



Master Gardener Program

April Gardening Calendar

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Spring has arrived! This month might see the last frost. Or not. (See Sidebar.)

Here are gardening chores you should think about in April. Remember to adjust for your unique microclimate.

General: Clean and sharpen tools and mower blades. Check your irrigation system and install a drip system, if possible. Water newly planted shrubs and trees and plan how you will water them all summer; even native plants need extra water for 2-3 years until well-established. Harden off plants moved from the house or greenhouse to the garden by gradually exposing them to outdoor conditions over 7-10 days. Pull weeds. Patrol for insects and other pests and consult your local Master Gardener for ways to control them.

Bulbs: Remove faded blossoms but leave foliage. Do not twist or braid foliage, as it may interrupt nutrient flow to the bulb. Fertilize bulbs once after bloom. At the end of the month plant summer-blooming bulbs, rhizomes and tubers such as gladiolus, lilies, begonias and cannas.

Flowers: Finish pruning established roses. Fertilize after pruning (and then every 4-6 weeks through July); do not fertilize newly planted roses. Do not use pre-emergent weed killer near roses because it damages their roots. Plant seeds of cosmos, asters, marigolds, and zinnias. Move stored fuchsias and geraniums outside, but be prepared to cover them.

Shrubs: Fertilize rhododendrons with an acidifying fertilizer (e.g., ammonium sulfate) once shortly before blooming and once after. Plant bare root shrubs before the end of April to avoid summer drought stress. Prune spring-blooming shrubs after they bloom.

Trees: Plant trees including those that are bare root. Established trees do not need fertilizer every year; do not fertilize newly planted trees.

Fruit trees and small fruits: Graft scion wood to root stock for new fruit trees. If you have had past problems with scab or mildew, spray apple trees with lime-sulfur according to the instructions on the label. Tidy raspberries by removing dead canes (i.e., last year's fruiting canes). Fertilize raspberries, blackberries, and blueberries as buds swell with 5:10:10 fertilizer. Plant bare root strawberries.

Veggies: Be sure garlic doesn't dry out; fertilize it gently with nitrogen to get lush leaves. Transplant vegetable starts into the garden after the last hard frost. Direct seed beets, chard, lettuce, onions, peas, potatoes, radishes, spinach, carrots and parsnips. Start tomatoes, squash and basil indoors. Plant a container of hardy herbs near the house, or start a new herb garden in a sunny spot. Use row covers now to protect spinach, chard, and beets from leaf miners. Check growing cabbage family crops for loopers and other caterpillars.

Ground covers/vines: Plant sweet peas. Prune last year's blooms from heathers and heaths; apply fertilizer and mulch, if needed.

Lawns: Fertilize grass in late April with 3:1:2 slow-release or organic formulations. Don't fertilize the lawn if you are planning on letting it go dormant in the summer. If a new lawn was put in, water regularly until it is 3 inches tall.

Start your 2010 Garden Journal NOW!

SIDE BAR.

Last Frost Dates

In 5 out of every 10 years, the last frost occurs by:

- April 8 in Port Angeles
- April 17 in Sequim, and
- May 11 in Forks.