

February - Tips and Tasks

Top Priorities

Finish seed orders

 If you haven't finished ordering your seeds, February is a great time to do so. Select culivars that are resistant to the disease that you have been having a problem within your garden.

• Examine Equipment

Make sure your equipment is ready for the spring.
 Service your lawnmower. Clean and sharpen your clippers. Inspect tillers and sprayers.

Cold weather crops

 Start seedlings of cold season crops and hardy herbs such as radish, asparagus and early leafy greens.

Plant seeds

 Some seeds take 10-12 weeks to germinate before our average first frost date like Sweet peas, Geraniums and Impatiens. Now is a great time to get them started indoors.

Next Steps

Preparing for planting

 If your soils is especially poor, consider creating a raised bed or planting in grow bags or other containers.

Trees and shrubs

 Examine the base of trees and shrubs or damage from animals like voles and deer. Repair or remove any damage found.

Inspect

Look for spotted lanternfly egg masses and remove them. The entire egg mass is about 1.5 inches long and looks similar to a smudge of clay. Egg masses can be smashed with a stick, hand, or scraper card. Just make sure to apply firm pressure as you scrape so that individual eggs burst open. Please be safe while scraping and do not undertake dangerous climbing to reach them. Picture courtesy of Virginia Department of Forestry.



Better Impact

- Make a place for birds
 - Hang bird nesting boxes and clean any existing ones
 - Feed the birds with black oil sunflower seeds and suet cakes
- · Limit salt to melt ice
 - Use sand, ashes, or kitty litter to improve traction on icy areas.
- Healthy soil is covered soil
 - Plants living in the soil adds organic matter into the soil.
 When gardens are bare, keep the beds and soil covered to minimize the risk of erosion. Cover the soil with natural elements like shredded leaves, straw and wood chips or cover crops. Examples of winter cover crops include winter oat, cereal rye and crimson clover.



Resources

- *U. S. Department of Agriculture:
 https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2015/07/16/healthy-soil-covered-soil
- Check out our local Extension office at 8445 Thomas Nelson Hwy. Lovingston V 22949. They offer educational programs based on research and developed with input from local stakeholders.
- Visit us at RVCC- Rockfish Valley Community Center monthly on Saturday mornings. 190 Rockfish School Ln, Afton, VA 22920

