

Get Ready! The Spring Garden

Love your Lawn: Rake vigorously, over seed in **early** March, apply pre-emergent while forsythia in bloom

Prepare Perennial beds for the season: rough and fluff evergreen groundcovers (hellebores, epimediums, heucheras, pachysandra, moss phlox etc.)

Trim back any others left standing for winter. Spread layer of compost, NO mulch until soil temps are at least 50 degrees.

Plant: Bare root shrubs, roses and fruits. **Transplant** shrubs and trees and summer blooming perennials.

Divide: use divisions to fill in bare spots or use in containers. Get extra plants potted up for Garden Club plant sale.

Start a seed calendar for veggies, annuals or new perennials you want to grow.

Begin a journal to keep track of successes and failures, bloom times, future projects, and structural work that needs doing.

Think fall: order and plant mums, late summer bulbs, remontant roses, annual vines, and other fall interest plants.

Be on the Lookout: winter moths, voles, other overwintering bugs and critters, slugs and diseases

Snap lots of photos to help you asses what looks good and what needs work

Feed and Fertilize emerging bulbs, roses, shrubs and trees, and houseplants. Condition soil in vegetable beds.

Stake tall floppy plants while they are still small

Sharpen and oil garden tools and mower blades.

Clean birdhouses, outdoor furniture, and containers.

Branch Forcing: www.arboretumfriends.org/node/474

Gather vases for arranging, hit yards sales for extras you don't mind giving away

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Pruning: ID plant FIRST

Goals are to establish and maintain a good strong branch structure with ample space for light and air circulation, control size and improve flowering (or fruiting). Most pruning stimulates growth (an important thing to remember).

Always start with the D's: dead, damaged, diseased, don't need (suckers and water sprouts)

Earliest: Butterfly bush, willow, caryopteris, dogwoods, potentillas, fruit trees (except peach), fruit canes of late blooming raspberries , woody vines like wisteria ,clematis (group 3) honeysuckle, trumpet vine, deciduous trees but NOT maple, birch ,walnut or box elder

After they bloom: lilac, heathers, forsythias, rhododendrons, wegiela, spirea, mountain laurel, mock orange, lindera, redbud,quince,

Pruning is USUALLY done according to bloom/fruit time. Double check if unsure. A great book is **How to Prune** by John Cushnie.

Special types of pruning

Renewal pruning

Coppicing and Pollarding: willow, smoke bush (cotinus), dogwood shrubs

Roses: Many types of pruning based on type of rose.

Hydrangeas: Smooth hydrangeas *H. arborescens* (like Annabelle), and *Hydrangea grandiflora* or Pee-gee ('Limelight' and tree hydrangeas) can be cut back hard in early spring

Big Leaf or *Hydrangea macrophylla*: most form flower buds after flowering the previous year, any pruning in spring will cut them off. Prune right after bloom if necessary. These often lose their flowers buds in a harsh winter which is why they may not bloom consistently in your garden.

Newer varieties like 'Endless Summer ' and 'Twist and Shout" bloom on old and new growth, but are often best pruned to 6 inches in the spring as the new growth flowers are far more prolific (and reliable) the those from the old wood.

Conifers: Arbovitae, Junipers, yews and false cypress can all re-sprout from older wood and can be pruned for shape and size.

Pines, firs and spruce **will not** rejuvenate from cute into old growth. Prune "candles" which are the soft tips of new growth before they become hard needles.

REMEMBER: SAFETY FIRST! Ladders and chainsaws don't mix, always wear eye protection, and call an arborist for large trees and branches or for trees that have been neglected for a long time.

