



Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints



March 2021

Spring is coming! The calendar is saying so, but be careful by watching the temperature, winds, and sunshine. There are chores that can be done to prepare for gardening. Enjoy!

VEGETABLE GARDEN-Plan your vegetable garden for spring, summer, and fall vegetables that can be eaten fresh or preserved. If you lack in-ground gardening space, plan an outdoor container garden. Use a soil thermometer to help you know when to plant vegetables. Some cool season crops (onions, kale, lettuce, peas, radishes, and spinach) can be planted when the soil is consistently at or above 40 degrees F. Plant peas every 2-3 weeks until early May to extend the harvest. Add organic matter to the vegetable garden to help build and amend the soil. Avoid compacted soil by avoiding tilling wet or saturated garden soil. Consider taking soil samples to determine fertilizer needs.

BULBS- Check all your bulbs' condition to ensure they are firm, removing any soft or rotten bulbs. Fertilize spring flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodil, fritillaria, and crocus. Don't remove the foliage on early blooming bulbs until it turns yellow or brown and falls flat. The foliage replenishes the bulb with nutrients needed for next year's blooms.

TREES and SHRUBS- Plant bare root trees and shrubs keeping the exposed roots moist until planted. Remove protective trunk wrap and burlap from trees in the spring after snow has melted. Apply horticulture oils at bud break on fruit trees to control overwintering insect pests. When the soil temperature reaches 40 degrees F, fertilize trees and shrubs before new growth begins. Don't prune spring flowering shrubs now. Wait until about a month after they bloom. Pruning now may remove this year's flowers. Move deciduous trees or shrubs provided the soil isn't frozen or waterlogged.

ANNUAL FLOWERS- Plant cold hardy pansies and primrose.

LAWN-Apply pre-emergent herbicides in late March to mid-April to control annual weeds in your lawn (crabgrass and spurge). Mow your lawn if it needs it by choosing a dry day. Be sure to set your blades higher than usual. Lay new turf if the ground isn't frozen or waterlogged.

GARDEN BEDS- Clean up any garden beds left to winter over. Cut back browned-out ornamental grasses and foliage of perennial flowers that you didn't remove in fall. Some of it may even rake off. Compost the dead foliage. Pull any weeds that survived or sprouted over winter. They'll come out easier in the soft, damp soil than in summer. Wait until warmer weather to add new mulch.

ROSES- As soon as you see new growth on roses, remove their winter protection. Prune and fertilize as needed. Prune roses to encourage strong new growth.

PERENNIALS- Divide summer and fall blooming perennials as soon as you can work the soil. Prune early flowering varieties of clematis once their flowers have finished, and summer flowering ones before they start into active growth.

SEEDS- Test leftover garden seed for germination. Place 10 seeds between moist paper toweling, or cover with a thin layer of soil. Keep seeds warm and moist. If fewer than six seeds germinate, buy fresh seed or plant more heavily.

SLUGS- Keep an eye out for slugs as the weather warms by paying special attention to soft, new growth on plants, which slugs love. Use nematodes for an effective organic control. Crushed egg shells are useful to control slugs as the sharp edges rip the bellies of the slugs as they pass over them.



--Sandy