

March Garden Activities from Your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers

Trees and Shrubs - Complete all major pruning by mid-March. Maple trees bleed sap when pruned, so it's better to wait until late April.

Do not prune spring flowering shrubs like forsythia and quince until after they have bloomed, or you will not get any blooms this year.

Only prune crape myrtles if needed, removing any suckers, cross branches and dead branches.

Prune roses back to about half their present size before buds break and begin fertilizing as buds break.

Fertilize trees and shrubs following label instructions in March and follow with an application in early May and early June.

Cut back your butterfly bush to half the size you want it to become this summer.

Plant bare-root roses in soil that contains organic matter that has been thoroughly tilled.

Pull mulch at least six inches away from tree trunks to prevent soggy conditions and possible disease or insect damage.

Plant broadleaf evergreens and prune evergreen shrubs back to a manageable size before new growth starts.

Purchase azaleas when they are in bloom so you will be sure of the color you are buying.

Vegetables - Start planting cool season vegetables in late March – carrots, radishes, lettuce, collards, English peas, spinach, and beets. Warm season vegetables like tomatoes, peppers, corn and okra should be planted after the soil temperature warms up and the danger of frost has passed.

Start vegetables and summer annual seeds indoors. Your seedlings will be ready to transplant into your garden after the soil temperature warms up in six to eight weeks.

Planting the same vegetables in the same spot in your garden year after year can lead to an accumulation of insects and or diseases in your soil. To avoid this problem, rotate your crops.

Flowerbeds - Divide overgrown hostas, daylilies and other perennials and ground covers as needed when you see the leaves unfurling above ground.

Dig up the new flowerbeds you plan to plant this spring when the soil is not soggy and mix in plenty of organic matter.

Rejuvenate the pansies you planted last fall by fertilizing them with a water-soluble fertilizer as the temperature warms up.

English ivy can be very invasive. Good ground-cover substitutes include ajuga, mondo grass and creeping raspberry.

Avoid mixing freshly cut daffodils with other flowers in arrangements because they produce a chemical that injures blooms. Place daffodils in another container for a day after cutting, then rinse the stems before arranging.

Spring bulbs should be fertilized as flowers fade. Remove foliage only after it begins to fade.

Fertilize spring bulbs with a 10-10-10 fertilizer (one pound of fertilizer per 100 square feet of flowerbed).

To help control weeds in your garden, apply a two to three-inch layer of mulch.

Sprinkle crushed eggshells around plants susceptible to slugs and snails, especially hostas.

Be on the lookout for summer bulbs at your favorite garden center. For better selection, buy them when they become available but do not plant them until late April or early May.

Plant clematis and other vines and put out hummingbird feeders.

Soil Test - Have your garden soil tested. Your County Extension Agent has soil test bags and instructions.

If your soil test indicates that you need to add lime, it needs to be added two to three months prior to planting your garden.

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

If you want flowers on your cactus, plant it in a small pot. Most cactuses bloom sooner if rootbound.

Miscellaneous - Set your lawnmower blade on its highest setting and cut back liriop before new growth begins, being careful not to damage the crown of the plant.

Sharpen or replace lawn mower blades if you have not already done so.

Lift steppingstones that have sunk below grass level, spread sand in the low area and replace the steppingstone.

Clean leaves and other debris from ponds and water features.

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