APRIL

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Planning/Maintenance/ Activities

Prepare garden soil for spring planting.
Incorporate generous amounts of organic materials and other amendments. Plant's roots need loose soil twelve inches deep.

Cut back ornamental grasses to a few inches above the ground in early spring.
Tie the grasses together for easier cutting.

Prepare raised beds in areas where cold soils and poor drainage are a continuing problem.
Incorporate generous amounts (at least two inches) of organic materials.

Place compost or well-decomposed manure around perennial vegetables such as asparagus and rhubarb.

Replenish mulch around existing plants to a depth of 3 to 4 inches.
Keep mulch away from trunks to avoid rodent damage and disease.

Pest Monitoring & Management

T*o protect beneficial organisms, alway use the least toxic means to control pests.*
Chemicals(herbicide, insecticide, pesticide) should be used as the last resort in your Integrated Pest Management program due the detrimental affects on beneficial insects including bees. Read and follow all label directions prior to using chemical control.

Pull or hoe all weeds in your yard and garden.
Try to keep their numbers low, and get them before they go to seed.

Clean up hiding places for slugs, sowbugs and millipedes.
Least toxic management options for slugs include barriers and traps. Baits are also available for slug control; use caution around pets. Read and follow all label directions prior to using baits or any other chemical control.

Watch for insects and diseases that gave you problems last year.
The sooner you detect damage, the easier it is to control.

Install a ***new lawn or renovate an undesirable one.***
Newly seeded lawn may take two or more weeks to germinate.

Optimum time to fertilize lawn.
Apply 1 pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn. Reduce risks of run-off into local waterways by not fertilizing just prior to rain, and not over-irrigating so that water runs off of lawn and onto sidewalk or street, where it ends up in creeks and streams.

Woody Landscape Plants & Fruit Trees

Plant a tree in celebration of Arbor Day, the 2nd Wednesday in April in Washington!
Bare-root stock should be planted before new top growth begins. Balled-and-burlapped and containerized stock can still be planted later in spring. Pay particular attention to proper planting techniques.

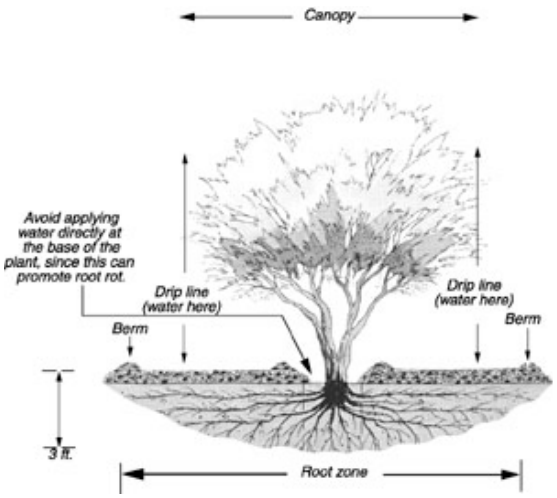
Fertilize trees and shrubs before new growth appears.
A soil test will indicate a nutrient deficiency. Follow recommendations for fertilizer and pH adjustments.

Avoid pruning oaks and elms during the growing season, typically early April through October.
Oak wilt and Dutch elm disease are spread by sap - feeding insects carrying the disease from tree to tree.

Remove fruit tree protectors.

Redo water wells for deep watering.

Begin deep watering deciduous and fruit trees with hose every 7-14 days.
The goal of deep watering is to achieve penetration of water to a depth of at least 3 feet for mature trees. The soil surrounding the plant's roots, called the "root zone," serves as a storage tank from which the plant draws moisture and nutrients. Most trees and shrubs shed rain water to the "drip line," much like an umbrella. The most active water absorption area is at the drip line and beyond, not close to the trunk. This is where you should water. Most of the roots spread 1 1\2 to 4 times as wide



as the plant's canopy.

Flowers, Vegetables and Small Fruit

Begin to "harden off" seedlings gradually before planting out in the garden.
This can be accomplished by exposing plants to increasing amounts of cold, sunlight and wind. At first, place them outside in a sheltered, shady area. Bring them back inside at night. Gradually increase exposure.

Allow foliage of spring-flowering bulbs to remain in place after blooms fade.
Leaves manufacture the feed reserves and are

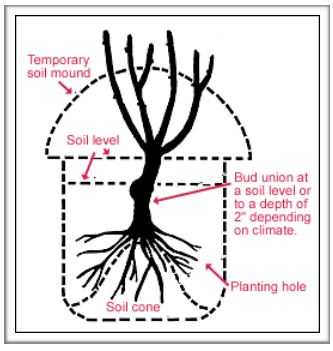
Deadhead spring bulbs when they are finished flowering to direct energy back into the bulbs.
Discard tulips that only produced large leaves and no flowers.

Plant now for drought tolerant plants.
Some plants to consider in a 'water wise' garden are Redtwig Dogwood, Smoke Bush, Arp Rosemary, Blue Oat Grass, Agastache (Giant Hyssop), Green Spice Heuchera, Sedum, Thymes, and many others.

Plant hardy perennials such as daylilies for your sunny garden and delphiniums for your shade garden.

Now is a good time to seed annuals such as marigolds, zinnias, cosmos and nasturtiums indoors.

Plant roses.
The graft should be planted in a well-drained area that gets at least 6 hours of sunlight per day. Plant



the union bud at ground level or two inches below the soil. This is where the bud union should be for roses growing in northern climates because this helps to provide some winter protection for the bud union.
You can still plant trees and shrubs.

Finish pruning chores on all but the flowering shrubs and trees.

Fertilize spring-blooming shrubs after flowering is complete.

After soil test results:
Amend soil as needed on fruit trees, raspberries, strawberries and asparagus. In addition, add 1-3 inches of finished compost (for **blueberries** add acid compost and fertilize with rhododendron fertilizer.) Cultivate nutrients into soil around plants by hand.

Transplant asparagus from mid-April to late May.
Any preparation for planting asparagus should begin no later than the year before you plan to plant. Begin with a soil test. Asparagus prefers a high pH (a "sweet" versus "sour" soil) of about 7.0.

Add deer protectors to berries.

For areas where deer are prolific, protect your strawberries by creating a 'hoop' house out of 1/4" inch PVC hoops covered with highway construction netting. Protect your blueberries and raspberries by placing bird netting over the entire patch and entire row.

Use floating row covers over your susceptible crops.

Covers keep insects such as beet leaf miners, cabbage maggot adult flies, and carrot rust flies away from your crops.

Check for correct operation of your drip irrigation system for your flower and vegetable gardens, berries, and trees.
Add new batteries to timers and set them according to weather conditions.

When soil in vegetable garden is workable:

- Remove weeds and mulch
- Amend according to soil tests and individual crop needs
- Add 1-3 inches of finished compost
- Rototill only section of garden currently planting
- Install your watering system for your garden and set the timer as appropriate. Only water the portion of your garden that is planted.
- Sow seeds or transfer cold hardy transplants following the plan you developed earlier in the year.
- Mulch around transplants with pine needles saved earlier.
- Install deer/rabbit protectors over vulnerable crops using the technique described above for protecting berries. For your vegetable garden, cover your crops with ¼ inch PVC hoops making a 10ft. by 4 ft. row covered with construction netting tied onto hoops. Ends are covered with anything handy to make sure no rabbits can enter.

Gardening in Kittitas County

Gardening in Kittitas County presents many challenges and opportunities. While there are ample days of sunshine and nights that meet and exceed plants' chilling requirements, there are extremes of heat in the summer and cold in the winter. Wind is a constant in all parts of the county and snow depth is a factor, especially in the higher elevations. Add to this the fact that Eastern Washington has an arid climate and most plants require additional regular watering, especially while becoming established. Last, but certainly not least, are the pests that prefer ones' garden and orchard to their natural diet and would ravage these if homeowners did not use special precautions against them.

Kittitas County, not unlike many counties in Washington, has differences within the county with respect to rainfall, elevation, and temperature. Therefore, the length of growing season is different depending on location. While the ground may be workable in Ellensburg (lower county) at the beginning of April, it may still be covered in a foot of snow in Roslyn (upper county). While the lower county may require minimum winter protection for most crops, upper county requires maximum protection for most perennials that do not naturally grow there.

At higher elevations such as Ronald (2,349 feet), the average growing season is 90 days with last frosts in early June (approximately June 9th) and first frosts in early September (approximately September 2nd); In Cle Elum (1,930 feet), the average growing season is 90 to 120 days with last frosts in late May (approximately May 24th) and first frosts in the middle of September (approximately September 11th). Cle Elum receives about 22" of rain on average. At lower elevations such as Ellensburg (1,542 feet), conditions are much drier and frost-free days are longer. The average growing season in Ellensburg is about 120 days with last frosts in early May (approximately May 11th) and first frosts around the end of September (approximately September 25th).

Ronald, Rosyln, and Cle Elum are rated USDA Zone 4 (-30ºF minimum temperature) while Ellensburg is rated at USDA Zone 5 (-20°F. minimum).

The authors of this e-book are using techniques deemed necessary for their particular region within Kittitas County. The reader's to do list will be specific to their area and their particular climate. Be sure to check resources provided to determine specific climate area.

This calendar is a compilation of many sources of information. Many thanks for the outstanding guidance provided by: Washington State University Extension, Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, The Morton Arboretum, Oregon State University Extension and many others as evidenced by the extensive use of hyperlinks.

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For more information:
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