

Spring Garden Cleanup

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Late Winter Tasks:

- Make a plan of garden accomplishments
- Make a list of supplies you will need
- Order arbors or fountains now
- Order seeds, prepare planting trays
- Do some winter sowing
- Prune grapes and fruit trees
- Clean out iris beds
- Keep all these notes in your garden journal

Spring Tasks:

There's a lot to do, but break these tasks up into small increments, a little each day, it won't seem so daunting.

- Inspect
- Prune
- Cut down perennials
- Rake
- Weed
- Edge
- Divide Plants
- Fertilize
- Soil Test

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Inspect Garden

As you go through your tasks. . .
inspect your plants
note which have died over winter
rewrite plant markers as you go
replant heaved plants as you see them

Replant Heaved Plants:

**-As you rake, you may encounter plants that have heaved
replant them; they may not be dead yet
-this fall make sure your beds are mulched a little heavier.**

Inspect tools: Now is the time to buy new tools

- Consider a few new ones:
- Soil Scoop
 - Sod edger/ lifter

- Hand Plow/ Ho Mi
- Garden knife
- Oil tools

PRUNE: Examine landscape trees:

Check for weaknesses
disease damage
hazards
broken branches
damage to the trunk
co-dominant trunks (may need cabling)
Call a certified arborist or the county extension if you have questions or concerns

Check Shrubs for tip die-back

Prune only those hydrangeas that need it!
Prune out old branches from Dogwood shrubs
Prune out old canes from Raspberry brambles
Prune shrub roses to desired shape
Prune Buddleia, Caryopteris, Perovskia

Renewal Pruning Shrubs

-Typically these shrubs have CANE growth habit: -Shrubs that have grown too large or have borers (lilacs/ viburnums)
-Cut back the branches by 1/3
-If the branch had borers cut it down completely
-Can also just cut the largest stems out every 2-3 yrs.
-For old/ overgrown shrubs cut back by 1/3 for 3 years
lilac, forsythia, roses, honeysuckle vine, burning bush, sand cherry, ninebark, weigela, oakleaf hydrangea , dogwood

ANNUAL Rejuvenation Pruning

**-Used for MOUNDING shrubs
-Prune close to the ground annually to keep it fresh
-Used on old over grown shrubs
-The best time to prune:
-When the plant will recover the fastest
-Just before regrowth begins in spring**

- spiraea, St John's wort, alpine current, potentilla, butterfly bush, New Jersey tea, smooth hydrangea
- Prune the entire shrub close to the ground
- Used on old over grown shrubs
- The best time to prune:
- When the plant will recover the fastest
- Just before regrowth begins in spring
- Fertilize with a shrub fertilizer when you are finished

Prune Wisteria in late Feb/ early March

Cut Down Last Years' Perennials

The debate over this continues...

Spring vs. Fall cut down?

- In Fall remove all diseased foliage & plants.
- Do not compost these plants.
- Spring: First...Don't be in a hurry
- Your perennials are used by bees for overwinter nesting.
- Cut plants back to 12-18" tall, If there are baby bees in the stems, they will be in the bottom half.
- Leave the cuttings in the garden to decompose.
- Ornamental grasses : A safe rule : April Fool's Day
- Use gloves! The leaves are very sharp
- Tie the branches in a bundle before cutting
- Cut them down with; pruners if small , hedge trimmers
- Now is the time to divide them too.

Rake Flower Beds

- Rake out heavy winter mulch protection from roses and other plants,
- Replace with fresh mulch in a layer no deeper than 3"
- Make a donut around the crown of plants
- Peonies: rake out leaves & mulch
- Apples & Crabapples- clean up fruit, leaves, prune
- Iris- remove dead leaves
- Annuals- remove whole plants from last season

- Mums- do not cut off dead stems until new growth is 4-5" tall
- As you rake, you may encounter plants that have *heaved* out of the soil from the winter freeze and thaw cycles;
- replant them; they may not be dead yet
- this fall make sure your beds are mulched a little heavier.

Weed the Garden

- Weed as early as possible in spring
- Lay down a preemergent herbicide -i.e. trifluralin, -this will prevent cool season weeds from germinating
- reapply in late June to prevent warm season weeds
- Use glyphosate on perennial weeds that have regrown
- Edge the garden, use a spade or sod lifter

Divide perennials

- if it blooms in fall, divide in spring,
- if it blooms in spring, divide in fall
- pot up the extras for gifts & donations to local plant sales
- After many years hosta, ornamental grasses and occasionally daylily will "donut"

Fertilize the garden

- Mid March- spread bone meal for spring flowering bulbs
- Mid April- spread granular shrub fertilizers
- Early May fertilize perennials with a high phosphorus fertilizer
- Mid June fertilize perennials again

Have a soil test done every 3-5 years

- Why?
 - To monitor the health of your soil
- Where?
 - Get soil test forms at local garden centers OR
 - Contact your county Cooperative Extension office or soil testing lab for the fee structure, mailing containers, and other information.

▪ How?

- Using a sm. shovel, sample to a 3-inch depth.
- Take approximately 10 to 15 samples
- Combine to make one composite sample.
- Air dry the sample before sending.

Other Small Tasks:

- Clean out planters & add fresh potting mix**
- Clean bird feeders**
- Oil pruning tools** Inspect

Start A Compost Pile

- All you need is a small space
- In the part-sun
- You don't need fancy bins
- Just a heap to pile clean yard/ garden/ kitchen waste
- Make sure to turn it once every few weeks
- Keep it a little moist
- No animal products!

Plan A New Activity This Year

- Raise monarch butterflies
- This month: decide on the structure you will use, build it
- Plan to plant swamp milkweed and tropical too
- Plant more nectar plants

Local Plant Sales:

- Wild Ones: Gibson Woods: May 7**
- LC Master Gardeners: LC Fair Grounds: May 7**
- Native/ Pollinator Plant Sale at Dolly's June 11-12 : and by appointment**

Things to Remember:

These are just ideas
Every garden is different
Don't get overwhelmed at the job list
Do one thing at a time
Enjoy the work

