

## February

- If you think back over the yard work of last year and feel it took too much time and effort, an analysis of your site and the suitability of your plantings is in order.
- Avoid walking on grass or ground covers when they are frozen. The frozen leaves are brittle and easily damaged. Ajuga is especially sensitive.
- Handle seed packets carefully. Rubbing the outside to determine how many seeds are inside can break the protective seed coat and reduce germination.
- Pinch off early blooms from developing pansies to encourage plants to branch and form more buds.
- Check stored bulbs, tubers and corms. Discard any that are soft or diseased.
- Don't remove mulch from perennials too early. A warm day may make you think spring is almost here, but there may be more cold weather to come.
- Try forcing branches of the following shrubs; winter honeysuckle, fragrant viburnum, Japanese andromeda; mountain andromeda, and native trees such as dogwood, spicebrush, serviceberry and redbud as well as azalea, rhododendron and mountain laurel. For something unusual try red maple, buckeye, birch, hickory, larch or oak branches. Also try forsythia, pussy willow, quince or spirea.
- Broadleaf evergreens can be pruned before new growth begins in spring. This will enable new growth to cover cut surfaces and exposed inner branches.
- Late winter is the time to prune many deciduous trees. Look over your plants now and remove dead, dying, unsightly parts of the tree, sprouts growing at or near the base of the tree trunk, crossed branches and V-shaped crotches.
- Start building your supply of gardening aids, like plastic milk jugs for hot caps and orange juice cans to make guards to stop cutworms.
- Now is a good time to transplant deciduous native plants if the ground is not too wet or too frozen.