

Garden Calendar

(provided by Cornell Cooperative Extension, Putnam County)

March

- Prune back Ornamental grasses and Butterfly bushes (*Buddleia* sp.) to the height of four to eight inches high. This also applies to Russian Sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*.) and Blue Mist Shrub (*Caryopteris clandonensis*) which is only marginally hardy in our area.
- Prune winter-damaged trees and shrubs, removing branches broken and bent by snows and heavy ice loads.
- Prune apple and pear trees before buds swell. Prune peaches and plums when flower buds begin to show color. Prune off all suckers and water sprouts. Prune out weak (narrow) crotches and direct sunlight into the center of the tree. Branches which grow parallel to the ground fruit most abundantly, so prune with this in mind.
- Mark safe plant-out date on your calendar (May 15th in Putnam County) then work backwards from that date to determine when you will start which seeds. Seeds of pansies, calendula, snapdragons, leeks, onions, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, head lettuce, peppers, and other plants that need a few weeks head start can be planted indoors under a fluorescent lamp or in a bright window.
- Wait until the soil has drained of ice and snowmelt and can be easily worked before planting peas and spinach outside. Poorly drained soils and excessively cold temperatures can result in poor germination and rotting seeds.
- Take your mower in for a tune-up. Sounds early? It is, but you'll beat the crowds who show up on the first sunny days of May!