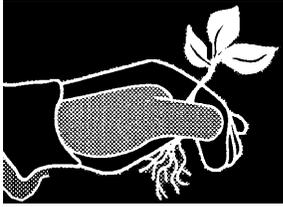


MARCH CHECK LIST



- Remember when moving plants (trees, shrubs and perennials), that excess irrigation can be as harmful as too little irrigation. Moisture meters can help determine the right time to irrigate.

VEGETABLE GARDEN

- Start transplants of tomatoes, peppers and eggplant where mid-May is planting time. Use short-season varieties suited to our area.
- Put seedlings of broccoli, cabbage and brussel sprouts into cold frame.
- Continue planting early peas when weather permits.
- Plant early potatoes on Good Friday, if soil is workable. Potatoes can be planted through April where growing seasons last through August. Light frost will not kill new growth. Don't plant spuds on newly tilled grassland, as wireworms abound the first summer. You can plant sprouted potatoes 6 inches deep. Break off longest sprouts.
- Clean up horseradish and rhubarb patches and mulch with aged manure or compost.
- Fertilize perennial garden plants with organic or commercial fertilizer.
- Harvest parsnips before they sprout, as they turn bitter afterwards.
- Make up manure/compost tea using 2-3 shovels of solid and enough water to fill a 5 gal. bucket, cover to prevent insects. Teas prevent transplant shock and are a real boost to growth.
- Cold frames can be started. Use fresh manures as bottom heat only and manure teas for nutrients.
- Plant all hardy crops as soon as the weather breaks from severe to milder temperatures.

ORCHARD AND FRUITS

- When temperatures get above 40 degrees and freezing temperatures are not expected for 24-48 hours, apply dormant oil. Apply before buds open.
- Plant new trees as soon as the soil can be worked.
- Prune out old wood on gooseberries and currants.
- Feed strawberries and apply a light straw mulch to keep berries off the soil. A light crop with heavy foliage indicates a lack of phosphorus.
- Plant new raspberries.
- Feed all berries with aged manure and mulch well.
- If you are going to do some fruit tree grafting, this is the month to attempt it.

TREES AND SHRUBS

- Prune shrubs that have suffered winter damage. When purchasing new shrubs, consider proper placement and varieties to avoid annual pruning. Harden-off newly purchased perennials and shrubs grown in the south before planting them.
- When day temperatures get above 40 degrees and freezing temperatures are not expected for 24-48 hours, apply dormant oil. Wait till early April to apply dormant oil to evergreens. They need warmer temperatures than deciduous trees.
- Apply fertilizer, so it reaches roots before bud break.
- Plant trees and shrubs. Take advantage of bare root stalk available this time of year.
- Continue pruning.

LAWNS

- Power rake lawn if needed and not done last month. Soil should be thawed and grass not greened up too much.
- A good month to seed lawn.

FLOWER GARDEN

- Divide and replant perennial flowers.
- Spread well-rotted manure or compost around big feeders such as peonies, bleeding hearts, delphiniums, chrysanthemums and perennial geraniums. Don't smother or damage their delicate crowns.
- Powder soil around spring blooming bulbs with bone meal, letting rain wash down the nutrients. Don't remove mulch until after blooming.
- Fertilize perennial plants.

HOUSEPLANTS

- Start geraniums if you didn't start them earlier.
- Extend the life of Easter lilies by carefully removing the orange pollen sacks as soon as the flower opens. This prevents pollination and extends the blooming period of flowers. Don't get pollen sacks on clothing or other materials. It is next to impossible to get out.
- Start tuberous begonias. Those overwintered in pots, replace the top 2 in. of soil with fresh mix.