



## Spring Clean-up

As the foliage of your perennials begins emerging and growing actively, be sure that all the dead foliage from last year's perennials and annual plants has been removed. Hoeing or hand pulling those pesky spring weeds before they take over is another chore. After weeding



reapply mulch to beds. Be aware that applying mulch now will prevent the soil from warming as quickly as unmulched soil. Also if you depend on "volunteer" seedlings to replenish your flower beds don't mulch heavily. It can prevent most of these seedlings from germinating.

Because of our cold winter some perennials could be a little late to begin growth. You can take advantage of this slower growth to catch up on dividing the summer and fall bloomers like hostas, asters, boltonia or daylilies.

If you hauled all your tender, outdoor, pot plants indoors for the winter, now is a good time to start pruning, repotting and fertilizing these plants to bring them out of the winter uglies. How do you tell when it's time to repot? A good clue is visible roots at the top of the pot or roots protruding from the drain hole. If you're unsure, pop the root ball out of the pot and examine. If you see any roots winding around the root ball it is time to repot. When repotting, use a pot at least twice the diameter of the old one.

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## Bradford Pear

The Bradford Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* ‘Bradford’) is a popular tree for home landscapes due to the attractive white flowers it produces in the early spring. Native to China, Bradford pears can be seen throughout the United States. The tree can grow as much as fifty feet in height, with a thirty foot wide canopy. Bradford pears are also popular due to their rapid growth, being able to grow as much as fifteen feet over ten years. Bradford pear is also tolerant of a wide range of soil conditions, including wet soils. Being adaptable to a range of environments, including poor soils and compaction along urban streets made Bradford pears the tree of choice for many areas starting in the 1950's. Bradford pears are a relatively short-lived tree, and specimen trees will require replacement in fifteen to twenty years.

Despite the popularity of Bradford pears, this variety of tree has a number of issues that make it less than ideal as an addition to home landscapes. While Bradford pears have attractive blossoms, they can have an unpleasant odor that has been described as rotting meat or as “fishy”. Bradford pears were designed to be self-infertile; however, they can reproduce with other cultivars of Callery pear or Asian pear to produce fertile fruit. Due to this, Bradford pear is considered an invasive plant in many areas. Hybridized pear trees can now be found in many forested areas, often in large numbers.

Another serious issue with Bradford pear is that the tree produces a weak branching structure. Connections of the branches to the tree are weak and branch into multiple stems. The tight space between branches often leads to included bark junctions that are much weaker than desired for tree forks. Due to this weak structure, Bradford pears are very prone to having broken limbs when placed under stress such as high winds. Breaks in the bark caused by branches splitting may lead to insect or disease problems for the tree.

Due to the above problems with this tree, it is not recommended for landscapes. Other potential options for trees that would serve the same role in the landscape include buckeye, redbud, dogwood, and magnolia.



Bradford pear with severe break due to weak structure



Callery pear growing wild at a forest border

# Garden Calendar: March

## Planting

- Plant new roses before March 15.
- Broad-leaved Evergreens such as Magnolia and Holly can be set out at this time.
- Plant cold weather annuals: Sweet William, English Daisies, Pansies, and Calendulas.
- Divide Mondo Grass and Liriope. Divide Cannas, Chrysanthemums, Coreopsis, Phlox, and Obedient Plant.
- Start seeds for Tomatoes, Bell Peppers, and Eggplant. Set out Thyme, Lemon Balm, Oregano, Chives, Sage, and Winter Savory.
- Sow seeds of Johnny Jump-ups, Sweet Peas, Larkspur, Forget-me-nots, and Baby Blue Eyes.
- Flowering shrubs may be moved at this time. Larger shrubs should be moved with a ball of dirt and smaller shrubs may be moved bare-rooted.
- This is the best month to move Crape myrtles.
- Lawns may be sodded at this time. Plant Gladiolus throughout this month for continuous bloom. Plant Hostas.
- Caladiums can be started in outdoor containers as soon as weather warms.



## Fertilizing

- Fertilize all the garden except acid-loving plants.
- Topdress Camellias with azalea-camellia fertilizer.
- Lime Peonies, Clematis, and Boxwoods.



## Pest Control

- Spray new rose leaves for black spot weekly.

## Pruning

- Prune roses at this time. Remove dead and weak canes. Properly dispose of clippings.
- Prune Crape Myrtles and Altheas.
- Prune evergreens for shape and size as early in the month as possible.
- Cut English Ivy back very hard. It will come back very nicely in the spring.
- Trim Mondo Grass and Liriope with lawn mower set on highest setting (6 inches). Dispose of trimmings.

## Mulch

- Replenish mulch around Azaleas and Camellias.

## Miscellaneous

- Dispose of fallen Camellia blossoms to prevent blight.
- Rake up seed hulls from under bird feeders. They will smother new growth.
- Remove dead flowers from Tulips and Daffodils. Do not cut foliage before it turns yellow and dies.



## In Bloom

Bluebells, Chionodoxa, Daffodil, Hyacinth, early Iris, Pansies, Violet, Carolina Jasmine, Azaleas, Camellias, Forsythia, Pearl Bush, Photinia, Flowering Quince, Spirea, flowering fruit trees (Crabapple, Cherry, Pear, and Peach), Oriental Magnolia, and Redbud.





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## Fertilizing Pecan Trees

Pecans are large trees that have significant nutrient requirements. Often, when trees go long periods of time without fertilizer applications, growth becomes poor and leads to reduced nut production. Lack of adequate nutrient availability can also weaken the tree and predispose it to diseases and other disorders; therefore, to ensure tree health and produce consistent and high-quality nuts, it is imperative to fertilize annually.

There are two ways to test nutrient value. A soil test should be the first step in starting a fertilizer program. A soil test is better when done pre-plant because it will allow for modification of soil pH and addition of nutrients. After planting, a soil test is effective in keeping track of soil pH and monitoring levels of nutrients present in the soil; however, foliar (leaflet) analysis is a better barometer of overall plant nutrient needs. Pecans can grow on a wide range of soil pHs. The recommended range is about 6.5, but, in most cases, soil pH from 6.0 to 7.0 will be sufficient.

Foliar analysis is the most accurate representation of a pecan tree's nutrient needs. Taking a leaf sample can be done easily in just a few steps:

1. Contact your local county Extension office for detailed instructions of how to collect and where to send samples or see Extension Publication 1224 Plant Analysis Sampling Instructions.
2. Collect leaflet samples in July.
3. Mark trees that were sampled for future reference.
4. The sample should be random within a tree. Collect two leaflets from a few leaves per tree—up to 30 total leaflets per area or cultivar will be fine.
5. Take the leaflets from the 3<sup>rd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> opposite pair on the leaf from the tip, and from all sides of the tree.
6. Make sure to sample each cultivar separately.
7. If the orchard is not uniform, sample different areas separately.

It is likely, first-year trees do not need a fertilizer application, as trees will live off nutrients obtained in the nursery. The tree may grow slowly aboveground in the first year, but the root system will grow abundantly. Second-year trees should start growing faster. Start applying fertilizer in a band along the dripline, but not next to the trunk. As the tree gets older, apply fertilizer in a band at a distance of 12 inches from the trunk. Fertilizer can also be applied by broadcasting, but this is usually not as efficient as band applications.

If the lawn surrounding the pecan tree is being fertilized, this could add some nutrition to the tree; however, it may not be enough to satisfy the nutritional needs of the tree because most of the fertilizer will be used by the grass. One-half pound of ammonium nitrate (or similar) per 100 square feet can be applied under the dripline of the tree. This should be done around the starting time of budbreak (March/April) and again in late spring or early summer (May/June). Roughly 6 to 12 inches of new growth is desired every year.

Pecan trees are heavy users of zinc. It is an essential nutrient for good growth and nut production. Zinc is commonly applied to improved cultivar pecan trees as a foliar spray. This ensures quick uptake by the tree. Young trees and fast-growing trees need applications of zinc on new growth during the spring starting at budbreak and continuing for three sprays at 2- to 3-week intervals. Zinc sulfate is the primary source of zinc and can be mixed at 2 to 3 pounds per 100 gallons of water. Soil applications of zinc are less effective than foliar applications and are only useful when the soil pH is below 6.0. If soil pH is below 6.0, then one-half pound of zinc sulfate per year of age of the tree can be soil-applied under the tree up to 10 pounds per tree total. Even so, foliar applications are the highly preferred method but can be difficult for homeowners. For more information refer to Extension Publication 3055, *Fertilizing Pecan Trees*.



**Photo: Zinc applications are very important for nut production.**



**Photo: Pecan leaf with leaflet pairs. Note the single leaflet at the leaf tip.**





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## Fire Ants

If you want to keep fire ants from taking over your yard this year, or if you want to reclaim your yard from fire ants, spring is the time to act. Knock out fire ants with a one-two punch. Broadcast a granular fire ant bait, like Amdro (a.i.: hydramethylnon) or Extinguish Plus (a.i.: hydramethylnon + methopren), over the yard and landscape at the rates stated on the product label. Do this even if you don't see any fire ant mounds. Unless your landscape is infested with Argentine ants or hairy crazy ants, there will be some young fire ant colonies that are just getting started. The application of fire ant baits is recommended three times per year, with Easter, 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and Labor Day as your reminders to apply.



When you purchase your fire ant bait, also get a can of one of the dry mound treatment products containing acephate or deltamethrin as well to spot treat any visible fire ant mounds. Liquid drench products that are labeled for fire ant mounds in the home lawn are also effective at clearing up any mounds that may pop up in between bait treatments. They are also great if you have a specific event coming up you would like to quickly treat troublesome mounds. Please see Extension publication 2429, Control Fire Ants in Your Yard, for more information on fire ant control and for a more complete list of products available to homeowners for mound control.

### Upcoming events:

**Pine Belt Beekeepers Beginner Beekeeper Series** – March 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>  
 6:30 p.m. Lamar County Extension Office, Purvis with Hands-on field day scheduled for March 19<sup>th</sup> beginning at 11:00 a.m. Call office of more details

**Pine Belt Beekeepers Monthly Meeting** – Thursday March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 p.m. Lamar County Extension Office Purvis

**Pine Belt Master Gardener Spring Garden Day** – March 25<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m. Forrest County Extension Office - Hattiesburg



# Mississippi Springing



**When: March 18, 2022 - Registration at 8:30  
 Program 9:00 am - noon**

**Where: Forrest County Extension Center  
 952 Sullivan Dr. Hattiesburg**

**FREE ADMISSION & REFRESHMENTS**



**INSIDE:**

- GUEST SPEAKERS
- TEE SHIRT & APRON SALE
- SILENT AUCTION
- RAFFLE
- DOOR PRIZES

**OUTSIDE:**

- PLANT SALE & VENDORS



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## Start Early for Pond Weed Control

Having too many weeds in a pond is the bane of many Mississippi pond owners. Pond weeds start growing early, as soon as day length and water temperatures allow. Don't let them get out of hand! Start a weed management program before they become a problem to keep your pond picture perfect.

Prevention is the best way to avoid weed problems. Shallow areas where light reaches the pond bottom are ideal for the growth of rooted aquatic weeds. You can reduce weeds by deepening the pond edges so that the water depth quickly reaches 3 feet. For safety, make the slope 3:1 or 1 foot increase in depth for every 3 feet farther from shore. Another way to help prevent weeds from becoming established is to stock triploid grass carp at about five fish per acre in new or weed-free ponds.

Too many or not enough nutrients in the pond can lead to weed growth. Excess nutrients from livestock or other sources can run off into a pond and lead to weed problems, especially algae. Duckweed and watermeal also thrive in nutrient-rich waters, especially in dry winters when ponds are not flushed out by rainwater.

In clear ponds, sunlight can penetrate to the bottom and stimulate the growth of rooted plants. One way to prevent this problem is to fertilize the water to stimulate the production of microscopic plants that shade the pond bottom. Ponds with existing weed problems should not be fertilized, as this will only stimulate the growth of the weeds. Fertilization is not a good option for stock watering ponds.

Prevention is always the best approach, but if weeds do become a problem, the first step in controlling them is properly identifying the problem plant(s). Your local Extension office can help with identification. Once you know the weed, there are four forms of weed control: physical, mechanical, biological, and chemical. These control measures are usually most effective when combined. The best time to treat aquatic weeds with herbicide is during the spring when the plants are growing rapidly, and water temperatures are around 70 to 80 degrees.

Decomposition of weeds killed by herbicides removes oxygen from the water and can even result in a fish kill, especially in the summer. When using a fast-acting herbicide, treating only a section, up to a third of the pond area, at a time will reduce the chances of oxygen problems. For more information refer to Publication 1428, *Managing Mississippi Ponds and Small Lakes*, at [extension.msstate.edu](http://extension.msstate.edu).

### Calendar:

March 24<sup>th</sup> – Tim Ray with Harrison County Extension will be hosting **Lawn Care Basics – What Homeowners Should Know** from 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM via Zoom. No registration is required. The link to join is <https://msstateextension.zoom.us/j/94787161070>



Pond weeds start growing early as soon as day length and water temperatures allow, so start a weed management program before they become a problem. (Photo by MSU Extension/Wes Neal)





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27<sup>th</sup> Annual  
**Landscape Symposium**

**April 23, 2022**

The Venue at 7L Farms  
853 Oil Well Road  
Wiggins, MS 39577

Program 8:30 am - 3:00 pm

**Topics Include:**  
Bonsai  
Trees in the Home Landscape  
Seed Starting and Propagation  
Floral Design

Registration is \$10.00  
(Lunch Included)

There will be a Vegetable and Plant Sale, A Raffle and Door Prizes

For more information  
Call (601) 928-5286

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Stone County Master Gardeners  
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national origin, sex, sexual orientation or group affiliation, age, disability, or veteran status.

Pearl River County  
Master Gardeners  
Spring Garden Clinic  
March 19, 2022

9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m.

Paul Bounds Garden Center  
401 N. Main Street  
Picayune, MS 39466



## Events

March 24<sup>th</sup> – Tim Ray with Harrison County Extension will be hosting **Lawn Care Basics – What Homeowners Should Know** from 1:30 PM – 4:30 PM via Zoom. No registration is required. The link to join is <https://msstateextension.zoom.us/j/94787161070>

### Teacher's Conservation Workshop

If you wanted to teach everything about your profession to a group of school teachers, could you do it in just a single week? That's the mission of the Teacher's Conservation Workshop (TCW). For over 50 years, the TCW has been "bringing the outdoors into the classroom" with active, engaging, and enjoyable activities designed to expose teachers to all aspects of the outdoors, forestry, and of course, conservation.

In the decades that the Mississippi Forestry Association has been sponsoring this workshop thousands of educators have taken advantage of this opportunity to gain insight into one of Mississippi's most important industries: forestry. With over 65% of our state forested, timber generates over \$1 Billion annually in MS. It's vitally important that teachers have an understanding of this industry and the role it plays in all our lives.

The TCW lasts just one week, and in that time, the participating teachers engage in presentations from foresters, landowners, wildlife biologists, and other natural resource professionals. Most of the week, however, is spent outdoors. There are field trips each day to tree nurseries, private and public forests, active logging operations, sawmills, and many other locations. Everything is hands on and designed with two things in mind: learning about forestry and having fun while doing it. At the end of the week, teachers leave with dozens of lesson plans that are adaptable to almost any subject and any grade level. Two week-long workshops are held each year in Hattiesburg (June 5-10), and Booneville (June 19-24). A shorter version of the workshop is held in Jackson and takes place over just three days (July 12-14).

In addition to the knowledge gained, participating teachers also receive 5.0 continuing education credits (CEUs). The course can also be taken for academic credit towards a degree in education. The cost for this workshop is only \$150, and there are many scholarships available, so most teachers end up having to pay nothing out of pocket. For more information, check out <https://www.msforestry.net/page/TCW> or email Butch Bailey at [Butch.Bailey@MSState.edu](mailto:Butch.Bailey@MSState.edu).

## Online Private Applicator Certification Program

**A private applicator is a certified applicator who uses or supervises the use of restricted-use pesticides to produce an agricultural commodity on his or her own land, leased land, or rented land or on the lands of his or her employer. Private applicators must be at least 18 years old.**

In response to limited face-to-face training during the COVID-19 situation, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture–Bureau of Plant Industry has approved an online private applicator certification program developed by the MSU Extension Service. Persons needing to obtain or renew their private applicator certification can complete the online training (two video training modules and a competency exam) by using the following link: <http://extension.msstate.edu/content/online-private-applicator-certification-program>. The fee for training and testing is \$20, payable online by credit card, debit card, or eCheck.



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EXTENSION

# Private Applicator

## TRAINING AND TESTING ONLINE

Watch the training modules, pass the exam, and receive your private applicator certification from MDAC Bureau of Plant Industry.

# \$20 COST

Visit <http://msuext.ms/agmes> or contact your local MSU Extension office for info on how to register.