

Spring

PLANTING GUIDE



April showers bring May flowers, as the saying goes. Spring is a great time to clear away those dead winter leaves and make room for fresh, vibrant flowers and plants, and bring your yard back to life.

Best Spring Annual Flowers

- Petunias
- Begonias
- Blue Daze
- Persian Shield
- Alyssum
- Dianthus
- Angelonia
- Vinca

If you want to see more butterflies and birds in your yard, plant their favorite flowers!

- Columbine
- Buddleia Bush
- Flame Acanthus
- Gregg's Mist
- Helen's Flower
- Fall Aster
- Purple Cone Flower
- Phlox
- Day Lilies
- Amaryllis

PREP WORK

Clear Drainage Ditches

Leaves and debris can gather in drainage areas during winter. Spring rains will need adequate runoff and spring seedlings do best in soil that drains well.

Weeding and Mulching Beds

Weeds that appear in garden beds will be easiest to pull now, as the roots are shallow. Covering bare spots with mulch or ground cover will minimize the emergence of new weeds. Add mulch to a depth of three to four inches and use black plastic sheeting to cover the beds before planting to suppress emerging weeds. Keep the mulch a few inches away from tree trunks and the crowns and stems of plants. This helps reduce rot on stems of young plants and protects the bark of young fruit trees.

Top Dress Beds

Top dress garden beds with compost or manure in preparation for planting. Resist the urge to dig the bed; established beds have a complex soil ecosystem that's best left undisturbed.

Prepare Your Lawn

Rake the lawn to remove dead growth which helps bring light and air to the top, encouraging grass to grow. Re-seed bare patches of lawn and rake bare spots firmly with a metal rake before seeding. Sprinkle grass seed into a bucket of soil and spread evenly over the bare spot. Keep it well watered until seeds germinate and the new grass establishes.

Pruning

Prune trees and shrubs after new growth has begun. Prune roses just before they start to bud out. Spring blooming trees and shrubs, however, should not be pruned in late winter; their flower buds are ready to open as temperatures warm.

START DIGGING!

When to Plant

It's best to plant new bulbs in late February or early March to achieve the best looking flower. Once it crumbles easily, the soil is ready for gardening. After the bulbs are planted, spread topsoil and mulch around the plant to give the flowers extra nutrients.

Divide and Conquer

Divide perennials and clear and mulch perennial beds. For easier handling, try to time the division so emerging shoots are only two to four inches tall. Prepare new beds for perennial flowers by spreading a six-inch deep layer of organic matter (i.e. peat moss, compost, rotted manure) and work in deeply. Plant out daffodils, lilies, crocus, hyacinth and any other bulbs that were forced into pots or bowls inside.

Attracting Pollenators

The first flowers to appear each spring are especially valued since they help to establish a resident bee population which is needed throughout the growing season. Plant flowers in clumps; flowers of the same species clumped together will attract more bees than individual flowers dispersed throughout the garden. Plant flowers with different shapes. Different species of bees have different tongue lengths and favor flowers specific to their anatomy. A variety of sizes and shapes of flower will attract a corresponding variety of bees and pollinating insects.

Deadheading

You can greatly extend the blooming time of your spring annuals by removing the faded blooms. Using clippers, cut long-stemmed flowers back to the main stem or base. If you want your plants to self-sow, let the last of the flowers go to seed and drop where they may. ❖

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