



EARTHCARE MANAGEMENT

MARCH

- ✚ **Shrubbery, Ground Covers & Roses** – Last month we talked about pruning and shaping these items. You are now likely starting to see the new foliage growth and buds being set on blooming plant materials. Now is not a good time to do any heavy pruning or shearing! Avoid this so the blooming plants can go thru this process. Once the blooming cycle is complete then it is a good time to get things manicured again...
- ✚ **Spring Seasonal Color** – March is a great time to plant seasonal color for those who want to enjoy some fresh new color! There will be a variety of choices at your local nursery to pick from. Here are a couple of things to consider prior to the fun planting part! One, check the bed space where the color will be installed. It's always a good idea to have four to six inches of mixed soil as a good medium for the new bedding plants to grow in. This makes it easier for the tender new root systems to absorb water and nutrients, giving them a better chance to make you happy!
- ✚ **Equipment Check** – Chances are the lawn equipment has not had regular use thru the winter months. It is a good time to test everything to ensure it is in proper working order. An important and sometimes overlooked item is the mower blade. The key to a crisp look lawn is a sharp mower blade. When the grass is “cut” versus “torn” it makes a big aesthetic difference, and that difference is a sharp blade!
- ✚ **Automatic Irrigation Systems** – Many homes have an automatic irrigation system. This is a big component to the overall health of your landscape. It is helpful to turn on each zone and check for proper operation now that we are approaching warmer weather. Adjusting the run times, how many days a week it is set to run and making any needed repairs is not only important to plant health but water savings as well. I mention this several times thru the year as water conservation is a hot topic!
- ✚ **Fire Ant Control** – This is an item you can take care of at any time. Rains will increase the fire ant activity and you will see mounds pop up out of nowhere. These are not only unsightly but can cause damage to your landscape if mounds are built up at the base of plants. One method of control is granular products that contain some type of food that is attractive to fire ants and very small amounts of slow-acting insecticides or insect growth regulators. Baits have a lot of advantages. They are inexpensive, easy to apply, safe to pets and wildlife, and they work! The only negative about baits is they are slow-acting. Depending on which bait you use, it takes from two to eight weeks to see the benefit of a fire ant bait treatment. The other method is mound treatments which are **dry** or **liquid drench** treatments containing fast-acting contact insecticides that you apply directly to individual fire ant mounds. They kill quickly and are the fastest way to eliminate big, troublesome mounds that are just ‘in the wrong place’. Mound treatments are also a convenient way to deal with mounds that ‘pop up’ between bait treatments.