

Gardening 101 – March



"Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas. " - Elizabeth Murray

Prune

- ✓ If wisteria haven't been pruned, do so now as it's the last chance before they can be pruned without bleeding sap
- ✓ New trees, hedges and climbers can all be continually pruned as needed
- ✓ The stems of willows and dogwood can be pruned to encourage new growth
- ✓ Roses should have their final prune by completely removing dead, damaged or diseased stems

Plant

- ✓ Sweet peas and broad beans can be sown once the soil reaches 6C. A better crop will be achieved if you use cloches to make the ground warmer
- ✓ Mustard and rocket can be sown early if the weather is warm and mild, however you need to be relatively certain the weather will keep up
- ✓ Lilies can be planted either in the ground, or in outdoor pots
- ✓ Now is the time to plant new hedges if desired
- ✓ Cut-and-come-again salads can be planted now but will need to be kept under cover until the weather is warmer

Harvest

- ✓ Any parsnips and leeks left in the ground need to be harvested now, as they won't last any longer
- ✓ Winter lettuces from the previous year should be ready to start harvesting
- ✓ Rhubarbs which haven't been forced will be ready for harvesting from mid-March

Miscellaneous

- ✓ Protect any new shoots from slugs by burying part-filled jars or bowls with beer around the shoots. Check and empty these daily.
- ✓ Open up greenhouse and conservatory vents and doors on warm days to circulate fresh air
- ✓ Hedges, shrubs and trees should be fed with an all-purpose fertiliser and then mulched to keep the nutrients in

Gardener's Advice

Encourage pollinators throughout the year

We encourage pollinators throughout the year, but you're unlikely to tempt many into a greenhouse in early March, so if you have indoor fruit trees like Nectarines or Apricots, make a pollinating brush (we use a cane and turkey feather), and tickle all the flowers on sunny days around midday, when the pollen will be driest.

www.thegardenimpressionists.wordpress.com
Julian



Prune and Remove

Late March is the perfect time to prune your shrub roses to keep them at a manageable size. Remove dead or diseased canes and thin the other canes out by one third. Then cut off the remaining canes by at least one third.

www.thegardendiaries.wordpress.com
Claire



Prune Trees

With the leaves off of deciduous trees you can see where to make good pruning cuts. Remove dead and diseased branches, crossing branches, and thin the crown with pruning cuts to create a better shape.

www.thegardendiaries.wordpress.com
Claire



Keep your tools sharp

Keep your pruning tools sharp with a sharpening stone, and clean the blade with a rag and rubbing alcohol. A sharper cut heals faster and a clean tool avoids transmitting disease from one plant to another.

www.thegardendiaries.wordpress.com
Claire



Snowdrops

Traditionally, snowdrops are planted 'in the green' after flowering, however this can damage the roots and weakens the bulb, meaning they fail to flower the following year. Best leave them until June time when they're dormant, or if you must move them now do it as quick as possible, water and feed with dilute high potash liquid fertilizer and reduce leaf size if showing signs of stress.

www.hartley-botanic.co.uk/featured-blogs/matthew-biggs
Matthew Biggs



How to Prepare Seed Beds

To prepare seed beds, cover the soil with clear polythene to warm the soil and encourage and weed seeds to germinate, as these can then be hoed off before sowing seeds. When you're ready to sow, remove the polythene and rake the soil to a fine texture, then remove weeds and debris.

www.hartley-botanic.co.uk/featured-blogs/matthew-biggs
Matthew Biggs



Top 10 Tips for March

	Now is the time to prune plants to remove frost damaged branches and encourage healthy spring growth in fruit trees and roses.
	Despite the warmer weather, seedlings will fare better if the ground is warmed with cloches before planting, and shoots are protected under cover while young.
	Slugs and pests will start to come in masses so putting traps and eco-friendly killers now will help to deter and prevent swarms in summer.
	Take advantage of the warmer weather by keeping vents and doors open in conservatory and greenhouses. This helps to prevent mould and stagnation.
	Now is the last chance to really dig up your soil and add fertiliser or compost before spring sowing. Doing so helps to turn up weeds and worms, as well as adding essential nutrients and breaking up clumps.
	Less hardy plants can be planted indoors to allow stronger growth before being transferred. This helps to avoid damage from waterlogged soil and cold spells.
	Winter and summer blooming shrubs can be pruned now, however wait until spring blooming shrubs have finished blooming to avoid cutting off next year's flowers.
	Houseplants can start to take more water as the days grow longer and temperatures grow higher. Keep the windows open at home when possible to circulate fresh air.
	Apply an organic pre-emergence herbicide on your lawn to prevent the first wave of annual weeds from cropping up.
	Weather in March can fluctuate, so best to plant less hardy seedlings later on when the warm weather is more likely to stick.