
Early Spring Garden Punch List

Early spring preparations for a
beautiful garden through the season

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MARCH – *Wake Up the Garden*

March is about observing, cleaning up, and preparing.

Garden Beds

- Stay off garden soil if it is wet or muddy.
- Cut back ornamental grasses, and dead perennial growth.
- Remove leaves and winter debris from garden beds and add to compost.
- Divide and move perennials.
- Top dress beds with 1–2 inches of compost if needed.
- Start pulling small early weeds.

Seed Starting

- Start peppers, eggplant, and tomatoes indoors early–mid March.
- Check seed inventory and order seeds if you haven't already.

Cool Season Vegetables

- Plant peas outdoors when soil reaches about 45°F.
- Prepare vegetable beds by loosening soil and adding compost.

Trees & Shrubs

- Prune dead, damaged, or crossing branches.
- Begin planting bare-root trees, berries, and shrubs.

Garden Prep

- Clean and sharpen tools.
- Water trees, shrubs, perennials and lawn if we've been dry
- Turn or start a compost pile. Now is a great time to start, no meat, dairy, fish or diseased leaves.



APRIL – *Prepare & Begin Planting*

April is when the garden starts coming alive, but frost is still possible.

Flowers

- Continue to divide and move perennials as needed.
- Plant cold-tolerant flowers like pansies, violas and snapdragons.
- Start fast-growing annuals indoors zinnias, cosmos, and marigolds.

Vegetables

- Direct sow: lettuce, spinach, radishes, carrots, swiss chard, potatoes, and onion sets
- Transplant: Broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower
- Start squash and cucumbers indoors late April for May planting.

Garden Care

- Mulch beds lightly to help retain moisture and suppress weeds 2–3".
- Stake tall perennials such as peonies early before they flop.
- Prune Roses, remove dead or diseased canes, and prune back roughly to 2'.
- Fertilize, now is a great time to apply an organic granular fertilizer.
- Continue removing weeds while they are small.

Lawn Care

- Rake winter debris from lawn.
- Aerate if soil is compacted.
- Fertilize with a pre-emergent fertilizer.
- Reseed bare spots. Do not use a pre-emergent fertilizer if you are reseeding.

MAY – *Plant the Summer Garden*

May is when planting ramps up, but keep an eye on late frosts.

Warm Season Vegetables

- Once nighttime temperatures stay above about 50–55°F: Plant, tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, corn, beans, eggplant, and melons
- Harden off seedlings before planting outside.
- Protect new plants from wind and strong afternoon sun.

Harvest

- Early harvests may include: lettuce, spinach, radishes, asparagus, and rhubarb

Flowers

- Plant annual flowers after frost risk passes. Frost free date is May 5
- Start planting containers and hanging baskets.
- Apply fertilizer regularly to keep flowers blooming all season long.
- Plant summer bulbs like gladiolus, cannas or dahlias.

Trees and Shrubs

- Plant trees, shrubs, and roses, planting early helps them get established before the summer heat.

Garden Maintenance

- Turn on irrigation system, and make repairs. Don't set it and forget it.
- Check plants regularly for pests or disease.
- If spraying insecticides, avoid spraying while bees are active.
- Treat for Japanese Beetles by putting down a grub killer such as GrubGone

Lawn

- Mulch lawn clippings for nitrogen return
- Begin regular watering if spring rains are light, remember water deeply vs light and frequently. This encourages strong deep roots.



Notes: