

## Gardener's Corner March 2024

These last few days of February have brought us summer-like weather. Hellebores (aka, Lenten Rose) and daffodils are blooming; tulips are up and budding. It's hard to believe we're still in winter. It is a good time to take advantage of the break from the cold during these nice days and start preparing our gardens for the spring and summer.

Some tips and tasks from the **Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG)** indicate that as soon as trees, shrubs, and perennials are available at your local garden center and the ground can be worked, you can begin to plant them. They suggest we prune trees before the new growth appears. Oaks need to be pruned before mid-March to avoid transmitting oak wilt.

Now is a good time to remove weeds and dead foliage from your gardens and mulch the beds to help suppress weeds. You can also divide summer and fall blooming perennials such as black-eyed Susans as they emerge. Cut ornamental grasses to the ground and divide large clumps as new growth begins to show. Some annuals that can handle cooler weather such as pansies violas, snapdragons, sweet alyssum dianthus and annual primrose can be planted outside at this time.

The unusually warm weather and how it affects our gardens has been the subject of much discussion. The February *Yard and Garden News* from the **University of Minnesota Extension** has a good article about *How this Warm Weather Will Affect My Plants*. While their Hardiness zones are clearly lower than ours (3a to 5a), there are some helpful tips about how warmer weather will affect your plants. You can find it at:

<https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-news/how-will-warm-winter-affect-my-plants>.

There is also some specific Missouri warmer-than-normal weather information (and more) in the **University of Missouri Extension's Garden Spade**. You can find the February issue at:

[https://i.emlfiles4.com/cmpdoc/9/4/0/0/9/1/files/23083\\_february-2024-garden-spade-newsletter.pdf](https://i.emlfiles4.com/cmpdoc/9/4/0/0/9/1/files/23083_february-2024-garden-spade-newsletter.pdf)

Some virtual programs of interest in March are the following:

March 5, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. *Dormant Fruit Tree Pruning*. Presented by **Seed St. Louis** through the **St. Louis County Public Library**. Register here: <https://slcl.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=362268>

March 5, 1:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. *Rain Garden Essentials: Design, Build, Plant*, presented by the **University of Illinois Extension** Register at: <https://registration.extension.illinois.edu/start/four-seasons-gardening-webinar-rain-garden-essentials-design-build-plant-3-5-24>

March 6, 2 p.m. – 3 p.m. *Native Plant Food Gardening Panel*, moderated by Jean Ponzi, the panel includes several distinguished experts. It is part of the **Partners for Native Landscaping** webinar series through the **St. Louis County Public Library**. You can register here:

<https://slcl.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=357363>

March 7, 11 a.m. -12 noon. *Reconnect to Nature*. Join Mignon Hemsley and Danuelle Doswell at the **Smithsonian Gardens** for an enlightening exploration of ancestral ties to houseplants, and a compelling case for embracing indoor greenery as a means to enhance mental and physical wellbeing. Register at:

[https://smithsonian.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_8IWGXhPkt-iy3qK-w8zGXA#/registration](https://smithsonian.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_8IWGXhPkt-iy3qK-w8zGXA#/registration).

March 12, 7 p.m. – 8 p.m. *Kill Your Lawn for the Birds*. Presented by Emily Connor, **Audubon Riverlands & Dan Pearson, St. Louis Audubon Society** through the **St. Louis County Library**. Register at:

<https://slcl.evanced.info/signup/EventDetails?EventId=357359>