

# 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.



As the soil temperature gets warmer add summer annuals to the landscape. Be sure to amend the soil with rich organic matter as good drainage is essential for the survival of tender annuals.

Sweet Corn, squash, tomatoes, and other warm season vegetables can be planted after all danger of frost. This is usually after April 20th in most of the state. Folks in the mountains may wish to wait a week or two longer.

Continue orchard management with registered sprays on fruit trees and good sanitation. Apply mulch around fruit trees but do not put it right up against the trunk as this could encourage disease, insects or even rodents.

Apply post emergence crabgrass control now when the weeds are young. Be sure to select a product labeled for the specific type of turf to be treated. Split applications of summer pre- emergence should be reapplied at the end of May.

Be on the lookout for lace bugs on Azaleas, cotoneaster, and other ornamentals and apply a treatment as needed. Remember that lace bugs have several generations and continued scouting is needed throughout the growing season.

Roses should be sprayed at monthly intervals for control of disease, insects and spider mites. A light monthly application of fertilizer will also benefit them.

Or use a three-in-one product that feeds, has a systemic insecticide, and a systemic fungicide. These applications usually last 5-6 weeks.

Prune climbing roses soon after their first bloom. Remove weak or diseased canes and prune other canes back about one third, training them to a trellis or fence.

Pinch out any cold damaged leaves on roses and give them a final pruning if it has not been done yet.

Apply fertilizer to ornamentals now. Remember that large mature shrubs may not need any supplemental nutrition on a continuing basis.

Finish any last-minute pruning on ornamentals that are not now blooming or about to bloom.

There is still time to make a late treatment of preemergent herbicide to keep annual weeds out of our lawns and landscapes.

After hostas begin to emerge is the right time to dig and divide if they have gotten too big or need a location change.

Pull back mulch a little from emerging perennials to encourage new growth and to help warm the soil.

It is still too early to move indoor plants outside yet. Wait for evening temperatures to remain above 50°F.

Do not make the mistake of planting your vegetables too early. Cool soil temperatures will cut back germination severely and cause transplants to stunt.

Protect flowering fruit trees now from any late frosts by stringing them with Christmas lights in the event of a

hard freeze. The heat from the lights should protect most of the blooms.

Warm-season grasses, including bermudagrass, zoysia grass, and centipede grass, should be fertilized with 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet of quickly available nitrogen fertilizers (with less than 50 percent slowly available nitrogen). This application should be repeated in May and June.

Control lawn weeds now through late May before they get large, and temperatures get too high to apply herbicides safely.

A full, evergreen hedge north of your home can cut heating bills by 34 percent in windswept regions or by 10% in sheltered areas. If your house is exposed to winter winds, this spring, consider establishing an evergreen planting for a windbreak.

Layering has been found to be successful on more species of trees and shrubs than any other style of vegetative propagation. Layering consists of wounding a branch of the plant, then covering the wounded area with a rooting medium, such as soil or sphagnum moss. The branch usually will form roots around the wound while it is still attached to the parent plant. Layering is most successful if done in spring or late fall as rooting is most vigorous in cool weather.

Many gardeners plant annual and perennial flowers to attract hummingbirds. Woody plants can also be added to the yard to provide nectar for our smallest native birds. Some common trees visited by hummingbirds are buckeye, horse chestnut, catalpa, apple, crabapple, hawthorn, silk tree, redbud, and tulip poplar. Shrubs include azalea, beauty bush, coralberry, native honeysuckle, lilac, New Jersey tea, Siberian pea shrub, and red weigela.

The last Friday in April is National Arbor Day - plant a tree or support an organization that does!

Consider planting bushes and trees for pollinators now. Also think about what annuals and perennials to plant this spring and consider native plants that support local pollinator populations.

When pruning forsythia, do not shear as you would a hedge. It is best to thin out the old branches as close to the ground as possible. This should be done immediately after blooming.

If wisteria does not bloom, it needs careful pruning to correct the condition. Prune long, straggling canes and all dead wood. Root pruning sometimes helps too.

Fertilize bulbs upon emergence of foliage with a 10-10-10 fertilizer, using a rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet. Repeat the application after the bulbs have bloomed.

Plants brought from greenhouses need to be hardened off (acclimated to the reduced humidity and cooler temperatures of the outdoors) before being planted in the landscape. Place newly purchased plants outside during the day but bring in at night to protect from early season, cool, night temperatures that may injure or kill the plants. Gradually, the plants can be left outside for longer periods of time until they have fully acclimated and can be planted.

Lift, divide, and replant chrysanthemums as soon as new shoots appear. Each rooted shoot or clump will develop into a fine plant for late summer bloom. Pinch out the top when the plants are about 4 inches high to thicken the plant.

Try the new, semi-dwarf cosmos, 'Sonata White'. It is wind tolerant, grows to 20 inches high, and is great for cut flowers.

If you want to plant an Easter lily outside, do not plant it near other lilies. Easter lilies may carry a virus that can infect other lilies.

When you are out shopping for annual flowers for your garden, look for plants with lots of unopened buds. Plants that bloom in the pack are often root bound and can be set back for several weeks after being transplanted. Plants not yet in bloom will bloom sooner, be better established, and grow faster.

Plant dahlia tubers as soon as the danger of frost is passed. Stake at the time of planting to avoid injury to tubers.

To extend the blooming period of gladiolus, plant early, mid- and late-season selections each week until the middle of June. Choose a sunny location and plant the corms four to six inches deep and six to eight inches apart.

Plant clematis in locations that receive at least six hours of sunshine a day. Use an organic mulch or ground

cover to shade roots and keep them cool. Plant in rich, well-drained loam.

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station reports that larger plants with more flowers can be grown in a soil mix consisting of 1 part sphagnum moss, 1 part peat moss, 2 parts perlite and 2 parts compost than with 4 other commonly used mixes. Sphagnum moss is reported to increase aeration and water-holding capacity and to suppress soil-borne diseases.

Many popular perennials can be divided now including phlox, fall asters, shasta daisies, baby's breath, and liriopse. Set up a plant exchange with friends and neighbors to share the excess.

When iris leaves appear thin and limp, check for borers. These grub-like insects can ruin an entire planting if not detected and eradicated early. Dig up damaged tubers and place in the trash.

For hot-weather color, select one of the following: Gloriosa Daisy, Madagascar Periwinkle, Ornamental Peppers, Mexican Zinnia, or Amaranthus 'Joseph's Coat'. Plant after all danger of frost is past and plan for color until winter arrives.

April is a good time to clean up plants and flower beds. Pick out dead leaves and twigs and prune dead limbs.

Cut flower stalks back to the ground on daffodils, hyacinths, and other spring flowering bulbs as the flowers fade.

Do not cut the foliage until it dies naturally. The leaves are necessary to produce strong bulbs capable of reflowering. Folding or tying the foliage reduces the plants ability to photosynthesize which means fewer or smaller flowers next year. If bulbs are planted under other perennials, the new developing foliage will eventually hide the dying leaves.

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