

Tips for the Landscape and Garden

Tips adapted from Bob Westerfield, State Consumer Horticulturist for the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, and Walter Reeves, Retired Extension agent for DeKalb County and Saturday Morning Gardening Show Host on WSB Radio.



You do not have to buy mums in the fall ever again. It is easy to go out in March and find clumps with fresh growth tight inside the old dead stems. Lift these. Tear them apart and replant, perhaps putting them in pots, where they can grow all year in a secluded nursery and then moved into place as autumn decor.

Recycle those old mini blinds in the garden. Cut slats into 6-8" pieces with wire snips and use a permanent marker to record seed variety and planting date.

If your lawn was weedy last summer, now is the time to apply pre-emergent herbicide to control this summer's weeds. Be sure to select a product labeled for the type of turf grass you have. Do not use pre-emergence controls if you are planning to re-plant or reseed your lawn.

Continue pruning chores now on woody ornamentals in your landscape. However, do not prune plants that flower in the early spring at this time as you will be cutting off the spring flowers.

Start seeds of your favorite spring garden vegetables inside now so that they are ready to plant when soil temperatures are warmer. Use a good, sterile, growing medium to start tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, etc. Keep

seed trays where they will receive plenty of light and be sure the seeds are moist but not overly wet.

You can still plant bare-root roses into a well amended bed. Be sure to leave the grafted crown of the plant above the soil.

Boxwoods and hollies may show signs of leaf miner. At first the damage appears as small holes in the leaves but later develops into elongated discolored areas. Apply a systemic insecticide at the first sign of damage.

Hold off the temptation to fertilize warm season turf grasses until they are well into the green-up stage. Landscape shrubs can be safely fertilized at the end of March.

Check fig trees for any winter cold damage and remove all the damaged wood.

Start seeds of summer annuals such as marigolds, petunias, salvia and zinnia indoors. Do not place the transplants in the ground until all threat of frost is gone.

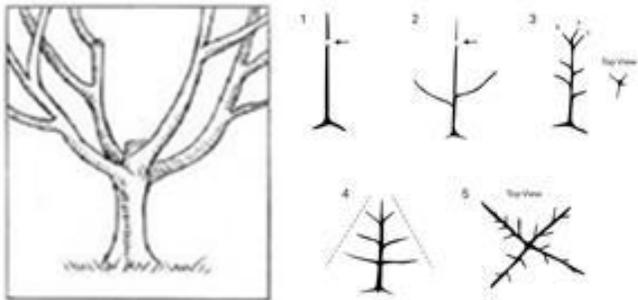
Hostas can be dug and split for transplanting after they begin to emerge in the spring. Watch for slugs and snails and apply bait as needed to control them.

Annual bluegrass is a cool season annual grass that germinates in fall and grows slowly through the winter. In late spring it flowers and drops many seeds that lie dormant until the return of cool weather in the fall, starting the cycle again. In areas of stressed turf grass, the annual bluegrass will out-compete and thrive.

Fertilize fruit trees in March according to soil test recommendations. Remember to begin a disease and insect spray program for all fruit trees. Continue applications at the recommended intervals until the fruit ripens. Remember to thin fruit to avoid breaking limbs and small fruit.

Avoid spraying when the flowers are open, and pollinators are present. And keep a record of dates, amounts, and chemicals used.

Fruit trees should be pruned in late winter. Apples and pears are pruned to an upright growth habit and central leader. Peaches are pruned to an open vase shape.



Open Vase Shape

Central Leader Shape

Buy the best pruning tools you can afford. They will last longer and will probably cost less over time. Cheap tools tend to break or dull easily. They can make the job difficult and frustrating or damage the plant you are trying to prune. Take time to do some comparison shopping before purchasing your pruning tools.

Fertilize winter annuals such as pansies and snapdragons.

Cut back winter damaged leaves or liriopse (use your mower if there is room).

Hand prune boxwoods (no shears as this creates too much flat growth and shades out inside growth weakening the plant).

Spray a fungicide on fruit trees (Captan, etc.) while the blooms are on the tree. *Wait until evening when pollinators are not active.

Do not spray insecticides while trees are blooming—protect pollinators.

Begin planting cool season vegetables such as spinach, lettuce, beets, radish, turnips, mustard, and cauliflower in the garden.

Fescue seed can be planted now if you have not used a pre-emergent. Do not use a pre-emergent for 6 weeks after seeding.

Continue dividing hostas and other spring emerging perennials before leaves truly open to avoid damaging the leaves.

Check the backside of leaves on camellias and euonymus for scale insects. A horticultural oil can be sprayed now to suffocate insects if the pests are found. Read labels carefully.

Clean up spent flowers and leave around camellias to prevent petal blight.

Wait until the soil warms in mid-April before planting out canna, caladium, and gladiolus bulbs.

Wait until spring blooming plants such as azaleas, forsythia, quince, and winter honeysuckle have flowered if you need to prune.

[Link to Basic Principles of Pruning Woody Plants from University of Georgia Extension](#)

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