



## Lawn Burweed

Lawn burweed (*Soliva pterosperma*) is more commonly known as sticker weed due to the cluster of tiny seeds with spines that stick into tender flesh of bare feet, knees, and hands that may come in contact with them at seed maturity. Lawn burweed is best described as a low-growing, freely-branched winter annual having leaves that are twice divided into narrow segments or lobes similar to the appearance of tiny carrot leaves. The real identifier is the small rosette button fruit clusters that form down in the leaf axils once the plant reaches a reproductive stage. At maturity, usually late spring and into summer, is when we endure their pain from the dried sharp spines.



If you did not apply a pre-emergent herbicide earlier this fall to control winter annual weeds, and you had lawn burweed in your lawn last summer, then you most likely have them again now. You will have to endure their painful spines for another summer each time you walk barefoot on your lawn unless you take action soon to control them. Once the fruiting clusters have formed and produced the tiny seeds and spines, killing the plants will eliminate the weeds, but the tiny spines and seed will remain to inflict pain for another summer.

Post-emergent options will be dictated by the primary turf species found within your home lawn. Products containing atrazine provide excellent control in centipede and St. Augustine lawns, while mix products containing 2,4-D, Dicamba, and MCPP/Mecoprop will provide good control. For most southern lawns, excluding bahiagrass, metsulfuron methyl can be a viable solution. For more products and information about turf tolerance to herbicides and more options, please refer to Publication #1322 "Establish and Manage Your Home Lawn". Also, **fully read and obey all label directions and instructions** no matter which product you choose.

Extension publication #1532 "[Weed Control Guidelines for Mississippi](#)" provides a list of several good post-emergent herbicide choices that will control this weed along with most other winter annual weed species, but timing is critical.



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## Events for February 2020

<u>Hancock County Events</u>	
8	<b>Junior Master Gardener Meeting</b> — 9:00 a.m. Bay Saint Louis Community Garden.
12	<b>Pruning Plants for the Home Landscape</b> — 2:00 p.m. Pass Christian Public Library. This program will include information on when and how to prune fruit and ornamental plants in the home landscape. Presented by Dr. Christian Stephenson, Hancock County Extension Agent.
18	<b>Garden Talk</b> — 10:00 a.m. Kiln Public Library. Meet other gardeners to discuss, and share, favorite plants for the home landscape. This program is led by Kiln Public Library Branch Manager Nel DuComb.
<u>Harrison County Events</u>	
5	<b>Hancock/Harrison Forestry and Wildlife Association monthly meeting</b> — 11:00 a.m. until Noon. Sherry's Country Kitchen located at 20180 Highway 53 in Gulfport, MS. All Hancock/Harrison CFWA members are welcome to attend.
<u>Jackson County Events</u>	
10	<b>2020 Master Gardener Training Class Registration Due for Jackson County</b> — Training courses will be held at the Jackson County Extension office on Tuesdays and Thursdays February 25 – March 31. Contact Evan Ware for more information <a href="mailto:evan.ware@msstate.edu">evan.ware@msstate.edu</a> or 228-769-3047.
24	<b>Jackson County Forestry Association Meeting</b> — 6:00 p.m. at Vancleave HUD Building, 5125 Ballpark Rd. Shaun Tanger with the Coastal Research and Extension Center will present on taxes. Meeting sponsored by the Mississippi Forestry Association. RSVP by February 17 to <a href="mailto:evan.ware@msstate.edu">evan.ware@msstate.edu</a> or call/text 662-769-9757.
<u>Lamar County Events</u>	
14	<b>Arbor Day Tree Give-A-Way</b> — 9:00 a.m. at Lamar County Multipurpose Arena.
19	<b>Pine Belt Master Gardener training class registration deadline</b> — 5:00 p.m. Contact the Lamar County Extension Service office for more information. 601-794-3910.
20	<b>Improved Seedling Genetics with ArborGen by Forrest/Lamar CFA</b> — 6:00 p.m. at the Forrest County Extension Office.
<u>Pearl River County Events</u>	
4	<b>Pearl River-Stone County Forestry Association Meeting</b> — 12:00 noon. The Sawmill Restaurant, 2205 Highway 49, Wiggins, MS.
7	<b>2020 Master Gardener Training Class Registration Due for Pearl River County</b> — The classes will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays at the Pearl River County Extension Service office in Poplarville. Call 601-403-2280 for more information.
11	<b>Pearl River County Master Gardener Meeting</b> — 12:30 p.m. at the home of Eileen Hollander.
13	<b>Southeast District Master Gardener Meeting</b> — Forrest County Extension Service office.
17	<b>Heart Health</b> — 11:00 a.m. at the Senior Center of South Pearl River County. Dawn Vosbein, Extension Agent.

# Garden Calendar: February



## Planning

- Decide on plants you would like to have in your spring garden and flower beds.
- Consider buying new plants that you have not tried before.
- Determine how many seed packets you need. Remember to order extra seed if you are planning to replant for a second crop of flowers after the heat of the summer.

## Planting

- Plant cold weather annuals: Nasturtiums, Pansies, Snapdragons, English Daisies, Sweet William, and Calendulas
- Start cold weather vegetables in cold frame: Broccoli, Cauliflower, Onion sets, English Peas, Kale, Carrots, Collards, Beets, Radishes, Kohlrabi, and Chinese Cabbage.
- Plant Asparagus in prepared beds.
- Start seeds of Herbs indoors for transplant outdoors.
- February is an ideal time to set out Dogwoods. Planting site should be well drained and plants should be planted shallowly. Dogwoods prefer acidic soil.
- Broad-leaved Evergreens such as Magnolia, Holly, and Photinia can be set out at this time.
- Plant new Roses, or move old Roses soon after February 15.

## Fertilizing

- Roses -- Apply top-dressing of organic fertilizer under thick layer of compost or rotted manure.
- Fertilize Trees and Shrubs (not spring Flowering Shrubs) if not fertilized in January.

## Pest Control

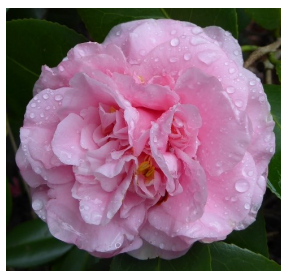
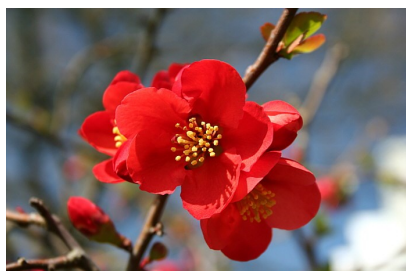
- Spray garden with dormant spray. This will kill many eggs and spores of insects and diseases. Do not apply if temperatures will dip below freezing within 4 hours of application.

## Pruning

- Prune Evergreens for size and shape. Cut out dead wood of Flowering Shrubs. Dispose of clippings to prevent disease or insect spread.
- Prune Hydrangeas during the last week in the month.

## In Bloom

- Crocus, early Daffodils, Helleborus, Hyacinth, Pansies, Scilla, Snowdrop, Snowflake, Violet, Camellia, Forsythia, Flowering Quince, Loropetalum, Pussy Willow, Thumbergia Spirea, and Winter Jasmine.





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## Correct Pruning Provides for Thriving Landscape Plants

There's been a lot of attention paid to the matter of pruning, especially with the crime against horticulture known as "crape murder." But we're also getting closer to early spring, when many gardeners want to tidy up their landscape plants.

First, why do we need to prune landscape plants? The reasons can be condensed to a few purposes: to maintain a specific size and/or form, to remove growth that has become unruly or to prevent a plant from interfering with the home structure or utilities. And, pruning also encourages new growth so timing is essential depending on what type of plant you need to prune.

The type of plant determines the pruning strategy. Broadleaf evergreens like hollies, boxwoods, azaleas and camellias can tolerate everything from light pruning (like tip pruning) to very aggressive renovation pruning, because the branches have structures called latent buds that will generate new growth. Narrowleaf evergreens, such as junipers, arborvitae and pines, tolerate light pruning or shaping but won't recover if severely pruned. They don't have the latent buds to produce new growth. Deciduous shrubs, like the broadleaf evergreens, will tolerate light to aggressive pruning.

Many questions about pruning revolve around landscape shrubs that produce beautiful flowers. Pruning these at the wrong time can ruin the colorful show. We can distill the answer down to one question: Is this a spring-flowering or summer-flowering tree or shrub? Flower buds on spring-flowering plants like azaleas and Indian hawthorn are formed the previous year. This means any pruning done late in the year probably removes next year's flowers. Prune spring-flowering plants immediately after the colorful show ends. I like to use July 4 as the pruning deadline for spring-flowering plants. For summer-flowering plants, crape myrtle and landscape roses, such as Knockout or Drift, the flower buds develop on the current season's growth. Pruning these plants in the spring does not impact their flowering.

One type of plant that causes a lot of confusion is hydrangea. The bigleaf hydrangea, which has flowers that change colors depending on soil pH, and oakleaf hydrangea flower on "old wood" from flower buds formed the previous year. Prune these each year right after flowering by removing about one-third of the stems to control the plant size. For more information on pruning, see our publication, *Pruning Landscape Plants*, at [www.extension.msstate.edu](http://www.extension.msstate.edu) or call your local Extension office.



Flower buds develop on the current season's growth for summer-flowering plants like crape myrtle. Pruning in the spring does not impact their flowering. (Photo by MSU Extension Service/Gary Bachman)



Prune spring-flowering plants such as azaleas immediately after bloom. Flower buds on these plants form the previous year, so pruning late in the year removes next year's flowers. (Photo by MSU Extension Service/Gary Bachman)



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## Nematodes in the Home Garden

Nematodes are a group of slender worms, too small to be seen without magnification. Most plants have some nematodes associated with them either within the plant or feeding by puncturing plant roots with their spear-like mouthparts. Nematodes may cause damage to plants including malformation of flowers, leaves, stems, and roots, while others affect the ability of plants to transport nutrients. Nematode feeding can also allow for entry of other pathogens, increasing the damage done to plants. Nematode damage is more severe when plants are under other forms of stress.

Plants affected by nematodes show symptoms like those caused by inadequate water, poor nutrition, or root rots. Plants may be stunted or show yellowing of foliage. Plants may also wilt under warm conditions even when soil moisture is sufficient. These symptoms are usually more evident on young plants than on established ones.

Nematodes enter the garden either by infested soil or transplants. Infested soil is easily moved from one garden to another on equipment such as hand tools or shovels. Before moving any tools from a garden area you believe may be infested with harmful nematodes, wash away any traces of soil and disinfect tools with a 10 percent bleach solution.

If a garden area has been infested with plant pathogenic nematodes, choosing another site for your garden is a good way to avoid damage to plants. Due to limited space this is often not possible for many gardeners. Growing plants resistant to nematodes can also decrease damage. Using resistant plants is both easy and inexpensive; however, resistant varieties are not available for all crops, and in some cases, resistance is not complete. Increasing soil organic matter can also reduce problems with nematodes. Organic matter helps the soil retain moisture and adds nutrients that assist plants in resisting nematode damage. Increased soil microbes resulting from addition of organic matter may also reduce nematode populations by building up microorganisms that feed on them. Finally, keeping part of the garden fallow can reduce nematode numbers by providing them no host to feed on. The area must be kept free of weeds for this to be effective.

Many types of nematodes are free-living and do not damage plants. Some nematodes are important beneficials, reducing populations of harmful nematodes and some insects. Identification of nematodes present in the soil is important to determine if the species present can cause damage to plants. The kinds and amounts of nematodes present in your soil may be determined by sending soil samples to the Mississippi State University Extension Plant Pathology Laboratory. Contact your county Extension office for more information about nematode testing.



Nematode attacking plant root (x1800)



Tomato roots affected by root knot nematode



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## Kudzu Bugs

With the onset of cooler temperatures, kudzu bugs are leaving fields and kudzu patches to seek overwintering sites. Their numbers are higher than ever this year, and this has resulted in large concentrations of adults on non-legume plants in home and commercial landscapes. This is prompting calls from clients who are concerned that the bugs are damaging these plants. Sometimes bugs are stacked more than one layer thick, and it is understandable that clients would be concerned about such large numbers of insects. Fortunately, kudzu bugs do not seem to cause serious damage by this behavior and treatment is usually not needed to protect plants this late in the year.

The nuisance effect of having this large number of bugs flying around is another question, especially if bugs are concentrating on plants around patios, doorways or porches. In cases where treatment is desired, spraying with a pyrethroid insecticide (bifenthrin, permethrin, cyfluthrin, cyhalothrin) that is labeled for use on the plants being treated will kill a lot of kudzu bugs. Ortho Bug B Gon Insect Killer for Lawns and Gardens Concentrate and Hi-Yield Lawn, Garden, Pet & Livestock Insect Control concentrate are two examples. Chemical control may not completely eliminate the problem because of continued migration of new bugs.

Kudzu bugs accumulating on the outside of buildings and invading the inside of buildings in search of a place to overwinter is a much greater problem. Although kudzu bugs are susceptible to pyrethroid insecticides, good proactive physical exclusion is the best defense against this problem. Homeowners should be encouraged to spend most of their time and money on making buildings bug-proof, rather than on insecticide sprays. Spraying exterior surfaces of buildings with a pyrethroid insecticide (Bayer Advanced Carpenter Ant and Termite Killer Plus Concentrate and Hi-Yield Lawn, Garden, Pet & Livestock Insect Control concentrate are two examples) that is labeled for such use can help reduce numbers of bugs resting on building exteriors. However, without having the physical exclusion in place, large numbers of bugs will still get inside if the building is experiencing heavy kudzu bug activity.



An adult kudzu bug, left, and an immature kudzu bug rest on a kudzu leaf. These insects entered the state in 2012 and now are a pest in soybeans. (Photo by MSU Extension Service/Blake Layton)



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## Cyclamen

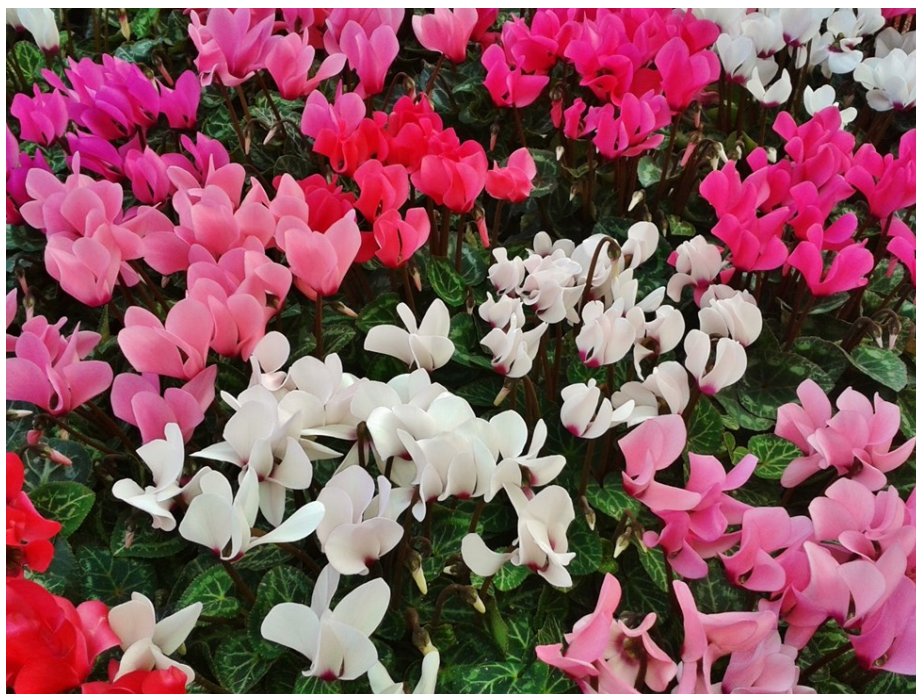
If you receive a potted plant this Valentine's Day from your sweetheart, there's a good chance it could be a florist's cyclamen. Cyclamen can be spotted throughout grocery stores and garden centers alike this time of year due to their bright winter blooms. The flower colors range anywhere from white to numerous shades of reds, pinks, and purples. The cyclamen's color palette in addition to their heart-shaped leaves make them a perfect valentine.

When properly cared for, cyclamen can bloom for up to 4 weeks. They prefer cool temperatures (ideally 60-65°F daytime temperature and 50°F nighttime) and if temperatures are above 70°F, buds will not develop. Because of their temperature preferences, be sure to choose a cooler location in your home far away from any heat sources. Bright, indirect light is ideal. Cyclamen require moist soil but will rot in soggy soils. Carefully water along the pots edge to avoid getting the crown of the plant wet and only water when the soil is dry to the touch. Removing spent flowers will encourage blooming to continue. When deadheading, take care to remove the entire stem completely from the crown to discourage rot. In some of our coastal areas, florist's cyclamen are used in outdoor cool season annual displays – although, with recent frosts in January some have had to be changed out.

Most of the time, cyclamen are short-lived annuals for the typical home gardener. In their native climate, they will go dormant after flowering. You may notice hardy cyclamen in your garden behaves in the same manner. A potted florist's cyclamen's leaves will yellow and drop as it goes dormant and is usually thrown away at this point.

Keeping a florist's cyclamen through dormancy and getting it to bloom again is a difficult task, though it is possible for the determined gardener. There is usually not enough light in the home to produce strong, compact plants with large blooms. If you'd like to try, keep the soil from completely drying out when your cyclamen is dormant. Keep the plant in a shady location until new leaves emerge. Once the leaves emerge in the fall, move the cyclamen to a bright location and water thoroughly. Continue watering regularly and fertilize monthly with a houseplant fertilizer.

Whether you use cyclamen as short-term winter décor or you attempt to keep it reblooming, cool temperatures and proper moisture and light levels are key.





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## 4-H Kids Garden Club

Hancock County 4-H hosts a monthly free elementary age, children's garden club. The group meets the 2nd Saturday of each month from 9 – 10 a.m. in the Community Garden on the corner of Bookter and St. Francis St. in Bay Saint Louis. The alternative meeting site in the case of inclement weather is at the Hancock County Extension office (856 Suite B, Hwy 90, Bay St. Louis, MS 39520).

Group activities include gardening, hosting a bed in the community garden, education about gardening, crafts and snacks. In addition to the monthly meeting, the club also includes community activities including hosting a children's booth at the annual Relay for Life, an annual plant sale the 2nd Saturday in August, and participating in Bay St. Louis' Christmas parade where plant seeds are distributed to the community.

In 2020, the club already has scheduled guest teachers including oceanographers and members of the Hancock County Master Gardeners. In addition to regular gardening activities, the children will plant succulents to take home, create trees from oyster shells, learn about soil and rocks, and map the community garden to develop mapping skills. This year, the Community Garden will be adding a greenhouse which will also be integrated into the children's activities.

All are welcome to the program which generally targets children kindergarten to 7th grade. Parents, grandparents, guardians and foster parents are welcome to attend with the children. Preregistration for the program is not required, but it is helpful to have a head count of participants for planning activity resources and snacks.

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