

Garden Column for La Voz
February 14, 2007
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The weather can't seem to make up its mind these days. March is always a month of uncertainty about the weather. Erratic weather confuses us about gardening chores, especially pruning. Below are a few questions I normally receive in early March.

Question: Can I prune my hollies back really hard now? Answer: Mid-March is when I would recommend drastic cuts on hollies, boxwoods and other evergreen shrubs. However, light pruning to shape these plants can be done any time of the year.

Question: Can I still prune my peach trees now? Answer: Yes, peaches and most other fruit trees including grapes can still be pruned at this date. Excessive bleeding may occur on grapes, but they normally recover with no problem

Question: Is it too early to plant a vegetable garden? Answer: It's too early to plant some warm season vegetables such as tomato and squash; however, there is still time to plant cool season vegetables such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, turnips, radishes, potatoes, and other cool season crops. Use transplants whenever possible with these crops for quicker start.

Question: Can I plant potatoes that we eat from the grocery store? Answer: You can, but your results will not be as good if you had used seed potatoes. Seed potatoes are treated for diseases and are true to type. If you're going to go to all the trouble to plant, then spend a little more money and use seed potatoes.

Question: When can I take my houseplants outdoors? Answer: The last frost free date for this area is around April 15, however, I would wait until May 1 to take house plants out doors. I have observed snow showers in mid April. Even though we may have some warm weather, its best to wait until the threat of frost is over.

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