March 2013 Hilltop Garden Tips

- Finish up on pruning your bush roses early this month. Pruning is done to improve the appearance of the plant, to remove dead or diseased wood, to let in sunlight and air to the center of the plant and to control the quantity and quality of the flowers produced.
- This month early season vegetable gardening goes into full swing. Consider planting the following this month: Asparagus, Pak Choi, Lettuce, Carrots, Kohlrabi, Radish, Cauliflower, Cabbage, Broccoli, Mustard, Turnips, Swiss Chard, Beets, Irish Potatoes, Onions, Spinach, and English Peas.
- Plant a tree for Arbor Day! Arkansas celebrates Arbor Day on the third Monday of March each year, which is March 19 this year.
- Plant your small fruit plants, grape vines and fruit trees before the buds break. Providing summer water needs is critical for fruit production. Install a drip system for best results.
- Finish pruning fruit trees early this month. You can still apply dormant oil on your trees if you haven’t this winter. It’s too late to apply a fungicide to prevent peach leaf curl. This is done before spring bud swell.
- Prune cane producing shrubs like abelia, mahonia and nandina this month if needed. Remove 2 to 3 of the older taller canes to keep these shrubs vigorous and within bounds.
- Overgrown shrubs can be severely pruned this month (not needled evergreens).
- Spray your apple and pear trees with streptomycin for control of fireblight while the trees are in bloom. Make 3 applications: start of bloom, full bloom, and start of flower petal fall.
- Apply crabgrass pre-emergence herbicides to your lawn late this month to help control crabgrass in the turf. The crabgrass preventers containing fertilizer can be applied to fescue lawns, but not to Bermuda. Bermuda grass will not be ready to absorb applied nutrients until late April to early May, so the fertilizer applied now will only be used by existing weeds or runs off into our surface water. Apply these summer weed preventers by March 15.
- You still have time to divide many perennials like daylily, shasta daisy, gaillardia and coreopsis this month.
- Seed fescue in thin or bare spots if not done in September. Fall planted fescue has a better chance of surviving its first hot summer.