the Perfect Spot for Your Container

Give the container a gentle watering – do not water from top – it is best to add water at base of plant. Place your container somewhere where it'll get 4 hours sunlight a day. In our hot summers it is not necessary to get sun

13) Enjoy Your Herbs!

The herbs can be used right away. Snip a bit off and use it in your recipes. However, do not cut more than 1/3 of a plant at a time.

Plant of the Month – Mexican Torch Sunflower – (*Tithonia rotundifolia*).



Mexican sunflowers are ideal for the beginner gardener who wants pops of color to fill in a large blank spot in the flower border. They're also great for cut flower arrangements while producing enough to attract scores of butterflies and beneficial insects like parasitic wasps. These flowers aren't fussy about soil and don't need much care after they start growing.

These annuals are a welcome addition to the butterfly garden thanks to their nectar-rich shallow blossoms that meet a pollinator's needs. Unlike many butterfly-friendly plants that are small in stature, the tall blooms of the Mexican sunflower bring butterflies right up to eye level, making them easier to observe. A mature stand of sunflowers makes a good addition to the vegetable garden, as the pollinators they attract will help increase your vegetable yields.

One packet of Mexican sunflowers will give you many vasefuls of cut flowers throughout the summer. Plant them with companions that thrive in the same sunny site and average soil, like cosmos and zinnias, which will also act as cut-and-come-again blooms for the cutting garden.

Sunflowers are edible, with a bittersweet flavor. The petals add a pretty pop of color to salads and desserts. The young, sunflower buds are edible, with a flavor similar to artichoke hearts. They can be grilled, marinated, or sauteed for an unusual appetizer or side dish.



Botanical Name: *Tithonia rotundifolia*

Family: Asteraceae

Native: Mexico and Central America

Hardiness: Annual

Plant Dimensions: 4'–6' tall

Variety Information: 3" wide, fiery orange, daisy-like flowers with golden centers.

Exposure: Full sun

Bloom Period: Summer to frost

Attributes: Attracts Hummingbirds, Attracts Pollinators, Cut Flower, Deer Resistant, Drought Tolerant, Heat Tolerant

Seeds are available at Cornelius or online from various companies. Here is a link to Botanical Interests:

<https://www.botanicalinterests.com/product/Torch-Mexican-Sunflower->

[Seeds?gclid=CjwKCAiAr4GgBhBFEiwAgwORrQKnfqD4rIDMDMJ01LnwEVqmE1xKcZrw39ZJvVg4FWaSeKBf45jLhBoCdrGQAavD_BwE](https://www.botanicalinterests.com/product/Torch-Mexican-Sunflower-?gclid=CjwKCAiAr4GgBhBFEiwAgwORrQKnfqD4rIDMDMJ01LnwEVqmE1xKcZrw39ZJvVg4FWaSeKBf45jLhBoCdrGQAavD_BwE)

These Are a Few of My Favorite Things

Lori Porter explains about how she grows lavender...

Lavender!



Attention all lovers of lavender! Have you ever seen Provence in the Spring with its incredible lavender fields? Did you know Fredericksburg also has amazing lavender fields?

With the onset of Spring, you may be considering adding some to your garden, but feeling a bit hesitant if you've never grown it previously. There are 47 species and over 450 varieties of lavender from English to French to Portuguese, and lucky for you, we Texans have our own variety created especially to thrive in tough Texas weather. While it is easy to kill (usually because of over-watering), if you just follow a few simple rules, you'll find it's just as easy to grow.

You'll want dry, alkaline soil, lots of sun, and heads up, you will need to protect it from frost.

It also performs better if

pruned twice annually. But don't be intimidated; it is actually a pretty low maintenance plant!

Why plant lavender? Well for starters, it makes a lovely fragrant hedgerow. Additionally, it blooms twice a year, and both the leaves and flowers can be used for soaps, bath salts, candles, essential oils, cut flower arrangements and in recipes. Bees and butterflies also love it! Here are my five tips for lavender success.

1. Plant it high and dry. Mound your soil up so that it sits higher than the rest of your bed. Lavender does not like wet feet!
2. Amend your soil. After checking the pH for acidity, add some sandy soil and maybe even a small amount pebbles. Sand and pebbles will allow for better drainage.
3. Give it plenty of space. It will triple in size very quickly. It needs about 24-36" so that it doesn't touch other plants and moisture cannot hang out around the base. Consider that it needs air flow to avoid mold and humidity.
4. It truly wants full sun. I've found that many flowering plants which have tags that say "sun or part sun" may want shade because it gets so hot and dry in Texas. Not lavender! Plant it in your sunniest spot.

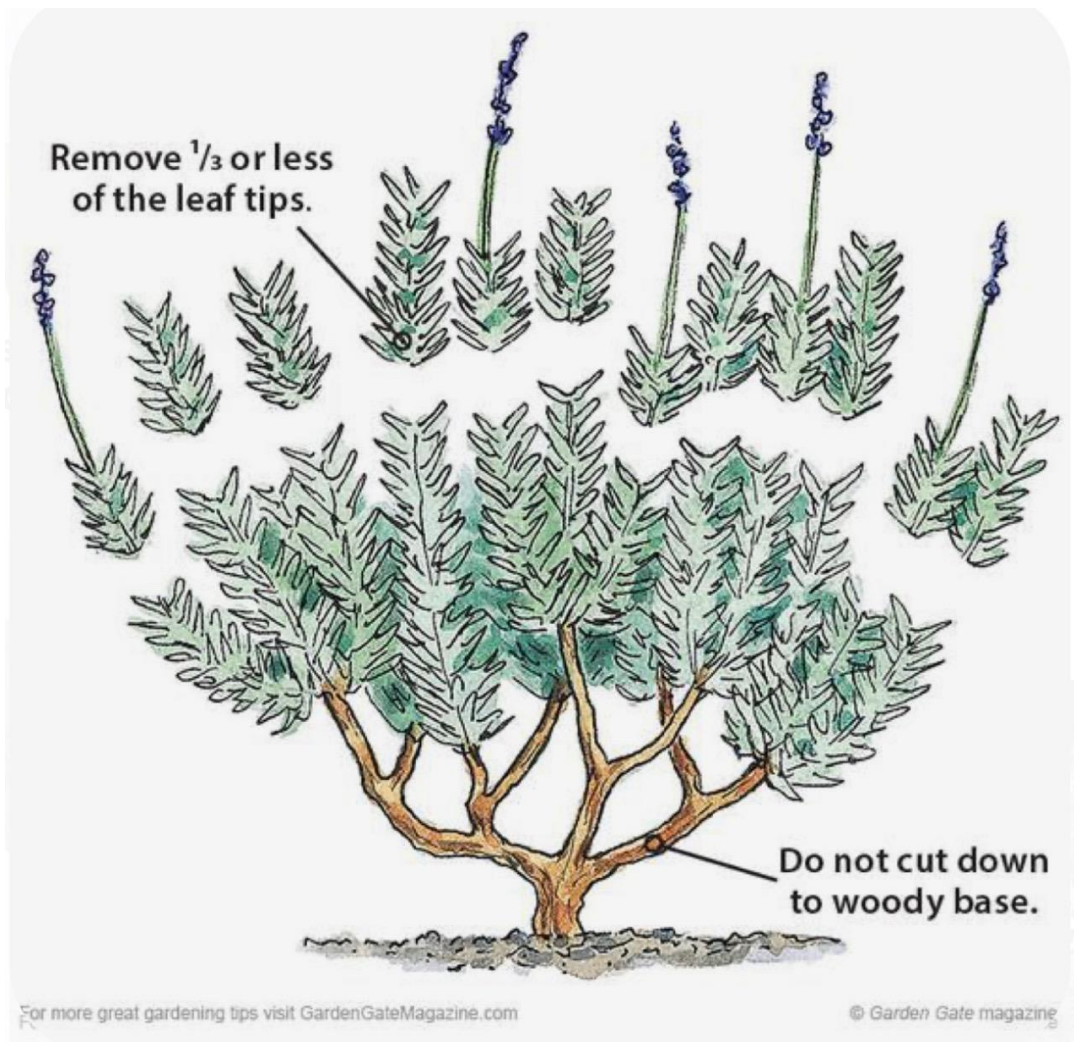


- Maintenance: A) prune it twice a year in a “dome” fashion to promote blooms. Prune only soft tips, don’t go down to woody stems. B) Cover it before a freeze, as frost will certainly kill it. C) Water once a week initially, but once established, it only needs watered about once a month. Drip lines work much better than sprinkler heads if you can swap them out (so the leaves don’t get continually soaked).

That’s it! Plant it high, keep it dry, protect it from freeze. One final word about lavender, it is typically only about a five year plant, so don’t place it in a primary focal area of your garden as an anchor.

I hope you’ll try it out. It is definitely satisfying to grow! Happy gardening!

- Lori Porter -



Some Videos of Note for March:

<https://buchanansplants.com/category/video/> **Organic Lawn Care**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lim2HhjjMeA> **Mulch: We've Got You Covered**

<https://www.facebook.com/InTheGardenHTX/videos/969255827030101> **Trimming Roses**



The life cycle and uniquely long annual migration of North America's monarch *butterfly* is examined in this nature documentary. Available on Amazon Prime

Some Articles of Note for This Season:

Plant for Pollinators

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/gardening/article/Plant-for-pollinators-15480258.php>

Houston Azaleas from A to Z

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/article/Houston-azaleas-guide-A-to-Z-13671333.php>

Don't Murder the Crepe Myrtles When Pruning

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/gardening/article/Don-t-murder-the-crepe-myrtles-when-pruning-12547530.php>

Some resources from Randy Lemmon Houston gardening guru who passed away on January 4, 2023...

<https://randylemmon.com/lawns/randys-lawn-care-schedule-organic/>

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">RANDY LEMMON'S LAWN FERTILIZATION SCHEDULE</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">Approved for all southern turngresses - St. Augustine, Bermuda and Zoysa</p> </div>												
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
F E R T I L I Z E R		<p>Apply a fast-acting 15-5-10, but NOT a weed-n-feed. Ex: Nitro-Phos Imperial 15-5-10 - Works for 30 days.</p>	<p>Apply optional trace minerals Ex: Azomite, Nature's Way, Soil Mender</p>	<p>Apply slow- or controlled-release fertilizer with a base ratio of 3-1-2 or 4-1-2. Ex: Nitro-Phos Super Turf 19-4-10</p>			<p>Apply slow- or controlled-release fertilizer with a base ratio of 3-1-2 or 4-1-2. Ex: Nitro-Phos Super Turf 19-4-10</p>			<p>Apply optional trace minerals Ex: Azomite, Nature's Way, Soil Mender</p>	<p>Apply fall feeding or winterizer for hardiness. Ex: Nitro-Phos Fall Special 8-12-16. Nitrogen (first number) should be low. Potassium (last number) should be highest.</p>	
F U N G I C I D E							<p>Treat gray leaf spot (blotches on grass blades) using fungicides with active ingredients like Daconil, Consan or Banner.</p>		<p>Control brownpatch with a systemic lawn fungicide containing myclobutanil, Terrachlor, PCNB, Banner or benomyl.</p>			
H E R B I C I D E		<p>Apply a pre-emergent formula containing Barracade, Dimension or pendimethlin as a 2-in-1 control for both broadleaf and grassy weeds.</p>			<p>Apply a pre-emergent formula containing Barracade, Dimension or pendimethlin as a 2-in-1 control for both broadleaf and grassy weeds.</p>					<p>Apply a pre-emergent formula containing Barracade, Dimension or pendimethlin as a 2-in-1 control for both broadleaf and grassy weeds.</p>		

Randy Lemmon's Mulch Ten Commandments

I – Thou must understand that “wood chips” don't equal mulch – Mulch isn't shredded wood. Mulch is anything that covers the soil to retain moisture and nutrients and prevent weeds. Wood chips or shredded wooden pallets don't do this. They actually rob the soil of nutrients as they attempt to break down.

II – Thou must never use wood shavings as mulch – Too often, I get questions about how to use wood shavings or sawdust from a freshly cut tree, woodwork projects or a ground-out stump. Fresh wood starves plants. Wood is high in carbon, and carbon seeks out nitrogen as it breaks down into the soil. Fresh wood shavings will immediately deplete the area of nitrogen, and the plants will start turning yellow as in the picture.

III – Thou must keep mulch away from foundations – It's extremely important to keep mulch several inches below the point where the house and the foundation come together. Otherwise, insects or moisture can use the mulch as a conduit to weep holes and thereafter enter the house.

IV – Thou shalt not believe charlatans who claim mulch attracts termites – Yes, termites might use mulch near a weep hole as a path in, but just having mulch doesn't attract termites. This is a crock perpetuated by rubber-mulch purveyors and shady pest-control operators.

V – Thou shalt not make mulch “volcanoes” around trees – In the subdivision where I live, someone recently piled dyed mulch nearly two feet deep around the base of a tree. My head almost exploded! Mulch rings around trees are good, if you use the right kind. But it only needs to be several inches tall at best. (And while I'm on the subject, stop planting flowers in mulch rings.)

VI – Thou must ask one's self, “Would I let my kids play in this?” – This is sort of a trick commandment. While I wouldn't recommend wood mulch (with no compost) for landscapes, I think they're good in playgrounds and on running trails. But as for dyed mulches, just stick your hands in a batch and rub them around. Then, look at your hands and tell me if the residue doesn't look like ashen soot or dye. Really ... would you let your kids play in that? I know kids don't usually play in flower and landscape beds, but look what it does to your gloves, hands and clothes when you spread it out!

VII – Thou shalt not be fooled by “good deals” – You get what you pay for! Good mulch is seldom less than \$3 a bag. It's always more cost effective to buy in bulk quantities. But you'll see tons of signs and ads that say “Mulch: 5 Bags for \$12!” or “5 Bags for \$10!!” That is almost always wood-chipped mulch or dyed wood-chipped mulch. And nothing good can come from that. A recent offer of three bags for \$10 at a reputable nursery WAS a good deal for great mulch ... but that's \$3.33 per bag.

VIII – Thou must avoid dyed (unnaturally colored) mulch -always – Most dyed mulches are made from questionable wood supplies, like shredded pallets, and nothing else. Plus, no dye is good for the soil, plain and simple ... even if it is supposedly organic. It's still dyed, and the dye will leach into the soil – not good for the soil or the plants in the long run. Other ash-infused mulches are just plain caustic. Nitrogen immobilization is what causes all that yellowing in the picture. That's a result of all the nitrogen being employed to break down the wood mulch. Then, there's no nitrogen left for the plants to keep their leaves green.

IX – Thou must understand that rubber mulch is the worst – Bet you didn't think I could slam anything harder than dyed mulch, did you? But let's defend the use or rubber mulch in a couple areas. I can see the need to recycle old tires. I just don't want them in my landscape. I have seen rubber mulch used successfully in dog runs, hiking trails and kids' playgrounds. However, in the landscape, what leaches from rubber mulch is 10 times worse than the leaching from dyed or ash-infused mulches. It introduces dangerous levels of zinc and other harmful chemicals that can kill root systems. Plus it heats up unmercifully in our summers, also killing roots.

X – Thou must believe there is no better mulch than compost – Dyed mulch has become so dang popular along the Gulf Coast because them-there Yankees done moved here from other states. Seriously, people in northern states like Ohio and Pennsylvania are accustomed to darker soils than ours, and I think this may have been their attempt to get a soil shade to offset the colors of their plants. In truth, those northern soils are not really black, just really dark brown. In fact, black does not occur in nature. You can get that dark color by using really good compost as a mulch. And before you complain that weeds will set up in it, there is lots of research that proves otherwise. I've seen it for myself, and I love the idea of good compost for mulch, mainly because it's feeding the soil, feeding the roots and feeding the plants.

So, what mulches can you use? Here are my top five:

1. **Compost** – By far the standard in Houston is Nature's Way Resources' Two-Year-Old Leaf Mold Compost. A close second is the vegan compost from The Ground Up, followed by Landscapers Pride compost and Top Shelf Organic Compost.
2. **Shredded and double-shredded hardwood mulches** – They will have a bit of compost in them as well. Nature's Way, The Ground Up and Landscapers Pride make several varieties.
3. **Mixed (blended) mulch** – These mixes of shredded hardwood and shredded pine bark mulch give you a darker color longer. Landscapers Pride Black Velvet may be the perfect example of this. Nature's Way Resources and The Ground Up have similar examples.
4. **Texas native mulch** – Anything you can certify as “Texas Native” is good. Nature's Way has it. And Landscapers Pride sources all their ingredients locally.
5. **Pine straw** – Sounds simple, and there's usually plenty of it around. It should be used more often, especially around evergreen shrub beds that include such plants as azaleas, gardenias and camellias.

<https://randylemmon.com/mulch/mulch-the-ten-commandments/>

PLANTING TIME!

WHAT TO PLANT

MARCH | HTX



Learn To Bloom
YEAR-ROUND GARDENING

Cucumber*	Tomatoes	Mustard
Zucchini*	Peppers	Kale
Squash*	Rosemary	Arugula*
Melons*	Thyme	Radish*
	Oregano	Bush Beans*
Swiss Chard	Sage	Pole Beans*
	Basil	*start from seed

growing gardeners

WHAT TO PLANT

FOR EASY CUT FLOWER ARRANGMENTS

MARCH | HTX



Learn To Bloom
YEAR-ROUND GARDENING

Lemon Basil*	Sunflowers*
Cinnamon	Gomphrena*
Basil*	Zinnia*
Sweet Basil*	Cosmos*
Oregano	*start from seed
Sage	

growing gardeners

	Vegetable Garden Planting Dates for Harris County											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
ASPARAGUS, Crowns												
BEANS, Lima & Snap Bush												
BEANS, Lima & Snap Pole												
BEETS												
BROCCOLI, Plants												
CABBAGE, Plants												
CAULIFLOWER, Plants												
CARROTS												
CHARD, Swiss												
CHINESE CABBAGE												
COLLARDS												
CORN												
CUCUMBER												
EGGPLANTS, Plants												
KOHLRABI, Plants												
LETTUCE												
MUSKMELON, Cantalope												
MUSTARD												
OKRA												
ONION, Bulb-type sets												
ONION, Transplant for scallions												
ONION, Multipliers												
PARSLEY												
PEAS, English & Snap												
PEAS, Southern												
PEPPER, Plants												
POTATO, Irish												
POTATO, Sweet												
PUMPKIN												
RADISH												
SPINACH												
SQUASH, Summer												
SQUASH, Winter												
TOMATO, Plants												
TURNIP												
WATERMELON												

On a Lighter Note...



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