

# The March HORT REPORT

## LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

- Prepare lawn mower: install clean filters.
- Cultivate annual flower beds to destroy winter weeds.
- Apply organic mulch to control weeds in beds.
- Remove excess thatch from warm season lawns.
- March is the *second-best* time of the year to seed cool-season turf grasses; however, fall is the best time to plant.
- Cool-season lawns such as bluegrass, fescue, and rye grass may be fertilized with the first application of the season.
- Usually, four applications of fertilizer are required per year. In March, May, October, and November.
- Broadleaf weeds can be easily controlled in cool-season lawns with post-emergent broadleaf herbicides.
- Begin mowing cool-season grasses at 1 ½ to 3 ½ inches high.
- Chemical and physical control of galls (swelling) on stems and foliage of trees should begin now.
- Dormant oils can still be applied to control mites, galls, overwintering aphids, etc.
- Anthracnose control on Sycamore, Maple, and Oak should begin now.
- Prune roses just before growth starts and begin a regular disease spray program as the foliage appears.
- Divide and re-plant summer and fall blooming perennials.
- Mow or cut back old Liriope and other ornamental grass foliage.

## Perfect PERENNIALS for the Lazy Gardener:

*Are you ready to get your "Lazy Garden" going? Give these perfect perennials a try so you can enjoy a beautiful yard without all the fuss:*

- **HOSTAS...** It just doesn't get any easier than Hostas! They come in many sizes and shades of green and can fill in a space nicely. You can even divide them up every few years, which is a great way to get free plants for other parts of your yard. They don't require pruning, weeds don't phase them, and a few inches of water a week will do the trick. The beautiful bloom stalks attract the hummingbirds and other pollinators. They love the shade.
- **DAYLILIES...** It seems that Daylilies can grow just about anywhere, which is why you tend to see them everywhere! You can grow them from starts or bulbs. Both are inexpensive, and they do well in both sun and shade situations. Weeds don't bother them and pests seem to leave them alone, making them a hardy and fuss free plant.
- **IRIS...** If you love purple and blue flowers, the Iris is perfect for you! You can plant them from starts or bulbs and they will return in full force year after year. They are not bothered by most pests and weeds, and if we get regular rain, that should be all they need to survive. They look great in borders, and will multiply over time, giving you more flowers for free!
- **HERBS...** Quite a few herbs are perennials and look good in a garden bed as well as being edible! I've had Rosemary growing in a pot (Zone 7) for several years now. Consider adding Dill, Rosemary, Lavender, and Basil to your garden beds and borders where it will offer color,

scent, and come back the following year in full force. Most herbs are quite hardy and just require regular watering. They attract pollinators and are quite beneficial in many ways.

- **HYDRANGEAS...** One of the only things Hydrangeas need to survive is sun. Try a Hydrangea on the North side of your landscape. They come in all sorts of colors, bloom all season, and will return year after year. A light pruning is all they need and all you have to do is stand back and watch the show! A weekly deep watering will do.
- **SALVIA...** Salvia is perfect for attracting ALL the pollinators... hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees! It is a hardy perennial that does well even in mixed sun situations. It is inexpensive to buy, and once you plant it, you can count on it returning year after year in an even bigger form! Try Salvia in garden borders and beds to add color and height. This plant is very drought tolerant and a deep watering once a week is usually sufficient.

## SHRUBS TO LOVE

Part of the appeal of shrubs is the lack of maintenance they require. \*NOTE (LAZY GARDENERS!) Always check the hardiness zone and follow any specific instructions, but most perennial shrubs require minimal work when planted in the correct conditions. *Boost summer color and pollinator appeal with these plants:*

### **BUTTONBUSH** (AKA: *Cephalanthus occidentalis*)

Watch hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees flock to these fragrant spherical white flowers. Button bush is also a host for several types of caterpillars. The round fruit persists through winter, providing food for a variety of birds.



#### *Buttonbush Details:*

- USDA Zones: 3-11
- Light Needs: Full to Partial Sun
- Water Needs: Likes moist soil
- Average Size at Maturity: 6' tall, 6' wide
- WHY WE LOVE IT: This long flowering plant provides months and months of enjoyment.

### **SUMMERSWEET** (AKA: *Clethra alnifolia*)

Entice Hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees with the fragrant white flowers. Can be planted in the shade.



#### *Summersweet Details:*

- USDA Zones: 4-9
- Light Needs: Shade tolerant
- Water Needs: Likes moist soil
- Average Size at Maturity: 4-8' tall, 4-6' wide

#### **SWEETSPIRE** (AKA: *Itea virginica*)

The Sweetspire's white flowers give off a slight fragrance, attracting hummingbirds, bees, and butterflies. Try Henry's Garnet or Little Henry for smaller spaces.



#### *Sweetspire Details:*

- USDA Zones: 5-9
- Light Needs: Sun or Shade
- Water Needs: Likes moist, acidic soil
- Average Size at Maturity: 3-6' tall, 3-6' wide
- WHY WE LOVE IT: The leaves turn from green to yellow, orange then reddish-purple colors during autumn.

#### **ELDERBERRY** (AKA: *Sambucus nigra canadensis*)

Give this shrub plenty of room to spread and grow. Then watch both butterflies and bees gather on flowers as birds flock to ripe fruit.



#### *Elderberry Details:*

- USDA Zones: 3-9
- Light Needs: Full Sun
- Water Needs: Prefers moist soil but will tolerate drier conditions once it is established.
- Average Size at Maturity: 5-12' tall, 5-12' wide
- WHY WE LOVE IT: The leaves turn from green to yellow, orange then reddish-purple colors during autumn.

#### **SHRUB HIBISCUS “Rose of Sharon” (AKA: *Hibiscus syriacus*)**

Bring in the Hummingbirds with the colorful blossoms of this lovely late-summer bloomer. You'll also find bees, butterflies and other pollinators visiting the white, pink, red, purple or violet flowers. This variety is BLUE CHIFFON - Proven Winners 2021 Shrub of the year!



#### *Rose of Sharon Details:*

- USDA Zones: 5-8
- Light Needs: Full to Part Sun
- Water Needs: Moist well-draining soil. Water weekly. Dry conditions will require more frequent watering.
- Average Size at Maturity: Grows up to 15' tall
- WHY WE LOVE IT: Incredibly adaptable shrub, grows in almost any type of soil.

## **HOW MANY TYPES OF HIBISCUS ARE THERE?**

### **WHATS THE DIFFERENCE?**

- **HARDY HIBISCUS:** The “Superstar” of the family! Fast growing and fabulous, they explode with pinwheel-like flowers the size of dinner plates in late summer. These plants are true perennials and will die down to the ground in most zones. They are late to break dormancy,

sometimes as late as the end of May. They range in size from 2-10' tall, and full sun is a must. They perform best with consistent watering.

- **SHRUB HIBISCUS:** Are also called "Rose of Sharon" and have a woody habitat and bloom on the same structure each year. These tend to be the largest in size with some varieties reaching up to 15' tall.
- **TROPICAL HIBISCUS:** These are considered cousins to the shrub hibiscus and are not hardy. These tend to be used in the landscape as patio or houseplants since they are not frost tolerant. When brought indoors for the winter, they will bloom inside all winter with a sunny location.

## EVERYONE'S FAVORITE... HUMMINGBIRD!



### **HUMMINGBIRD FACTS:**

- The name 'Hummingbird' comes from the humming noise their wings make as they beat 53 times per second!
- They fly at a speed of about 25 mph and zoom even faster when the wind pushes them along.
- When they are really exerting themselves, their hearts race around 1,200 beats per minute. In calmer times, that rate drops to 600 beats per minute. Humans in comparison, have a resting heart rate of about 72 beats per minute.
- They are the only bird that can fly backwards.
- They are the smallest migrating bird.
- They can't walk or hop and use their legs to perch and move sideways.
- They exist on a nectar diet as well as insects. They consume up to double their body weight.
- Their average body weight is less than a nickel.
- They have no sense of smell but do have good color vision.
- They prefer orange or red flowers.
- It is not recommended to use red dye in nectar as it could harm the birds. Instead, use feeders that have red coloring in their structure.
- Make your nectar at home... boil 4-parts water to 1-part white table sugar, cool, and serve. Store leftovers for up to 1 week in the refrigerator.
- Hang more than one feeder because these territorial birds come in droves.
- Plant nectar filled plants to attract the hummingbirds: Penstemon, Red Hot Poker, Trumpet Vine, Honeysuckle, Salvia, Petunias, Larkspur, and Bee Balm.
- Provide trees and shrubs near the feeding area to give hummingbirds a place to rest and shelter from predators and weather.
- Ripe fruit near the feeding area makes the site more attractive to hummers and it attracts gnats - an important source of protein for them.
- Hummingbirds need water. A bird bath about 1 ½ inches deep provides plenty of water.

- The best flowers for attracting hummingbirds are those with long throats that hang in clusters beyond the foliage. We call these “multiple feeding stations”. Flowers that are too close to the foliage force a hummingbird to beat his wings against leaves as they feed.

### **How do you keep Hummingbird feeders clean?**

- Feeders are easier to clean if they are hung in the shade. Mold growth slows significantly.
- Use ¼ cup rice and ½ cup hot water in a feeder and shake it. The rice is an abrasive, so it cleans the inside of the feeder.
- In hot humid weather, the recommendation is to clean feeders every three (3) days using hot water, a natural cleaner, and a small brush to scrub with.
- Fill feeders using a mixture of hot water and vinegar. Let it soak, rinse well, then let air dry before filling.
- You can safely use a mixture of bleach and water to clean your feeders to stop black mold.
- Q-tips work well to clean out small nooks and holes.
- FEEDERS... Keep it up. Some will worry that leaving a Hummingbird feeder up in fall will prevent hummers from migrating. This is false. Hummingbirds know to migrate when days are shorter, and feeders can be an important food source as the birds head south.
- Hang feeders back out by early April.
- Hang feeders 3-5 feet off the ground.

## **CUSTOMERS ASK**

### **When is a good time to prune?**

When the winter grasses are emerging is a sure sign it is time to prune before spring arrives. However, there are strict rules for pruning “OLD WOOD” and “NEW WOOD”.

Old wood is that which is left AFTER early bloomers are through with their show, over the course of several months, they will begin internally planning the flowering which will appear early NEXT year. If they are pruned now, there will be many lovely leaves but scant flowering next spring.

Remember, each of these must be pruned AFTER spring/summer flowering – Witch-hazel, Forsythia, Lily of the Valley Bush, Viburnum, Azaleas, Weigela, Mock Orange, Lilac, Snowball, and Ninebark.

### **When do I prune my roses?**

Major pruning should be done in early spring, after the last frost or you can let the roses tell you – when they start to bud or leaf out, it's time. General estimate for Zone 7 is March 30 to April 30.

#### **WHAT YOU'LL NEED:**

- GOOD GLOVES... Gauntlet style is recommended for extra protection up your forearm. Ross Seed carries a great pair for \$18.99. ...I just love mine!
- BYPASS PRUNERS... NOT ANVIL. Bypass blades overlap and make a clean cut. Anvil blades meet and can crush or damage canes.
- HEAVY LONG SLEEVES... The right clothing will keep you from getting “bit” by the thorns.

**SUMMER:** Dead flowers can be cut back anytime in summer. During the flowering season, deadheading will encourage more blooms and maintain an attractive shrub.

**FALL:** After the first killing frost, trim longer stems to keep them from snapping in winter storms. Crossing branches that can be damaged by rubbing together should also be trimmed back. Take it

easy though, as too much pruning can stimulate growth, and that new growth may be damaged by freezing weather. Remove any dead or diseased branches and foliage and clean your cutting tools well to prevent transferring disease to another plant.

**PRUNING HEIGHT:** Prune to the height you want your rose bush to be. If it is in the back of a border, leave it a little higher. For the front of the border, trim lower. For hybrid teas, the lower you prune, the bigger the flower and longer the stem. Leave them a little taller and you will get more blooms, although smaller and shorter.

***FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO HELP YOU PRUNE CORRECTLY:***

1. Remove all remaining leaves. This allows you to see the structure of the bush and clearly see all the canes (stems). This will also remove any pests or disease that may have been hiding over winter in the foliage.
2. Start with dead wood. How do you know it's dead? Cut into it – brown is dead, green is living. Cut any dead wood back to base.
3. Open the center of the plant. Take out crossing branches which can rub, causing damage and encouraging disease. The goal is to have upward-reaching branches with an open structure in a vase-like shape.
4. Remove any thin, weak growth – the basic rule of thumb is to remove anything thinner than a pencil.
5. Prune remaining canes by cutting  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inches above an outward-facing bud eye (a small bump where the leaf would meet the stem). New stems grow in the direction of the bud and the goal is to encourage them to grow outward, not inward. Make cuts at a 45-degree angle sloping away from the bud, allowing water to run off.
6. Clean up the surrounding area underneath. All leaves and cut branches should be disposed of as disease and pests could be lurking.
7. FEED YOUR ROSES! Roses are “Big Eaters” and need proper nutrition, so feed them with a long-lasting fertilizer like OSMOCOTE. One application of Osmocote will last 4 months!

**CLIMBING ROSES:** Most of the same rules apply, but there are a few differences, mainly the way the climbers grow. They have 2 types of canes, main and lateral. The main comes directly from the base and should NEVER be pruned. They put their energy into growing first and flowering second. If energy is being spent on regrowth of main canes, it will not flower. The lateral canes are the ones that produce flowers and pruning these will encourage blooming. Lateral canes can be pruned anytime of the year.

**KNOCK-OUT ROSES:** Knock outs are generally ready for pruning in their second or third season, after reaching a mature height of 3-4'. The timing of pruning is late winter or early spring when buds start to form. Knock-outs bloom on new growth, so old, dead, or broken canes should be cut back by  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the height. Deadheading will produce new bloom clusters and overall growth.

**HATE PRUNING, BUT LOVE ROSES?**

Landscape roses are a simple way to add lots of color to your garden with minimal labor (\*Pay Attention: LAZY GARDENERS!). Unlike hybrid teas, these resilient plants don't require precise pruning or other care. Pruning these beauties is easy! Come spring, cut out any old or dead wood then trim the whole plant back by  $\frac{1}{2}$  its height and that's it! *\*NOTE: The OSO EASY Series is a great choice if you don't want to deal with heavy pruning or deadheading. They are also highly disease resistant.*

## **MORE WAYS TO KEEP YOUR ROSES HEALTHY:**

Fertilize properly and keep pests and disease at bay with regular applications of BIOADVANCED ALL-IN-ONE ROSE & FLOWER CARE. 3 products in one: fertilizer, insect control, and disease control. One application needs to be applied at the base of rose and watered in ...yes, it IS that easy! Your roses will love you for it!