



## Get ready to do cold weather garden chores

**F**ebruary is the last month to take care of chores that need to be performed in the dormancy of winter. There are many items that should be accomplished before your plants wake up with the warmth of spring.

I have talked with many of you about citrus and how it made out in all the cold weather. I've had a chance to see a few trees now, and my recommendation is still to wait. Don't do any cold damage pruning at this point. Wait and see what actually happens once we start to get growth in the spring. In general, I've seen a few limes and they are damaged; the lemons look better but have some damage, and the Satsumas look pretty good, however some leaves have been burned.

Fertilize citrus in February. The recommended rate is to apply 1 pound of 13-13-13 fertilizer per year of age per tree up to a maximum of 12 pounds. If you want to use 8-8-8, the rate would be 1\_ pounds per year of age up to a maximum of 18 pounds. Remember that a pint of fertilizer weighs 1 pound.

You can also fertilize your landscape trees in February. The simple method is to use 2 pounds of 8-8-8 per inch diameter of the tree. Apply this amount under the canopy of the tree. If you have a 23 inch water oak it would be fertilized at a rate of 46 pounds of fertilizer, and a 3 inch crape myrtle would only get 6 pounds.

Fire blight is an ugly disease that gets on both fruiting pears and ornamental pears like Bradford and Cleveland Flowering pears. It is a condition that shows up later in the year as die back on the last 8 to 12 inches of the branches. The leaves turn black and cling to the branches.

The bacteria overwinters at the base of the blighted twigs and is spread by bees during blooming and by splashing rain. The control is to spray the blooms three times with streptomycin or copper fungicides. Spray the first time when about 5% of the blooms are open, again at 20-30% bloom and finally at 50% bloom. This is our only opportunity for control so be ready.

Valentines Day is the day to remember your sweetheart, but it also reminds me to put out the crab grass preventer. Crabgrass is an annual weed that comes back from seed every year. So if you had it in your lawn last year, you will have it again this year unless you treat.

The chemical to use is a pre-emerge herbicide that has the active ingredient dithiopyr. You can find it in retail products such as Hi-Yield Dimension, Greenlight Crabgrass Preventer 2 and Sta-Green Crab-Ex. Applied in mid February it will prevent seeds from emerging and will even kill small crabgrass seedlings. Try to do this in mid February for best results but be sure to complete the task by the end of February.

Control scale now on plants like camellia, fatsia, euonymus and citrus before the leaves emerge. Dormant oil can be used now and will even work better if you add

Malathion.

Lichen can also be controlled now if you find it unsightly. It is the greenish to gray color moss like material that grows on the branches and trunks of ornamental plants and trees. Use Bordeaux mixture or other fixed copper fungicides and spray before the new leaves emerge. Lichen are not parasitic and do not need to be controlled unless there

is a very large population.

Get busy, spring will be here before you know it!

*For more information on these or related topics contact Kenny Sharpe, LASUAg Center Country Agent at 225-686-3020 or visit the website at [www.lsuagcenter.edu/livingston](http://www.lsuagcenter.edu/livingston).*

NORTH OAKS HEALTH SYSTEM PRESENTS:

## 4<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL Heart 101 SCREENING EVENT

Saturday, Feb. 20, 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.



- Cholesterol and glucose screenings
- Blood pressure check
- Heart risk assessment
- Consultation with a cardiologist

Registered participants will learn about the effects of heart disease and the role lifestyle changes may have in preventing heart damage. North Oaks Specialty Clinic Cardiologist **Bruce Iteld, MD**, will meet with each attendee to discuss screening results.



Bruce Iteld, MD

**Appointments are required, and space is limited.**

**To register for this free event, call**

**North Oaks Specialty Clinic at (225) 664-9618.**



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