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News from Your Extension Agent:

February marks the beginning of spring garden prep

Planting

February is the time to plant various plants including roses, bare-rooted fruit and nut trees, as well as grapes, blueberries and blackberries. When purchasing fruit trees be sure to do your research to know which types require a second variety for pollination, such as plum, apple, pear, blueberries, and some muscadine grapes. For peach and plum trees, it is also recommended to apply fertilizer to the ground surrounding the trunk, slightly beyond the tree canopy (never at the base of the trunk).

For the spring vegetable garden, mid-February is the time to plant many crops too! Broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, kale, garlic, kohlrabi, onion, radish, spinach and turnips. Be sure to do your research on the best varieties for East Texas- I have a great resource for this, I would be happy to email to you.

Lawncare

Early to mid-February is the time to apply pre-emergent herbicide for lawns with a previous warm-season weed problem (crabgrass, goosegrass, weeds that appear in the summer). It is time to apply post-emergent control to those cool-season weeds that have already crept up (henbit, deadnettle). Be careful depending on the post-emergent product selected, that warm-season grasses have not come out of dormancy when applied. Many cool-season weeds can be hand-pulled or mechanically removed to control as an alternative to chemical control. It is also an option to mow cool-season weeds as a control method. Soon we will begin seeing thistle rosettes, contact me for more information about thistle control.

*For fertilizer, wait until March-April for warm-season grasses.

Livestock Care

For spring-calving herds the breeding season is just beginning. Many producers choose to vaccinate cows and heifers during this month. Before turning out the bull, do a breeding soundness evaluation to insure a good breeding season. Check body condition scores and adjust rations based on cow/heifer health. For fall-calving herds, the breeding season will end at the end of February. It will soon be time to work calves- vaccinating, dehorning, castrating etc. It is important to watch for grass tetany in all livestock as lush spring forage begins to emerge.

All data and recommendations are based on Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Resources, other Extension Resources and the Farmer's Almanac. Next week I will continue this discussion with common February forage maintenance tips for livestock owners.

Sincerely,



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