



Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints



April 2021

Well, well. It's finally spring after a long, snowy winter. The days will be warming along with the soil, so it's time to plant and be outdoors.

GARDEN BEDS-Prepare garden soil for spring planting incorporating generous amounts of organic materials (at least 2 inches), using the results of a soil analysis as a guide. Prepare raised beds in areas where cold soils and poor drainage are a continuing problem. Use a soil thermometer to help you know when to plant vegetables which is when the soil is consistently above 60 degrees F.

MAINTENANCE AND CLEANUP-Allow foliage of spring flowering bulbs to brown and die back before removing. Place compost or decomposed manure around perennial vegetables such as asparagus and rhubarb. Cut back ornamental grasses to a few inches above the ground. Cover transplants to protect against late spring frosts. Mechanically control young garden weeds by hoeing or hand pulling.

LAWNS-This is an optimum time to fertilize lawns. Apply one pound nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn. Reduce risks of runoff into local waterways by not fertilizing just prior to rain, and not overirrigating so that water runs off the lawn and onto the sidewalk or street. Dethatch and renovate lawns. If moss has been a problem, scratch the surface before seeding. In compacted sites, aerate with hollow core aerator when turfgrass is actively growing in April-June.

TREES AND SHRUBS-Prune and shape or thin spring blooming shrubs and trees after blossoms fade to encourage new flower buds for next season. Prune your deciduous trees and shrubs, using proper tools and techniques. If locally available, plant bare root trees and shrubs, keeping the exposed roots moist until planted. Use organic wood chips or bark mulches to retain soil moisture around shrubs and trees. Plant a tree to Celebrate National Arbor Day.

PLANTING AND PROPAGATION- Plant gladioli, hardy transplants of alyssum, phlox and marigolds if weather and soil conditions permit. In the vegetable garden you can plant peas, radishes, lettuce, spinach, beets, and turnips as soon as the garden soil is workable. Follow with broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, chives, endive, leeks, rhubarb, and rutabagas. Divide crowded, fall blooming perennials. Divide cool season ornamental grasses when new growth begins to emerge.

PEST MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT-Use chemical controls only when necessary and after thoroughly reading the pesticide label. First consider cultural, then physical

and biological controls. Choose the least toxic options, and use them judiciously. Some examples include insecticidal soaps, horticultural oils, botanical insecticides, and organic pesticides. Reduce chemical use to promote beneficial insects in your landscape. 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 and use caution around pets. Read and follow all label directions prior to using baits or any other chemical control. Cut and remove weeds near the garden to remove potential sources of plant disease. Help prevent damping off of seedlings by providing adequate ventilation.

Watch the calendar and the weather before planting anything, and protect in case of frost. Have fun and visit garden centers for ideas and advice.

As my schedule has become very full, this will be my last article for Helpful Hints. I have been writing the article since August 2014, and it has been my pleasure to do so. I have learned so much about gardening and was so happy to share it all with you. Thank you.



--Sandy