

## **Haddam Garden Club**

February 2018 Garden Blog Article

By Cindy Tillson



### **Anticipating Spring**

It's hard to come up with things to do in February but I have a few ideas. You can sit by the fire and read another good book, do a jigsaw puzzle (of flowers?), go south, go to the CT Flower show Feb 22-24 or tackle a few little garden related projects.

If you chose the latter, you can start by cleaning and sharpening your pruning tools.

Next, you could prune the fruit trees. This is best done now during dormancy with sharp pruning tools. Proper pruning should result in a structurally sound tree with balanced, well-spaced branches. The goal is a healthy, productive tree of a certain shape. That shape may be determined by the variety or by you. Older, overgrown trees benefit from renovation pruning, a much heavier prune than is done annually. Hiring or consulting an arborist can go a long way toward maintaining healthy fruit trees.

Dead or diseased wood can be removed anytime and should be removed promptly when discovered from all trees and shrubs. This alone can make a big difference in the health and appearance of a tree.

You can check on your stored flower tubers and toss those that have deteriorated.

Order your seeds if you haven't already. Stockpile your seed starting supplies. Make sure the heat and lights work and that the containers are clean and sanitized.

Bring geraniums out of storage, cut them back by half, water and set them in a bright, cool window.

Take a walk. Listen to the birds. You might find snowdrops, witch hazel or Hellebores in bloom. While you're at it, cut some forsythia, serviceberry or pussywillows to bring in the house to force. A cutting from the apple tree might work, too. When you get back in the house, fill a bucket or sink with water as warm as your hands can stand it. Fill the container you are going to keep them in too. To this add floral preservative or 1 Tbsp Listerine/quart of water. This promotes hydration and retards bacterial growth. Under water, recut the stems about 2 inches higher at an angle. Plunge immediately into the next container. (Each time they come in contact with the oxygen, they need to be re-cut underwater). Change the water and add new preservative once a week.

Enjoy. Persevere. Spring will come. It always does.

On February 14, Karla Dalley will visit the garden club and give a talk on "Spring Awakening: what is appropriate and what is not." Her talk will begin around 11:30 at the Community Center in Higganum. The public is welcome to attend.