

## Gardener's Corner February 2024

What beautiful weather today after so many dreary cloudy, rainy, snowy days. It looks like this weather may last a few more days. While Spring may not be here for a while, these next few days may give us a chance to work outside.

The **Missouri Botanical Garden** has tips and tasks for us during February. Some of these include spraying trees and shrubs with dormant oil sprays if they have had problems with insects in the past. These pests may include aphids, scale and mites and other such insects. If you decided to use oils, make certain you follow instructions on labels.

You can prune summer flowering shrubs such as *Hydrangea paniculata*, *Lagerstroemia indica*, *Hibiscus syriacus* and *Buddleja davidii* from the end of this month through early March. For other shrubs, however, wait until blooming is finished. These latter shrubs include *Forsythia* spp., *Syringa* spp., *Viburnum* spp., and *Hydrangea macrophylla*.

If you plan to grow larkspur, sweet peas, poppies and snapdragons, now is the time to sow seeds as they need to start their growth before warm weather. Cold weather vegetables can be started indoors for transplantation outside in March and April. Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, celery kohlrabi, kale, collards, mustard greens and bok choy are on that early start list.

This thorough publication, *Starting Plants from Seeds Indoors*, from the **University of Missouri Extension** should help get you underway if you are interested in starting cold weather crops. Among the good information it contains are charts for when to start both vegetables and flowers. Find it at: <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g6570>

There is a little something for everyone in the programs of interest for February:

**Wednesday, February 7, 12 noon – 1 p.m.** *Gardening for a Changing Climate*. **Kansas State University Extension**. Although describing gardening in Kansas, the webinar will discuss problems caused by weather extremes and drought conditions. With projected changes in our climate, gardening will be more challenging. Extreme events will require adaptation with plant selection, irrigation, and soil health. Join Dr. Charles Rice, Nobel Peace Prize winner and Distinguished Professor of Soil Microbiology, to learn how to overcome the challenges of gardening in a changing climate. Register at: [https://ksu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_IxIjvtedRu-pvfFA6Kzvxw#/registration](https://ksu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IxIjvtedRu-pvfFA6Kzvxw#/registration)

**Thursday, February 8 – 11 a.m. – noon.** *Let's Talk Gardens Webinar Series* at the **Smithsonian Gardens** presents *Cultivating Wakandan Resilience: Afrofuturism & Gardening*. The fascinating intersection of Afrofuturism and gardening will be explored drawing inspiration from the Afrofuturistic vision portrayed in Marvel's Black Panther. The profound connection between gardening, resilience, and Afrofuturism will be explored, offering a fresh perspective on the future of African-American gardens. As an added bonus, this webinar will feature engaging Wakanda botany trivia questions to enhance participation and make the learning experience memorable for all. Register at: [https://smithsonian.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_GU36ZsPaRaey2vBcEinyuw#/registration](https://smithsonian.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GU36ZsPaRaey2vBcEinyuw#/registration)

**Wednesday, February 7 – 10:00 a.m. to Noon.** Hand tool cleaning Workshop at **Forest Releaf**. This year, the annual cleaning of the pruners will be indoors at the Maryland Heights/Waste connections sustainability center! Bring a pair from home or help clean their nursery set.

**Tuesday, February 13 - 1:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.** *Insects to Know: Spotted Lanternfly and Periodical Cicadas* will be presented through the *Four Seasons Gardening Webinar Series* offered by **University of Illinois Extension Horticulture**. In 2023, the first spotted lanternfly in Illinois was identified in Cook County. In spring 2024, a large brood of periodical cicadas are set to emerge in Northern Illinois, making it a big year for insects! Learn about the biology of these insects and what their arrival means for gardeners and farmers. Register at: <https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/four-seasons-gardening-webinar-insects-to-know-spotted-lanternfly-periodical-cicadas-2-13-24>

**Tuesday, February 13 – 2:00 p.m. to 3:00.** *Starting Seedlings*. Presented by **Seed St. Louis** through the **St. Louis County Library**. Register at: <https://slcl.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=362267>

**Wednesday, February 21 - 2:00 p.m.** *Native Plant Gardening 101* presented by Erin Goss, **Shaw Nature Reserve** offered through the **St. Louis County Library**. Explore basic terminology, concepts and popular native plants for St. Louis gardens and resources that can be used to answer common questions or help design, install and maintain a native plant garden. Part of the *Partners for Native Landscaping* webinar series. Register at: <https://slcl.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=357361>

**Wednesday, February 28 – 2:00 p.m.** *Native? Invasive? Exotic? Choose Eco-Logically* presented by Jean Ponzi, **Earthways Center** offered by **St. Louis County Library**. Explore the wildly wonderful options to bio-diversify our home and community lands. Learn how plant choices matter to birds, bugs and people - and why some good-looking plants go bad. Part of the *Partners for Native Landscaping* webinar series. Register at: <https://slcl.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=357362>

Two videos you can watch at your leisure will get you excited about the 2024 Proven Winners. You can find these at the following sites:

**Gardening by Creekside.** *Proven Winners for 2024* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkDYfttjGkg>

**Garden Answer.** *Our experience with New Annuals for 2024. Proven Winners.* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tutY1TrGnbA>