

## Farmer Fred - February Garden Chores for the Central Valley, Foothills & Bay Area

# Tend to your summer shade garden this week. Start colorful tuberous begonias indoors now. Move them outside in late March.

# Early February is a good time to start seeds of tomatoes and peppers indoors.

# Remove old flowers on camellias to reduce the chance of petal blight.

# Place three inches of mulch around trees and shrubs to keep weeds under control. Keep the mulch at least an inch away from the trunks and stems to avoid rot.

# Azaleas in bloom are arriving at stores now. Head to your favorite garden center for best selection.

# Mid-February is the best time to apply your final (or only) application of dormant spray for peach leaf curl, brown rot and scale on your stone fruit trees.

# Asparagus shoots are starting to pop up now. They'd appreciate a feeding of a balanced fertilizer.

# Blooming plants for your Valentine's Day sweetheart include azaleas, cyclamen, tulips, hydrangeas and orchids.

# Finish pruning your roses by mid-February.

# Dahlia bulbs are available in area nurseries. For best selection, choose them now then plant them in the garden in late March for a rich array of color and different flower forms.

# According to several nursery people, now is a good time to transplant azaleas and camellias.

# Snails will soon begin their yearly trek to your tender, young foliage. Look for them hiding beneath plants and lumber piles now before they get started munching.

# Before planting your flower and vegetable beds, mix in compost to help condition the soil.

# Despite the warmer days, it's still winter. Leave freeze-damaged leaves on plants for a couple more weeks, to protect and insulate any new growth from a March cold snap.

# Tuberous begonia bulbs are available at nurseries now. For a sure winner, select the largest and healthiest looking bulbs.

# It's not too late to plant winter and spring blooming annuals such as pansies, snapdragons, calendulas and alyssum.

# Sharpen lawn mower blades and change the mower's oil before lawn cutting becomes a weekly job.

# Eliminate mosquito breeding areas in your yard before the buzzing begins in earnest. Empty any rain-filled containers around the yard.