

Professional Landscaping Tips – February through Mid-March



By Ronny Nelson, Horticulturist, Board Certified Master Arborist and President of Simply Horticulture, LLC.

As you know, the weather is very unpredictable. One moment it's 80 degrees and sunny outside. The next day, 2-inches of rainfall, followed by freezing weather. As confusing as North Texas weather can be to us, it's confusing to the plants too.

When we have consistent warm temperatures for 2-3 weeks straight, warm season plants awaken from dormancy. This is often resulting in vulnerability to freeze and pest injury. Many pests begin to emerge. Just last week, I noticed aphids feeding on the underside of Live Oaks. Other pest like winter weeds will eventually break through the pre-emergent and become noticeable.

In order to prepare, our professionals are focusing on the following items.

- Apply pre-and-post emergent herbicide to manage winter weeds and prevent warm season weeds. Granular products are available at your local garden center, but for the best results, contract a licensed pesticide applicator.
- Consider applying an insecticide to prevent fire ants. This can be helpful once ants begin to forage.
- Cutback ornamental grasses. Complete this by the 2nd or 3rd week in March.
- In early March, cut back Liriope grass and other groundcovers. Be careful to not cutback the grass too severely. This could stunt and/or injure the new years growth.
- Divide perennials and replant in other areas in the garden before they awake from dormancy.
- Corrective prune shrubs to manage shape and size prior to spring, once the growth has flushed. Not all shrubs need corrective pruning, so reach out to a local horticulturist.
- Inspect your flowers. Aphids begin feeding on pansies this time of year. Add a liquid fertilizer with systemic insecticide and fungicide to keep your flowers healthy.
- Deadhead flowers to encourage new blooms. This requires pinching the stem to remove the old bloom.
- We do not need outside watering with all the rain. If it goes 2-3 weeks without rain, check the soil to determine if outside watering is appropriate. Turn off automatic controllers and water manually. Don't forget to have your irrigation checked and adjusted before late spring.
- Minimize pruning to oak trees starting mid-February through June. If you must make a cut on an oak tree, apply pruning sealer directly after during this period.
- Install good quality mulch in beds and tree rings at 3-4 inches thick to prevent weeds and to maintain proper soil temperature. This may require removing or turning old mulch. Be sure to not cover the base of plants with mulch. Over-mulching the base of trees and shrubs is a common issue.

I hope that these tips help you enjoy a beautiful landscape this spring!

Sincerely,

Ronny Nelson, BCMA