

TONY'S TIPS

FEBRUARY

It's been a fairly kind season so far and I hope that trend continues. Although you may not feel like doing much in the garden, it is a time when much should be done to facilitate the long term attractiveness and wellbeing of your garden.

We're in the middle of Crepe Myrtle season (yes they prefer to be planted mid-summer instead of mid-winter) & we have traditional taller tree type Crepe Myrtles as well as the dwarf shrubby ones however this month also sees the release again of intermediate Crepe Myrtles. The "Magic" series had a limited release last year & I planted one in my garden with much success. They are 2-3 metres in height, more shrubs than trees & come in Coral Pink, Plum & Purple. Their foliage is a deep green to burgundy, their flowers bright & bold & their hardiness unquestioned. All Crepe Myrtles are drought tolerant but struggle with wet feet, so plant up on a mound of improved soil to ensure good drainage & a happy plant.



Purple Magic



Coral Magic



Plum Magic

THINGS TO DO IN FEBRUARY

- If it is hot, water regularly. I know that most small to medium plants can't store the water & most soils have poor water retention, so in hot weather I water my plants morning & night for 10 or 20 seconds each, rather than 5mins or 10mins once or twice a week. On really hot days, I or my family will water over the plant's foliage in the middle of the day (again for seconds) to cool the plant, de-stress the plants & lower it's body temperature. It's the same as you splashing water on your face on a hot day! Water on foliage on hot days does not burn leaves; it cools the plant.
- This is the last month to prune most long flowering plants back moderately and to still get a recovery flush of growth and flower before Winter: i.e. Prune Roses, Salvias, Catmint, Gauras, Fuchsias, Leggy Petunias and Lavenders and Hydrangeas if you haven't pruned them already. Also hedges of Pittosporum, Murraya, Lily Pillies etc
- Whilst our summer vegies are producing happily now & are being encouraged with food, water & mulch, it is time to start thinking of cool climate vegies. It is the month for planting brussel sprouts, beetroot, broccoli, cabbage, leek, lettuces, carrots, spring onions, sliver beet & spinach from seed or seedling to ensure the supply through Winter & Spring. Our first batch of certified garlic will be in the nursery early February. It seems early but our grower says early garlic in frost free zones is good garlic.
- **PEST WATCH!** Nature is having a great year – both plants & animals so beware of the following pests & apply the correct solution. Mites are a tiny member of the spider family that like to breed quickly & in numbers can quickly stop a plant in its tracks. Roses have been in some cases severely affected. Look for tell-tale dry, speckled leaves & fine webbing. Prune first; then treat comprehensively with Mavrik no more than twice, then follow up with regular sprays of Natrasoap which is a suffocant, so it must be applied over, under & all around the foliage of the plant. Water over plant regularly between sprays to inhibit the breeding of the dry loving mites. Caterpillars have become an issue in many gardens. Spray with Mavrik, Success or Pyrethrum at dusk for best results. Lawn Beetle Grub. Dead patches in Lawn, Magpies or Crows on or digging in your lawn. These are usually indicators of Lawn Beetle Grub which is a fat creamy white grub, with a darker head that feed on lawn roots – particularly Kikuyu & Buffalo. Safest treatment is a water-on application of Confidor according to directions or easiest is the Lawn Builder with Grub control.
- Sasanqua Camellias have already set their flower buds for early & mid-Autumn flowering, so prune lightly (5% prune) to maintain shape but feed & water well to encourage retention of all of those flowers & to encourage the formation of new ones that will last through into Winter.

Visit me in store for even more tips!
Regards, Tony



We're getting very excited in the gift shop with the gift fair just 3 short weeks away. Once again, Melissa and Janine are ready for 4 days of solid shopping to ensure the gift shop shelves are overflowing again.

In the meantime, there are still some great gift ideas to tempt you. Melissa has recently returned from a trip to India where she managed to source some great new suppliers. Come in and see the exquisite range of pure cotton Indian quilts, throws, robes and scarves. Stocks are limited, so be quick. These gorgeous items feature the vibrant colour blocking fabrics that India is famous for.

We're also extremely excited about our beautiful new sterling silver jewellery featuring semi precious and precious stones. Choose from amethyst, lapis, garnet, crystal quartz, ruby and emerald to name just a few. We have earrings, necklaces, bangles and a huge variety of rings all made from solid 925 grade sterling silver. Come in and visit us soon and let one of the girls help you... *Melissa, Janine, Vivienne, Marita, Paula and Sophie*

