



## Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints



### April 2020

Take a walk outside to see what is blooming—crocus, daffodils, early tulips, hyacinths, primrose, cherry blossoms, magnolias, azaleas, freesia, iris, creeping phlox, hellebore, and Virginia bluebells to name a few.

**FLOWER BEDS-** Remove mulches from all flower beds and strawberry beds. Once the garden soil is workable, give it a good stirring and let it sit for several days. Then top dress with compost or well-rotted manure.

**ROSES-** Plant rosebushes before growth starts and buds swell. Wait to prune roses until after buds begin to swell to avoid late frosts damaging new growth.

**FERTILIZERS-** Broadcast lime, wood ashes, or a mixture of the two over alkaline loving perennials such as delphiniums and dianthus. Feed your trees by scattering about six handfuls per each 10x10 foot area with a well-rounded fertilizer. Do not fertilize strawberries in the spring as this is when the leaves are developing which will produce lush growth and soft berries. Wait until blossoms appear and use a light hand to fertilize. Begin fertilizing houseplants again.

**PERENNIALS-** Divide summer and fall blooming perennials including delphiniums, irises, chrysanthemums, daisies, and phlox. Plant perennials early in the season to make sure they are established by summer. For overwintered geraniums, cut back 4 to 6 inches and remove the bottom leaves.

**LAWNS-** Rake your lawn to remove all leaves, dead grass, and small twigs. Sow seed for a new lawn, or fill in bare patches by first covering the area with compost or other organic matter. If you have dead spots in the lawn, plan to patch them before the summer heat. Loosen the soil and work in some good quality compost, sprinkle grass seed, rake lightly, and tamp to assure good seed to soil contact. Mulch with a thin layer of straw. Water as needed to keep the soil evenly moist until the grass sprouts. Apply pre-emergent herbicides in mid-April to control annual weeds such as crabgrass.

**VEGETABLE GARDENS-** Plant cool season crops such as beets, peas, lettuce, collards, turnips, carrots, broccoli transplants, Brussels sprouts, Swiss chard, kale, kohlrabi, onions, parsley, parsnips, radishes, and spinach. Plant peas every 2-3 weeks until early May to extend the harvest. Divide any crowded rhubarb stalks by digging up the whole crown, break off the young side shoots, and plant in a sunny location. Plant bare root asparagus crowns as soon as the ground thaws. Mechanically control young garden weeds by hoeing or hand pulling.

**INSECTS-** If scale or aphids have been a problem on trees and shrubs, spray the branches with dormant oil when temperatures are above 40 degrees. Reduce chemical use to promote beneficial insects in your landscape.

**ORNAMENTAL GRASSES-** Prune grasses to a height of 6-12 inches and higher for larger clumps. Divide cool season grasses when new growth begins to emerge.

**PRUNING-** Inspect trees and shrubs for broken limbs and prune damaged branches back to unaffected wood by cutting back to a branch or bud that's facing outward.



--Sandy