

## **April Garden Activities from Your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers**

**Trees and Shrubs** – You may kill pollinating bees if you spray your fruit trees with pesticides while they are blooming. Wait until most of the blooms have dropped before spraying.

When planting a new tree, keep weeds and grasses out of a 3 foot by 3-foot area around the tree to reduce competition for nutrients and moisture. Cover the ground around the tree with mulch.

Don't be too quick to remove perennials and shrubs that have been damaged by cold. Cut back the dead branches above ground but leave the roots in place until June to see if new shoots appear.

Fertilize fruit trees just before or during bloom period, always following label directions.

Fertilize azaleas after blooming is complete.

Prune spring-flowering trees and shrubs AFTER they bloom.

Protect hydrangeas and roses if a late frost threatens.

Twist off faded flowers of rhododendron after they bloom to double the number of flowers next year.

Buy azaleas when in bloom so you can select colors compatible with your existing landscape.

As you see new growth on your roses, begin fertilizing (following label directions) every four to six weeks.

Container grown trees can be planted now.

Remove the thin sprouts (suckers) that grow from the base of Dogwood, Cherry and Crabapple trees and Crape Myrtles.

Regularly water bare-root roses and trees planted this spring.

**Vegetables** - Plant tomato seedlings in your garden as the weather warms up, after the danger of frost has passed. To reduce the likelihood of blossom end rot on your tomatoes, work one-half handful of dolomitic lime into the soil around each plant, mulch and provide a uniform amount of moisture during the growing season.

Leaf lettuce can be grown in containers or in your vegetable garden from spring until summer. Choose a site with four to six hours of direct sunlight and expect to harvest in about 45 days.

Do not work in your garden when the foliage is wet to avoid spreading diseases from one plant to another.

Don't rush to plant corn. Wait until the soil has warmed up, or the seeds may rot.

Set out herb transplants after the danger of frost has passed.

**Flowerbeds** - Eliminate weeds before they set seed, and you will also be reducing future weed problems.

Fertilize emerging perennials with bonemeal, following label directions.

Fertilize daylilies in April, June and September.

Fertilize summer bulbs now. Always follow label directions.

After spring-flowering bulbs are finished blooming, feed them a 5-10-15 or similar ratio fertilizer following label directions.

Remove faded flowers from daffodils and hyacinths but let the foliage remain and die back naturally.

Divide and transplant perennials and ground cover this month. Water them well until they are established if rain is sparse.

As the soil temperature warms up, begin planting summer flowering bulbs – dahlias, gladiolus, caladiums, cannas.

Mid-to-late April is a good time to plant annuals and perennials. Fertilize with a starter fertilizer that contains lots of phosphorus (the middle fertilizer number).

Dig in 2 cubic feet of soil conditioner for every 10 square feet of bed area when preparing new flower beds.

Replace the pansies in container planters with summer annuals.

For a different look on a sunny fence, trellis or mailbox, plant hyacinth bean – a fast-growing ornamental bean (annual). Pink flowers give way to shiny, purple pods that are as attractive as the flowers. Wait until after the danger of frost to plant.

Pull up invasive plants such as Chinese privet, honeysuckle and English ivy.

**Houseplants** - Repot root bound houseplants before moving them outdoors in warm weather and begin fertilizing them at half the recommended strength. Protect them from the direct sun.

**Compost** - If you do not have a compost pile, start one.

**Miscellaneous** - Fertilize cool and warm season grasses.

Sod or sprig new lawn areas to fill in bare spots in existing lawns.

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