

Your March Gardening To-Do List

March weather can be quite varied here in the Tri-Lakes area. Warm and sunny one day, followed by freezing temperatures and snow the next. But it is the perfect time to start preparing for the season.

1. **PRUNE** any dead or broken branches on trees and shrubs. Winter can be harsh on trees and shrubs; inspect them for any snow damage and prune as needed. Flowering shrubs that bloom on new wood (Butterfly Bush, some Hydrangea and Clematis) can be pruned to the ground. All others should be pruned only to improve the plant's health or appearance.
2. **CLEAN** your garden tools if you didn't do it in the fall. Clean all dirt off metal parts with a stiff metal brush, wipe down with a rag, remove any rust with sandpaper then apply a light coating of vegetable oil. If you are reusing any pots from last year, wash them in hot soapy water then rinse with a solution of 1-part bleach to 10 parts water. Allow to air dry.
3. **SOW** wildflower seeds. March is an ideal time to sow wildflower seeds. Wait for a forecast of snow, then scatter the seeds over the area to be seeded and allow the snow to come and cover them. As the snow melts, the freezing at night and thawing during the day help work the seeds into the soil. The seeds will germinate in the spring when soil and air temperatures warm up.
4. **SEEDS** are readily available in all Garden Centers now. It's time to decide what you want to grow this year and buy your seeds early while the selection is still good.
5. **BIRDS** don't like dirty houses. If you have bird boxes, it is time to clean them out, and get them ready for this year's nesters.
6. **HOUSEPLANTS** need love too this time of year. Wipe down all leaves with a damp cloth or place them in the shower and give them a good drenching to get any dust off the leaves. Repot any that are root bound or have grown too big for their pot.



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