



# *From The Ground Up*

Florence County Master Gardeners

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2018

## *From the Potting Bench*

Ah, March! Is it spring or is it still winter? The weather changes from one day to the next. The seeds we planted in February are doing well, especially the basil. Thanks to some hard-working volunteers, the Hoop House has been scrubbed clean and is ready for the new plants. Once the water is on and stays on at the Hoop House, the plants will be moved. They will be transplanted and continue to grow for the Plant Sale in May. If any of you have plants, divisions or cuttings from your own garden you'd like to donate please let us know. For now you'll have to keep them in your garden until the Hoop House is ready.

The March meeting is also the time when we nominate new candidates for office. Last year, the existing officers were re-elected. This year though may not be so easy. Both Shelby McCormick and I will be stepping down this year as we said at the February meeting. I've enjoyed my term as your President but the time has come for me to pay attention to other areas of my life, most specifically my two new grandchildren. I will continue to be active as a Master Gardener, but will not be able to make the time commitment of an officer. It's not a difficult job, actually it's fun. The president has the opportunity to be involved in everything we do and really get to know your fellow members. If you asked me what has been the most difficult part of being president, I would have to say it's been finding a place to store the "Tote Bins of Office"; unsold cookbooks, t-shirts and the picnic supplies. And the most rewarding part has been successfully starting new projects and knowing many of you better. There are no duties of the president that couldn't be performed by any one of the Master Gardeners. Think it over, give it a try, you won't regret it.

*Christine*

# February Meeting

*Was held at Christine's house and new greenhouse for a seed planting session.*



# ***FUTURE EVENTS OF INTEREST***

## **Taste of Briggs Thursday, April 26 from 5:00 – 7:00pm**

Briggs Elementary School has gone beyond a school garden and become a farm complete with chickens. School to Farm is a class that is part of the Briggs curriculum and one of the first in the state. The Taste of Briggs is an annual fundraiser in support of the Briggs Farm. Show your support and enjoy good food at the same time. You can visit the farm any afternoon simply by going to the school yard. Both the coop and the raised beds are unique. One raised bed is maintained by the neighborhood.

## **March 19, Monday, FCMGA Monthly Meeting, Officer Nominations**

## **March 24, Saturday, City Center Farmers Market**

## **April 14, Saturday, Keep Florence Beautiful Clean Up**

## **April 16, Monday, FCMGA Monthly Meeting, Elections**

## **April 19, 20, 21 and 22, Thursday through Sunday, Spring Plant Sale at Farmers Market**

## **April 28, Saturday, City Center Farmers Market**

## **May 21, Monday, FCMGA Monthly Meeting, Picnic and Plant Swap at Lynches Park**

## **May 26, Saturday, City Center Farmers Market, FCMGA First Annual Plant Sale**

## MONTHLY TO DO LIST for MARCH

- Gather and destroy fallen leaves and dead blossoms of camellias --- Do not compost.
- Be prepared to cover tender plants if a freeze is forecasted.
- Allow foliage of spring bulbs to die naturally to replenish nutrients in the bulbs.
- Check for aphids on new growth. Aphids can be controlled with an insecticidal soap spray, but some plants may be sensitive to this treatment. Treat one plant first and if the soap spray damages the plant, try ridding the aphids by spraying with plain water.
- Fertilize trees, shrubs, and ground covers.
- De-thatch lawns.
- Aerate compacted lawns.
- Weed lawn or apply herbicide.
- Check for insects, diseases and rodents in lawns. Treat appropriately.
- Fertilize houseplants, prune dead foliage, and repot plants that have become root-bound.

## LAWNS

•**Fertilizing:** Do not fertilize before April 20. A frost could kill tender new growth as well as damage established lawns.

•**Special Care:** The last date to apply pre-emergence herbicide is March 15. It is still all right to spot kill winter weeds. Check for insects, disease, and rodents, and treat as needed.

## VEGETABLES & FRUITS

•**Planting:** Plant figs during this month. Sow seed for spinach, turnips, Swiss chard, carrots, and edible-pod peas. Set out transplants of broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and brussel sprouts. Before the **15th**, finish planting Irish potatoes, onion sets, and collards. Start planting sweet corn late in March in 2 week intervals to ensure a continual harvest. Perennial herbs, such as thyme, oregano, lemon balm, sage and chives, will be available soon through local garden centers. It is best to wait until after the threat of frost has passed before planting. Sow caraway seeds now.

•**Fertilizing:** Supply brambles and blueberry bushes cup of 10-10-10 per plant before bloom. Fertilize new strawberries now and keep well watered.

•**Special care:** Check the underside of leaves for insects. Begin spray program for fruit trees at time of bud swell and petal fall, continue at 1-2 week intervals. Do not spray with an insecticide when blooming. This may kill bees.

## TREES & SHRUBS

- Planting:** Plant container-grown and balled-and-burlapped trees now.
- Fertilizing:** Fertilize camellias after flowering and again in six weeks. Fertilize trees and shrubs as growth starts. Feed gardenias with a slow-release fertilizer.
- Pruning:** Spring-flowering trees and shrubs should be pruned after they have bloomed. Trim overgrown and uneven hedges before new growth appears. Trim gardenias that have turned brown after severely cold weather

## FLOWERS

- Planting:** Rework soil in perennial beds by applying organic matter. Divide and transplant summer- and fall-flowering perennials. Plant gladiolus corms at two week intervals to extend the flowering season. Plant annuals, such as snapdragons, dianthus, sweet William, sweet alyssum, calendulas, and English daisies. You can directly sow larkspur, baby blue-eyes, forget-me-nots, and Johnny jump-ups. Set out perennials now.
- Fertilizing:** Use 10-10-10 with minor trace elements to fertilize daylilies when new growth appears. Fertilize established roses with 1 cup 5-10-5 per plant as new growth starts.
- Special Care:** Mulch flower beds and borders. Use beer or bait to control slugs. Remove old mulch around roses to control diseases. Watch for aphids and black spot on roses and begin a regular spray program. Plan to rotate annuals in flower beds to prevent decline in vigor caused by soil disease, nematodes, and other soil-borne organisms.



## Phenology: Following Nature's Signs

The idea of watching for nature's seasonal signs is called **phenology**. For gardeners and farmers, this involves studying natural phenomena to know when to plant crops in the spring. Trees, shrubs, and flowers are sensitive to temperature and day length, and develop on a regular schedule based on local conditions. Other natural phenomena, such as bird migrations and the emergence of insects and amphibians (like spring peepers), also signify the coming of spring. It only makes sense to use these events as indicators of when the weather is right for planting.

Observations made over many years have led to some fairly reliable conclusions, such as those listed below.

### Following Nature's Lead

Nature's "signs" are different in every region; however, you should still relate to these examples:

- Blooming [crocus](#) are your cue to plant [radishes](#), [parsnips](#), and [spinach](#).
- Half-hardy vegetables, including [beets](#), [carrots](#), and [chard](#), can be planted when the [daffodils](#) blossom.



- When the forsythia is in bloom, it is safe to plant [peas](#), [onion sets](#), and [lettuce](#).
- Look for dandelions to bloom before planting [potatoes](#).
- Perennials can be planted when the maple trees begin to leaf out.
- When quince is blossoming, transplant [cabbage](#) and [broccoli](#).



- Wait for [apple trees](#) to bloom before planting [bush beans](#).
- When the apple blossoms fall, plant [pole beans](#) and [cucumbers](#).
- By the time the [lilacs](#) are in full bloom, it will be safe to plant tender annual flowers and [squashes](#).
- Transplant [tomatoes](#) when lily-of-the-valley is in full flower.
- Full-sized maple leaves signal time to plant [morning glory](#) seeds.
- [Peppers](#) and [eggplant](#) can be transplanted when the [irises](#) are blooming.
- When [peonies](#) blossom, it is safe to plant heat-loving melons, such as [cantaloupe](#).

While not totally foolproof, following nature's clock helps us tune in to the rhythm of life around us.

*Article taken from Farmers Almanac gardening blog by Robin Sweetser*

**DON'T  
FORGET!**

## Log Your Master Gardener Volunteer Hours

Be sure to log into the  
Master Gardener Reporting System  
State Page  
<https://mastergardener.app.clemson.edu/State.php>

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