



APRIL

Be Prepared For Late Frost Until May 10th

PLANT

- Plant new roses, deciduous shrubs, perennials, needle and broadleaf evergreens
- Choose azaleas when they are coming out in bloom to be sure of color. Use local nurseries to be sure of hardiness and quality.
- Dig and divide established summer and fall blooming perennials: achillea, asters, astilbe, black-eyed-Susans, coreopsis, loose strife, liatris, mums, ornamental grasses, shasta and phlox.
- Plant clematis where they can get 6 or more hours of sunlight. Various types bloom at different times of the year and need different exposures.
- Move annual seedlings to cold frame.
- Continue planting bare-rooted shrubs that have been soaked in tepid water for several hours or overnight.
- When planting trees, don't add organic material to soil. It may create conditions that encourage the roots to stay inside the planting hole finding it more difficult to penetrate the hard clay soil. By amending the soil, excess water will be retained, increasing the probability of root rot.



PRUNE

- Using guide lines stated previously, prune spring flowering shrubs within 2-3 weeks after blooming. Cut up to 1/3 of old and spindly wood and out-of-line branches now.

MULCH

- Carefully remove winter mulch around plants.
- Incorporate winter composted material, discarded seedlings, blooms and old mulch into the soil of flower beds to improve texture of the soil. Replenish with new mulch. .

FERTILIZE

- Evergreens and trees if not done in March with 5-10-5. If soil has hardened around plants, loosen carefully in a circle below outer edge of branches so as not to disturb existing roots. Use a four pronged garden fork and wiggle it gently to allow air, water and fertilizer to penetrate. If using manure, use well rotted or store bought manure.
- Fertilize bulbs when finished blooming and feed clematis often with high phosphorus fertilizer.
- Fertilize roses monthly and azaleas after blooming and feed lilacs with composted manure and lime.
- Japanese Iris need a moist and acid soil, well composted. Do not apply lime on them or on any evergreens (e.g. azaleas, hollies, conifers).
- After spring flowering bulbs are done, fertilize with 5-10-10. Allow bulb foliage to die back naturally. When foliage is no longer green it cannot manufacture food for the bulb for next year's bloom and therefore can be cut off.
- To promote spectacular blooms in summer on your crape-myrtles, fertilize now and in July with 5-10-10 or another high phosphorous fertilizer.
- Fertilize clematis with bone meal or 5-10-5 plus lime twice a year.



CHORES

- Water bulbs weekly if soil is dry (do not wet flowers). Hose boxwood with strong water spray to knock off red spider mites.
- Examine roses and photinia for powdery mildew and black spot.
- Divide chrysanthemums. Replant fresh shoots and discard old plant centers.
- Spray tea roses every 7-10 days with fungicide.
- Spray juniper for spider mite if necessary.

- Spray photinia with appropriate fungicide for leaf spot (fungal disease) every two weeks.
- Remove any old bagworms on evergreen trees and shrubs.

TIPS

For good drainage in pots use plastic "peanuts" in the bottom instead of stones or gravel. A square of fine plastic screening or a piece of old panty hose placed in the bottom prevents dirt from washing through. Note bare spots in areas where nothing is blooming. Mark them to help you remember where to plant bulbs in the fall.

LAWNS

- Fertilize warm season grasses with one pound of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. Repeat in May and June.
- Spring fertilization of cool season grasses is not recommended in Virginia.
- The first grass clippings of the season are rich in nutrients and contain fewer weed seeds than those collected later. Put them in the compost pile or, better yet, leave them on the lawn. But don't mow the lawn until it has grown at least 2 inches. Mowing height should be 3-4 inches for plant health and to minimize weeds.

GARDEN HIGHLIGHTS



- Bulbs: anemones, hyacinths, Dutch iris, jonquils, scilla, species tulips, and windflower
- Perennials: arabis, bergenia, barren wort, moss, pansies, phlox, early primroses, spurge, mountain pinks
- Shrubs: early azaleas, quince, PJM and Korean rhododendron, viburnum.
- Trees: Bradford pears, cherries, crab apples, redbud, Japanese maple, dogwood
- This is the best time to divide herbs such as chives, creeping thyme and tarragon. Because mint is so invasive many gardeners plant it in pots or boxes (plastic preferred). Try the different flavored mints, they don't grow so aggressively.