

Spring Has Sprung Tips for your spring garden

By Sally Ruth Bourrie

It's spring! The UVa Health System's Building and Grounds Department is filled with professionals who work hard to keep our environment beautiful all year 'round. They are sharing their expertise in these tips for things to do in April to get your garden growing:



— **Plant summer bulbs.** Lilies, gladiolas, dahlias and cannas are just a few of the bulbs that will brighten your landscape this summer if put in the ground now.

— **Plant annual flower seeds** in the ground. Early May is the end of frost; if it looks like a light frost is coming, throw a sheet over your flower beds at night for protection.

— **Finalize your list of spring annuals.** Think through plants you'd like to find and color combinations you'd like to put together. If you've never thought through your plantings in advance, give it a try; it's lots of fun. Take inspiration from the Health System's beautiful annual beds.

— **Deadhead spring perennials and bulbs.** "Deadheading" means to simply cut off spent blossoms. Leave bulb foliage from bulbs until it turns brown because that is the bulbs' food source for next year.

— **Prune spring bloomers** such as creeping phlox, azaleas and forsythias right after they bloom. Wait longer than two or three weeks and you will also cut off new buds set for next year's flowers.

— **Divide and plant** daylilies, iris

(not bearded or Germanic types), daisies and other perennials. There's still plenty of cool-weather-time for them to establish roots before summer heat sets in.

— **Feed hybrid tea roses** now, just prior to bud opening. Hybrid teas bloom earlier than other roses and need support now as they make their first push to bloom.

— **Plant and transplant deciduous shrubs** before they begin to leaf. When deciduous trees and shrubs are dormant – from the time they lose leaves in fall to sprouting leaves in spring – is the ideal time to move them. In this region, where winters are relatively mild, the ground freezes only about six inches (and is warmer than the air), so roots continue to grow, says Building and Grounds Supervisor Roger Conner. Winter is actually a great growing time for enabling plants to establish themselves.