

April in the Garden

Planning

Plan now for drought tolerant, heat loving plants. Some plants to consider in a drought tolerant garden are kinnickinnick, smoke tree, bergenia cotoneasters, barberries, coneflowers, iris, penstemons, sedums and thyme. Local Extension Offices have lists of these drought tolerant plants you can obtain, generally for free.

Fertilize and prune spring-blooming shrubs after flowering is complete. This allows them time for vigorous summer growth, which provides flower buds for next year's bloom.

Fruit tree pests and diseases are very common in the Inland Northwest. A regular spray program is necessary to produce the best quality fruits. Spray schedules for apples, cherries, peaches, apricots, pears and plums can be obtained at your local Extension Office.

Planting

Now is a good time to transplant many flowering perennials, herbs, landscape trees, shrubs, berry plants and fruit trees. Most are still dormant and will wake—ready to grow in a new location.

Transplant cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower and Brussel sprout starts. Wrap stiff paper disks around the stems to help control root maggots.

Calendulas, pansies and alyssum are cold tolerant flowers for early spring. Now is a good time to seed marigolds, zinnias, cosmos and nasturtiums indoors.

Lawn and Garden

If the weather has started warming up it is safe to uncover roses, azaleas, clematis vines and other shrubs from their mulch covers.

Cut back winter-killed rose canes to one inch below the blackened area. Cut all rose canes to about six inches above ground level. Plant roses with the graft two inches below the soil in a well-drained area that gets at least 6 hours of sunlight per day. You might consider planting some own-root roses this year to minimize winter damage.

Remember the old axiom: One year's seeding, seven years' weeding. One weed plant can produce thousands of seeds. Pull those weeds early to save yourself additional work later. Pull or hoe all weeds to keep their numbers low, and catch before they go to seed.

Treat lawns for crabgrass or annual bluegrass problems - both annual weeds that can be controlled with early use of pre-emergent weed killers. Apply when the forsythia start to bloom.

Fertilize spring-flowering bulbs. Also fertilize other ornamental fruit and berry plants that were not fertilized in March.

Sow seeds of carrots, greens and beets. Plant seed potatoes and onion bulbs. Cover planted areas with row cover to keep out insects.

Be better prepared for your growing season by what you learn! Now is a good time to attend gardening classes given by your local Extension Office.