

Garden Column for the Salisbury Post  
Darrell Blackwelder  
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February seems to be a transitional month for many home gardeners. Many are preparing for spring maintenance chores later this month and into March. Below are a few questions I have received during the past two weeks that may be of interest to home gardeners in Rowan County.

Question: Is now the time to prune grapes? Answer: Grapes, both bunch type and muscadine types can be pruned now through March. Late pruning may cause the plant to bleed, but the bleeding usually does not impede growth or grape production. I have pruned them with leaves on them before with no apparent damage, but I would not recommend late pruning.

Question: Can I apply a weed and feed fertilizer now to my lawn and reseed later? Answer: Be careful and do not apply fertilizers with herbicides now if you plan to reseed later in the spring. Both pre-emergence and post-emergence herbicides can delay or prevent fescue seed germination, especially pre-emergence herbicides.

Question: Can I control chickweed in lawns now? Answer: Yes, chickweed can be controlled if the plant is not blooming or too large. Post emergence herbicide blends containing 2,4-D and dicamba(Trime, Weed-B-Gon, etc.) work well early in the growing season when the weeds are small.

Question: Is now the time to apply dormant oils to my fruit trees? Answer: Yes, dormant spray oils can be applied to fruit trees and vines in late winter to control mites, scales and some fungal diseases. The best time apply these pesticides is when temperatures are above 40 degrees and below 65 degrees. Avoid applications when buds have swelled and are showing color.

Question: My pansies look pretty bad right now. Can I fertilize them now? Answer: Pansies need to be dead headed and fertilized now, but don't fertilize them during unseasonably warm weather-above 60 degrees. Fertilize them in cool weather

with liquid bloom booster fertilizers. Avoid applying fertilizers during brief periods of warm weather. Unseasonably warm weather promotes aggressive growth; pansies usually stretch and become weak.

Question: What is the best way to control bermuda grass in my garden? Answer: the best way to control bermuda grass in a garden is to kill the weed outright, usually in late August or during the peak growing season, usually when it is hot and the plant is aggressively growing. Till the garden under in the fall and plant a cover crop. Cover crops reduce weeds in the spring and will help control the weed.

Darrell Blackwelder is an agricultural agent in charge of horticulture with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service in Rowan County. For archived garden columns or other information, visit the Rowan County Master Gardener web site at [www.rowanmastergardener.com](http://www.rowanmastergardener.com) , e-mail [Darrell\\_Blackwelder@ncsu.edu](mailto:Darrell_Blackwelder@ncsu.edu)