

This Month in the Garden

March Tasks

Spring comes this month. Yay! Here are some garden tasks that may need to be done in your garden in March.

- Put out your hummingbird feeder. Hummingbirds return to the Houston area about March 1 and will be here well into fall. Learn about [providing for hummingbirds](#). For a list of plants that attract hummingbirds, visit <https://bexar-tx.tamu.edu/earth-kind-horticulture/best-plants-for-bexar-county-south-texas/plants-for-attracting-hummingbirds-to-your-southcentral-texas-garden/>.
- You may not need to use your irrigation system yet but now is a good time to evaluate it. Is it hitting all the right spots? You can have a professional check your system or you can do a quick and easy test yourself. Just set out a bunch of empty cans (tuna or pet food cans work great for this) and run your system like normal. Does each can have about one inch of water for the week? If not, some adjustments are needed. Here are some [guidelines from Texas A&M on Lawn Water Management](#).
- If you have not done so already, make sure your vegetable beds are ready and start planting those spring vegetables, including lima beans, pole beans, corn, eggplant, kohlrabi, and tomatoes. Near the end of the month, you can also plant cucumber, muskmelon, peppers, pumpkin, and squash. Use this [EarthKind® spring vegetable planting guide](#) to help you know what you can plant and when.
- If your mower hasn't had any maintenance recently, you should consider at least getting new blades. Dull blades will tear your grass rather than making clean cuts. Also, make sure you are following [best safety practices in lawn maintenance](#). Also, give your yard a good weeding before you start mowing. Otherwise, if they are producing seeds, you will spread the weeds as you mow.
- Should you fertilize? That depends on the health of your soil. Now might be a good time to get a soil test. You can learn all about this at <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/>.
- If you need to fertilize your lawn, wait until you have mowed twice before doing so. Learn more about proper [lawn fertilization in Texas](#) from Texas A&M.
- If your soil test indicates you need to fertilize your garden beds, here is [some information on how to fertilize correctly](#).



- As your plants begin their growth season, you may want to check them for garden pests. Look for both the insects and the damage they cause. You will need to look at all parts of the plants to determine if there is a problem. If you see no damage, have a nice cool drink of water (Hydration is important for gardeners as well as gardens!) and a nap; otherwise, don't rush for the chemicals. Instead, use the [Earth-Kind® Integrated Pest Management](#) practices to help your plants stay healthy.



Marigolds

- Begin planting summer annuals like marigold, zinnias, celosia, pentas, and others. Learn how to [care for seasonal annuals](#).
- Bring your children into the garden with you. Studies have shown that children who help grow vegetables tend to eat more vegetables. Learn more this and other benefits of gardening with children [here](#).
- Prune evergreens and fall-blooming shrubs and trees unless they have freeze damage. If they have freeze damage, give them a chance to recover so you can determine what parts of the plants survived and what needs to be trimmed. Learn [how to assess and handle freeze damage](#).
- Avoid purchasing bare-root roses you may see on sale. The time for planting bare-root roses is past and the best time to plant roses is in the fall. There are many other beautiful plants you can plant instead. Use the [Earth-Kind Plant Selector](#) for ideas.

March Color in Fort Bend County

First, let's recognize our Texas Superstar® of the Month – [the Texas Bluebonnet](#) (*Lupinus texensis*). This cheery winter annual is frequently seen beside highways during the months of March through May. Here are some things every Texan should know about our Texas State Flower:

- Texas actually has five state flowers, which are all the varieties of Texas Bluebonnets.
- Bluebonnets come in a variety of colors, including blue, white, lavender, pink and maroon, but they are all correctly called bluebonnets.
- All bluebonnets have an icy white tip at the top of the spike of blooms.
- Texas Bluebonnets need full sun and prefer a well-drained soil.
- Bluebonnets are best planted in September and October.
- Bluebonnet sizes range from a dainty 2 - 7 inches up to spikes of 2 – 3 feet.



For more information about Texas Superstar plants, visit <http://texassuperstar.com/>.

Here are some other blooms to brighten your March. We can't wait to see some of these beauties in our gardens.

- [Daylily](#): Although each bloom lasts only one day (hence their name), each one sure makes a splash on that day. These little beauties come in a variety of colors and heights. Early bloomers will start in March but some late bloomers continue blooming through fall.
- [Texas Redbud](#): Watch for this small flowering tree with rose-purple (not red!) blossoms that come before the tree gets its new leaves in spring. The tree is slow-growing reaching a typical height of only 15 – 20 feet. Bonus: the Texas Redbud is drought tolerant.
- [Rhododendrons and azaleas](#): These are called America's favorite shrubs and will begin blooming in March. They are evergreen and come in many different colors. However, be careful of the variety because not all tolerate heat well.
- [Indian Blanket](#): This lovely orange wildflower is often seen in fields blooming alongside Texas Bluebonnets. Like the bluebonnet, it is a self-seeding annual that has a long blooming season.
- [Plumbago \(*Plumbago auriculata*\)](#): Now is the time to plant this tender perennial with lovely blue or white flowers. It is both a Texas Superstar and an Earth-Kind plant and will bloom until winter frost. It prefers some protection from the afternoon shade in our area. It can grow to a height of 3 to 4 feet and a width of 5 feet.



Daylilies



Plumbago

The Fort Bend Master Gardeners demonstration gardens are currently undergoing renovation but feel free to visit our demonstration gardens for ideas. We do request that you keep your distance from Master Gardeners as they work in the gardens (for their safety and to make sure they keep working). For more information, look on our website at <https://fbmg.org/demonstration-gardens/>.