Virginia Cooperative Extension, found at [www.ext.vt.edu](http://www.ext.vt.edu/), has many valuable publications you can download to help with gardening questions.  With all the snow and cold weather we had, it is hard to believe that it is time to think about pruning.  At the web site, click on publications and choose Ornamentals & Turf, then look for publication #430-462, "A Guide to Successful Pruning: Shrub Pruning Calendar".  There you will see the best time "to prune" and "do not prune" information.  There are also numbered comments where you will learn when flowers are produced on new wood or wood from a past season and other information. Sometimes we have to prune old stems, such as Abelia, almost to the ground for them to thrive.  Crape Myrtles should be pruned this month or next, but please, do not commit "Crape Murder" by hacking away at your bush or tree.  Check the website for the correct pruning of these beautiful ornamentals by entering Crape Myrtle Pruning in the search box.  Those on the entrance to Grayrock are lovingly and correctly trimmed by our resident Tree Steward and horticulturist, Pat Cook, who has volunteered each year to take care of them.

I used a sunny day after the big snow recently to prune my roses and actually worked in shirtsleeves and not a heavy jacket!  Take advantage of these spots of sunshine to get the pruning done.

Sometimes we like to Google for information about what to do to solve a gardening problem.  Be sure you use only those sites that are from a college or university.  These have the scientific research to back up the information given, as well as what insecticides are safe to use in the environment as well as when to use them and how much is required.  Always follow the label as it is the law.

The Virginia Cooperative Extension Horticultural Help Desk, staffed by volunteer master gardeners, can also answer your questions. Email albemarlevcehelpdesk@gmail.com or call 434-872-4580. They will get back to you as soon as possible.  Look for their help desk at the Crozet Market every-other-Saturday once it begins.

See you in the garden!
Carolyn Rhondeau, Master Gardener