

What to do in M-A-R-C-H

The start of spring means it's time to head outside and get busy in your garden! Prep soil, plant cool-season crops, spray & prune or plant trees and some shrubs, and prepare your lawns for the upcoming growing season. What you do in March sets the stage for a successful garden and yard throughout the spring and summer!

Time to get planting!

Cool season flowers: About six to eight weeks before your region's last average frost date (for us, our last frost date is usually in the first week of May!) you can put out pansies, violas, lobelia, snapdragons and other cool-season flowers. They thrive in cool weather and tolerate frost as well. They're especially good in pots for bright color!

Cool season edibles and herbs: It's just about time to put cool-season annual edibles and perennial herbs outdoors! These include seedlings you've started indoors or purchased at a garden center: parsley, cilantro, broccoli, cauliflower, onions, and Brussels sprouts, peas, radishes, etc!

Warm season plants: Start warm season seeds indoors as well! Most vegetable and annual flower seeds should be started six to eight weeks before your region's last average frost date...and for most of the Midwest, that means starting seeds now! Check package directions for suggested timing, however. Some vegetables, tomatoes for example, might get too leggy before they can be planted outdoors if they're started too early!

Trees, Shrubs and Roses: You can plant container-grown or balled & burlaped trees, shrubs and roses as long as the soil is well-thawed and you can work it easily to the needed depth.

Tackle Pruning Chores!

Prune most trees and some shrubs: Wait until the fall to prune spring-blooming shrubs such as lilacs, viburnum, forsythia, azalea etc, so you don't trim off developing flowers. Most other shrubs will benefit from a little trimming now.

Prune Roses: Once roses send out tiny red buds that will turn into stems, they are ready for pruning. When the stems are about 1/2 inch long, the rose is pretty well out of dormancy. You should be able to tell what wood is alive and what has been killed by winter cold and should be removed!

Spray Fruit Trees!

Dormant oil prevents scale, insects, spider mites, fungus and a list of other pests. This is a good heavy oil that will smother any pests left on the tree from the previous growing season, and prevent pests in the upcoming season! Spray fruit trees with the oil when temperatures are above freezing for 24 hours, & prior to bud break. For fruit tree care, this is a great first step. Do not spray anything else on your tree until your tree has bloomed and the petals have fallen off. You can also spray dormant oil on roses and other trees and shrubs that have been troubled by pests in the past.

Spruce Up Lawns For Spring!

Rake Old Leaves: You'll feel like you're giving your yard a fresh spring start when you remove the old remnants of winter... late-falling leaves, sticks and trash that may have blown in during the winter months.

Cut Back Perennials: If you didn't do this in the fall, cut them back now!

Pull Away Winter Mulch: As soon as you see signs of new growth as the weather turns, pull away and clean up any mulch, straw or leaves you applied in the fall to protect perennials.

Prepare Your Lawn: Beginning in mid-March to late March, look at applying a good quality fertilizer to your lawn! If crabgrass was an issue last year, now is the time to put down crabgrass control as well! This should be applied at the same time as lawn fertilizer. We recommend 2 applications of crabgrass prevention. One application in the spring around mid-march and a second application typically around mid-June. This will prevent crab grass from germinating all season long! To keep your yard looking it's best for all 365 days, ask us about our 4-step fertilizer program!

The Green Thumbers is ready for Spring! Our staff has been trained to know the answers to all of your questions, so don't hesitate to reach out for expert advice from our horticulturists on any of the topics we just discussed! We have so many amazing products to share with you that will help you bring more beauty to your home, yard & neighborhood this year :)