

Plenty of gardening help available



Gardening
Sally Scalera
Guest columnist

Winter is coming to an end, though that doesn't mean there aren't more cold fronts coming (but please, no more freezes), and the days are slowly getting longer. Before discussing gardening activities to do this month, I would like to spread the word about some educational opportunities.

Just in case you haven't heard, the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Seminar is coming again and this year it will be held at Eau Gallie High School auditorium. The event is scheduled for Saturday, February 17th beginning at 9 am. This seminar is free and will include four presentations on the following topics: composting, native plants, Indian River Lagoon, soils, fertilizers and pests. There will also be vendors to check out!

If you are new to Florida, having problems with your lawn or landscape or you just want to make sure that your landscaping practices aren't harming the environment, consider signing up for a My Brevard Yard site visit. We will come to your yard and take a soil sample and a water sample (if you irrigate with well or surface water) for testing plus, calibrate an irrigation zone to make sure it is not over-watering. We will also help you answer all your gardening and insect/disease questions, problem areas, identify plants, etc. Your water sample will be tested for salt content in our office and the results of will let you know if it is safe to use on your plants. After your soil test results are received, you will be provided a fertilizer recommendation that will include the fertilizer analysis to use, how much to use, and when to apply it. The cost of the site visit is \$50.

For information on the following events or to register, just go to <http://bit.ly/ufbrevard> or call us at 633-1702 ext. 224.

The weather is usually quite nice to work outside in February so check out the following ideas of things to do.

Mid-month is a good time to prune hybrid rose bushes. Choose four to five main canes, to form the new shrub, and prune off the others. Shorten the main canes back a third of the way, and re-



This amaranthus tricolor 'Perfecta' is one of the flowers that can be planted now for the warmer weather ahead. PHOTOS BY SALLY SCALERA

move any dead, damaged, or twiggy growth back to the main cane. Flowers should be produced eight to nine weeks after pruning. If you are growing Old Garden Roses (OGR) like Chinas and Teas, these can be lightly pruned now as needed.

If your lawn has browned out from the cold, continue to water it (no more than once a week) and celebrate the fact that you won't need to mow again for a while. Don't expect the grass to green up, or try to make it do so, until we get longer days and warmer temperatures. The worst thing to do now would be to fertilize the lawn since the turf isn't actively growing. The nutrients will just leach into the nearest water body.

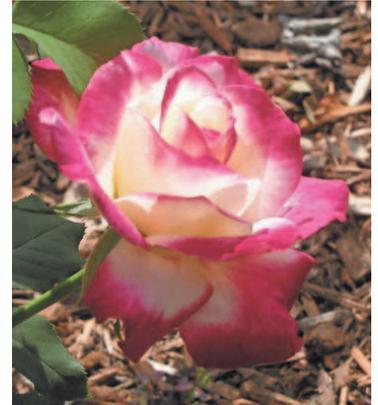
Check the vegetable garden for any diseased or insect infested plants and pull them out of the garden. After pulling them out, spread some organic matter like compost, aged manure, coffee grounds and tea bags over the ground to keep any weed seeds from germinating plus, it will enrich the soil. If you find any old, or non-producing plants, just cut them off at the soil line. This will leave the root system in the ground for

the soil microbes to consume and the soil won't be disturbed. That will prevent any weed seeds from germinating. If the soil is bare, cover it with more organic matter.

Vegetables that can be planted in February include; arugula, beans, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cantaloupes, carrots, cauliflower, celery, Chinese cabbage, collards, cucumbers, eggplant, endive/escarole, English or snow peas, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, okra, onions- bunching (green & shallots), peppers, potatoes (Irish & sweet), radish, southern peas, spinach, squash, sweet corn, Swiss chard, tomatoes, turnips, and watermelons.

Vegetable seeds that can be sown in February for planting in March include; arugula, beans, cantaloupes, Chinese cabbage, cucumbers, kohlrabi, okra, peppers, Southern peas, spinach, squash, sweet corn, Swiss chard, watermelon.

Some of the flowers that can be planted now for the warmer weather ahead include; ageratum, amaranth, celosia, coleus, cosmos, Dahlberg daisy, gaillardia, gomphrena, impatiens, li-



Mid-month is a good time to prune hybrid rose bushes, like this rose double delight.

sianthus, marigolds, melampodium, portulaca, red salvia, sunflower, vinca and zinnia.

Some of the herbs that can be planted now include; basil, oregano, chives (both onion & garlic), dill, fennel, parsley, sweet marjoram, mint, sage, and thyme.

Bulbs that can be planted this month include; Agapanthus, Amazon lily (*Eucharis grandiflora*), Aztec lily (*Sprekelia formosissima*), caladium, canna, dahlia, gladiolus, gloriosa lily, kaffir lily (*Clivia minata*), walking iris (*Neomarica gracilis*), rainlily (*Zepheranthus* spp.), lily, African iris (*Moraea* spp.), society garlic (*Tulbaghia violacea*), Tritonia (*T. crocata*), tuberose (*Policanthes tuberosa*), Watsonia (*W. spp.*) and spider lily (*Hymenocallis* spp.)

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the Brevard County Farmers Market which is held every Thursday from 3-6 p.m. at the Wickham Park Equestrian Center in Melbourne. Here is a list of some of the fresh produce that could be available at produce stands or farmers markets in February; broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collards, Chinese cabbage, cucumbers, eggplant, kale, grapefruit, oranges, peppers, radishes, spinach, strawberries and tomatoes.

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