



March is a major gardening month in our area. The weather stabilizes and by the end of the month it is warm enough to consider planting warm season plants. The **last average freeze date** occurs during mid-month.

Birds and Wildlife

- Black chin, ruby-throats and rufous hummingbirds will show up sometime during the month.
- Thistle or hulled sunflower seeds attract the goldfinch flocks that linger until May.
- Purple martins will be settling in this month.

Color

- You can cut tulip foliage down as soon as it is unattractive.
- Fall-planted pansies, snapdragons, dianthus, stocks, alyssum, and larkspur are spectacular this month.
- If the weather is warm after the 15th, consider moving the bougainvillea, plumeria, and hibiscus on to the patio.
- Keep up the spray regimen with roses. Be sure to fertilize the roses this month
- Fertilize the cool-season flowers one more time early this month.
- Plant hibiscus, bougainvillea, mandevilla and allemanda vines in containers for tropical landscape color.
- Fertilize established perennials this month.

Fruits and Nuts

- You can spray fungicides while the trees are in bloom, but not insecticides.
- When peaches are the size of a dime, thin them to one fruit every 6-8 inches of stem.
- You can still plant the thornless *Navajo* blackberry.

Ornamentals

- Be sure to fertilize with an orchid-fertilizer every time you water and place them in a bright location.
- March is a good time to divide and transplant mums, ajuga, liriopse, daylily, and Shasta daisy.

Shade Trees and Shrubs

- Weed-and-feed type fertilizers are notorious for killing young shade trees.

- Paint all wounds on **oak** trees immediately.
- If you see army worms or leaf rollers on your oak trees, apply Bt, Spinosad, or Malathion.
- Finish any pruning except for the early bloomers such as climbing roses, mountain laurel, and ornamental fruits.
- Check mountain laurels for worms. Use Bt or Spinosad to control them.

Turf Grass

- It's still too early to fertilize the lawn.
- March is a good month for aeration and adding a half-inch of compost as a soil dressing.
- Mow your Asiatic jasmine at the highest level on your mower to encourage a new growth of leaves.
- You may start mowing grass this month
- Check out the automatic lawn sprinkler system.
- Establish or renovate the lawn as needed.

Vegetables

- Put the containerized tomatoes in the ground towards the end of the month.
- March is a month to plant the gardener's favorite vegetables.
- Protect tender transplants and seedlings with Grow-Web.
- Rather than planting a whole package of veggie seeds, plant only the number you want or can eat and save the rest in the fridge.

Questions? Write gardener@gvtc.com

To get a complete list, go to www.thehillcountrygardener.com and click on "Publications."