

Note that the information in our monthly tips is intended for gardening in the Bountiful, UT area and may not be accurate for different climates.

February Gardening

Ave High 43° F.
Ave Low 24° F.
Ave Moisture 1.33"

Each year is different, let the weather be your guide. Use this gardening guide as a simple reminder as to what needs to be done in your garden this month.

February is a month that can vary widely from year to year. Some years, February is just an extension of January, merely a flip of the calendar page.



Other years, February is a preview of March, with rainy days and a few early flowers. It is really a roll of the dice; one never really knows what February might bring.

Even though it may still be cold, damp and miserable outdoors, an occasional sunny day may awaken the gardening bug within us. With a little luck, Mother Nature will send a few warm days our way this month. Don't get too excited, winter is still far from being over!

Trees & Shrubs

√ If exceptionally cold weather is in the forecast, provide protection to early flowering, or tender plants, by covering them with a frost blanket, not with plastic. Plastic can freeze-burn a plant if it comes in contact with it. Remove the covering as soon as the weather allows.

√ Witch-hazel, crocus, snodrops, hellebores and several other flowers may start to bloom very soon.

√ If the ground is not frozen, deciduous shrubs and trees can be transplanted this month. Once the buds have begun to swell, it is late. Once the buds break, its too late.

√ Fertilize trees (especially fruit trees) six to eight weeks before they start to grow. Punch a series of 1-2 inch holes, two feet apart, and 6 to 12 inches deep around the drip line. Apply the appropriate amount of fertilizer in each hole. The more holes you make the better. Don't put too much fertilizer in each hole or you may have a spotted lawn all spring and summer.

√ Late-February is the time to fertilize shrubs and evergreens. Use an 'acid-type, rhododendron fertilizer' to feed evergreens, conifers, broad leaf evergreens, rhododendrons, azaleas and Japanese Maples.

√ Use an all-purpose fertilizer for deciduous trees and shrubs. We recommend **Dr Earth Organic Fertilizer** or **Master Nursery All Purpose Fertilizer**.

√ Prune grape vines as soon as you have time. The sooner the better. Save the cut vines to make wreaths or other crafts.



√ Prune your *summer* flowering shrubs when the weather permits. Weigela, Rose of Sharon, Butterflybush, Bluemist Spirea, and barberries all benefit from a good pruning. Do not prune the early spring blooming shrubs yet.

√ Forsythia, quince, spirea, lilac, and other early spring flowering shrubs and trees will be blooming soon. Don't prune them now, they should be pruned a little later, after they have finished flowering. Pruning them now will reduce the amount of flowers.

√ Prune Fruit Trees anytime from now until they start to blossom. You can also prune them lightly after they finish blooming.



√ Prune to improve the shape of the plant, as well as to open up the center of the plant for good air circulation and sun exposure. Always start your pruning by removing all dead, diseased, decayed or broken branches.

√ In the event of heavy snow, be sure to shake or brush off the branches of your trees and shrubs.

√ It's a good time to examine your landscape and trim back any branches that were damaged by the winter weather.

√ Check the plants under the eaves of the house and under tall evergreens to make sure that they have sufficient moisture; if dry, water them regularly all winter.

Flowers

√ Check your stored plants such as begonias, dahlias and cannas. The bulbs may try to start to grow if they are too warm. They should be kept very dry, and stored at 45 degrees F. If they are shriveling, water them lightly, or put them into damp peat moss, and keep them cool.

√ Start flower seeds indoors six to eight weeks before you want to plant them outside. If you start them too early, you may not have room for them because you will need to transplant them in to larger pots, before you can safely put them outside.

√ Plant perennial flowers, verbena, coleus, dianthus, celosia, salvia, petunias, impatiens, flowering cabbage, and flowering kale from seed. Use germination mats and grow lights to help seedlings grow better.

√ Prevent 'damping off' on new seedlings by soaking the seeds in captan before planting them. You can also dust or spray captan on young seedlings to prevent this disease.

Houseplants

√ House plants may begin growing. Don't fertilize houseplants very much during the winter. Wait until March, when the plants start to put on significant new growth, to fertilize them.



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✓ **Lucky Bamboo** - If you are craving something green when everything seems white or brown, try growing Lucky Bamboo. These green stalks and leaves do not need natural light, they can grow almost anywhere. Just keep their roots in water and support the stalks with pebbles or marbles. Put them on a countertop, on your desk, or in your bedroom and enjoy them year round. We have a handout with growing instructions and information about the luck they bring to your home and business.

✓ **Amaryllis** - Fertilize your amaryllis once a month until the weather permits you to plant it outside for the summer. Keep the leaves upright, do not let them bend over.

✓ **Bonsai** - Indoor Bonsai trees are especially fun to have in the winter. You can enjoy pruning, grooming and growing them without getting out of your chair. These miniature trees need regular watering and plenty of good light. They like good air circulation, but they cannot tolerate locations near furnace vents or near doorways.



Growing bonsai plants is both an art and a science, be sure to learn more about watering and trimming your bonsai plant as soon as you have time.

Wild Bird

✓ Continue feeding our feathered friends, you'll want them to stick around to help you in insect control when the weather warms up. Give them a high energy food such as suet or peanut butter. Birds are attracted to a source of unfrozen water, try a birdbath heater to keep water available for your birds.



✓ Large birds are attracted to dehydrated fruits and nuts. Save your cherries and apples by dehydrating them, and storing them, for the birds to eat during the winter.

Vegetables and Fruits

✓ If you didn't prune your blackberries, raspberries, and boysenberries last fall, do it now, as soon as you have time. Cane fruits, with the exception of everbearing raspberries, should have all the canes which produced fruit last year completely removed. Don't remove all the everbearing canes or you will lose your spring crop of berries.

✓ If you grow currants, remove all trunks which are over 3 years old. Prune the rest to maintain the plant's size.

✓ Find your seed starting supplies and make sure they are in working condition. Invest in grow lights and heat mats

for starting seeds indoors.

✓ Start broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, cabbage, brussel sprouts, and onion seeds inside the house. Transplant them outside late-March or early-April.

✓ Plant peas, onions, and spinach as soon as the ground is dry. Try planting peas inside and then transplanting them outside in 4 to 6 weeks. You may get to pick your peas a week or two earlier.

✓ Start vegetable seeds inside about 6 to 8 weeks before you plant them outside.

✓ If you have room, start a few **very-early tomato plants**, to plant outside in a Wall of Water later in April.



✓ Plan your planting schedule wisely, if you plant them too early you will need a lot of space to keep them until the weather cooperates.

✓ Select varieties of new fruit trees to plant this spring. You can plant them as soon as the ground thaws.

Miscellaneous

✓ Avoid working the soil when it is wet. Wait until the soil starts to dry to avoid creating dirt clods.

✓ If you prepared your garden soil last fall, you can plant peas as soon as the ground is dry enough to be raked.

✓ Raised bed gardens can usually be planted 3 to 4 weeks earlier than traditional gardens.

✓ Tune up and repair the mower to get a jump on the season. Don't wait until the spring rush to get your mower back in shape!

✓ Did you check your garden tools yet?

✓ Make sure your cold frame is ready for use. You can add two or three weeks of gardening in the spring and two or three weeks in the fall with a simple cold frame.

✓ Remove excessive piles of snow on the lawn to help prevent snow mold. Fireplace ash, Ute-lite, or Ironite can help melt snow quicker.

✓ Visit our Garden Center and look through the seeds for spring planting. Download our Vegetable Planting Schedule and pick up our Gardening Calendar.

✓ Take a soil test if one has not been done the last five years.

✓ It's time to turn the compost pile! Use it as soon as the ground is dry. Refill your compost bin all summer.

