

February Is The Time To

- plant sweetpeas and broad windsor bean seeds outside around the end of February
- if you haven't done so, get seeds, flats, starter mix and sow cool weather crops indoors - broccoli, lettuce, kale, early cabbage, onions and leeks
- if you have a greenhouse or cold frame - sow spinach, lettuce, radishes, carrots and onions for early season fresh salad
- keep a check on weeds in the garden. Get out and weed early so they don't take over, they are easy to pull when the soil is moist
- check for snails and slugs as you do the weeding
- dormant spray fruit trees, roses and ornamental deciduous shrubs (**not evergreens**) when the weather person gives us a break of 12 to 24 hours with no rain
- plant trees and shrubs you didn't get around to planting last fall (well it was cold and wet then) do this when the ground is not frozen
- complete pruning of fruit trees, flowering cherries and shrubs to shape. **DO NOT PRUNE SHRUBS THAT FLOWER IN THE FIRST 5 MONTHS OF THE YEAR (Do them after flowering)**
- apply dolomite lime to lawns to green them up
- plant tuberous begonias indoors for a burst of colour this summer. Use 1/2 peat and 1/2 sand/soil mixture
- power rake thickly matted, neglected lawns to remove thatch build-up and moss
- aerate lawn with a garden fork or rent an aerator. This lets air and water down into the soil for better lawn growth
- sprinkle fine ashes from the woodstove or fireplace around fruit trees or flowering shrubs to increase bloom (large trees - 1 to 2 cups, small shrubs 1/4 cup)
- lift and divide perennials on a fine day when spring is in the air (**NOT WHEN THE GROUND IS FROZEN**)
- prune roses - see Question & Answer section
- check houseplants for aphids, whiteflies, scale, spider mites and fungus gnats (black flies like fruit flies) These are very easy to control if you stop infestation early
- when arranging fresh cut tulips in a vase, only fill the vase about 1/3 full of water. Tulips have a drinking problem which makes them suck in all the water and finish blooming much earlier
- check Colorado blue spruce for aphids. They start sucking on the needles in February and damage does not show until April or May when damaged needles turn brown and fall. Use Safer's insecticidal soap spray, use a soil drench of Lagon mixed at label directions or for a novel idea - vacuum the tree with a shop vac. (It will have the neighbours puzzled for weeks!)
- if we get another blast of winter shake the snow from shrubs, trees and hedges to prevent wet snow from weighing down and snapping branches
- colour up the garden with primula in protected spots - like outside the front door