

## March 2006 Spring Chores

### The Snow Falls

The snow falls  
But the robin calls  
And the sun rolls up so red,  
Till the wind roars out of the  
    blue northwest  
And drives the clouds ahead.  
    Then leap, seas  
    And whistle, trees,  
And the merry old world shall spin,  
For Winter goes out,  
The dreary lout,  
And March comes rollicking in!

Poem from March 1924, Peoples Home Journal

Now that March has come “rollicking” in, it is time to get to work on those Spring Chores. After the long winter, though it was rather milder than usual, gardeners are ready to lay foundation for this season’s gardens. Spring is a very busy time of year so get organized & get to work! Here is a list to help you get started.

Inspect all your tools & if you did not do so last fall, clean & sharpen them. Oil ones that need it. Organize the tool shed for easy access to what tool you need so it can be found easily when you need it. Clean & sterilize all pots & containers that have been previously used. Soapy water with a little bleach will do the trick.

Walk around the landscape & choose areas for new beds. Or assess what you have & might like to change. Start preparation for the changes.

Decide some of the plants that you would like to start from seed & sow them indoors under lights. Take cuttings from plants you have overwintered to make more. Remember that many houseplants make good bedding plants.

Trimming & pruning should be done now. Cut away dead, broken & damaged branches on trees & shrubs. Stooling, the art of cutting back trees & shrubs to make them bushier, or with larger or more colorful foliage, can

be done now. Cut back foliage on ornamental grasses. Clean up beds & other areas. Do not unmulch beds too early. March & April weather is not always predictable.

It is not too early to do some edging, weeding & prevention of pests & diseases.

Start watering trees & shrubs that were planted late in the last season. Remember drip irrigation is best. Make sure everything is in working order whatever type of watering you choose.

Late March & early April is a good time to transplant most trees & shrubs.

The best time to fertilize is in the spring when plants begin growth. Products like Electra & Melorganite can be applied & spring rains will soak them in to the soil. Use up all your compost & get going on making more, turning the pile often.

Divide perennials for new plants, to share with fellow gardeners, or to donate to plant sales.

Water gardens should be cleaned now to get out debris that has accumulated over the winter. Do not start to feed fish until the water reaches 50 degrees, even if they beg for food, which mine always do.

If you feed the birds, clean the feeders & make any repairs that are needed from winter damage.

And, finally, start a garden journal. It is fun & very helpful in future seasons!

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