



## What to do in the Garden in February

By Cindy Stockett

This has been a very warmish January but February has yet to reveal her cards. If the dry days continue there is a lot to do in the garden this month.

-trim back hellebore leaves from last year. If any have black spots on the leaves don't compost them. It is a fungal disease, Botrytis. You can sprinkle some granular lime around the hellebores to raise the pH of the soil, which discourages Botrytis. By removing last year's leaves it also shows off the hellebore flowers better. Now if you don't have any hellebores, there are lots to choose from in the nurseries. So be sure to plant at least one...they bring such cheer this time of the year. Hellebores are perennial plants so they return every year. They are tolerant of a wide range of growing conditions but prefer a rich, moist soil with

some dappled shade



-trim away leaves of epimediums, as the flowers will be appearing soon and the leaves can hide the flowers.

-if you have any primulas (perennial types) trim away last years leaves to show off the emerging flowers. Last year's leaves are usually much bigger than the new leaves. This is also a good time to pick up some in the nursery and they make a nice companion to Hellebores.

-continue to cut back dead perennials and deciduous grasses, generally clean up beds without walking in them as the soil is still pretty wet. Cleanup will also remove hiding places for slugs and their eggs.

-this is also a good time to get a jump on weeding shotweed. You will saving yourself a lot of future work if you can weed out these plants before they go to seed (and spread everywhere)

-if you want to be adventurous you can begin pruning roses (I only suggest this if you have way too many roses like me. ) It is early but mine are already starting to set buds and leaf out. A good cleanup of last year's leaves (on the ground and on the shrub) will help reduce black spot.

-if temps continue to remain mild, be on the lookout for slugs, especially around emerging hostas. This is also a good time to lift and divide any large hostas if you want to increase plants.

-nurseries will be getting trees in this month. Do some research on a good variety for your garden space. It is an investment in the future, to plant one.

-this is also a good time to order bare root berry plants for the garden, Raintree Nursery and One Green World are two good mail orders sources.

It many still be officially winter but Spring is in my heart.

Stay safe, stay well, wear your mask.