

April Gardening

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So far this spring, we have had some cold temperatures but, the warm weather should be here to stay now. Just incase you are looking for an excuse to be outdoors here are some ideas for things to do.

- * If you fertilized your lawn last month great but, if not, fertilize now.
- * Let your St. Augustine lawn tell you when it's time to water. When a section of the lawn has folded leaf blades and a bluish-green color then, its time to apply $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch of water.
- * Seed, plug, or sod to fill in the bare areas of the lawn.
- * Sharpen your mower blades because you're going to be using them a lot in the months ahead.
- * Remember, start mowing weekly again once the grass starts growing fast.
- * Prune azaleas and gardenias (if needed) after they have stopped blooming. Do not prune after June or this will result in the removal of flower buds for next spring.
- * If you are growing hybrid roses and have to battle black spot try something different this year. Instead of spraying a fungicide every week why not try a foliar spray of fish emulsion and seaweed. Fungicides only suppress the fungus whereas fish emulsion and seaweed provides all of the nutrients plus growth hormones and the emulsion is an oil which can have fungicidal properties.
- * The continual removal of the faded blooms of annual plants, called dead heading, will improve their appearance, encourage more blooms, and lengthen the life of the plant. Examples of annuals which benefit from deadheading include; red salvia, zinnias, coleus, gallardia, lisianthus, marigolds, dahlia, celosia and gomphrena.
- * Go buy a rain gauge for your yard (if you don't already have one!) The larger the opening the better. With your own rain gauge you will know how much rain your yard really gets each and every storm!
- * Finish your spring fertilization of fruit trees.
- * Vegetables that can be planted in April include; beans (snap, pole, shell, or lima), cherry tomatoes, cantaloupes, collards, okra, sweet potatoes, Southern peas, calabazas, chayotes, yard-long beans and other tropical crops.
- * If you're interested in adding some flowers to your landscape here are some plants that can handle full sun through the summer; floss flower (*Ageratum*), amaranth, asters, wax begonia, vinca (or periwinkle), celosia, coleus, cosmos, dahlia, dahlberg daisy, lisianthus,

gallardia, gazania, gerber daisy, kalanchoe, sunflowers, gomphrena, melampodium, torenia, lobelia, portulaca, blue salvia, red salvia, dusty miller, marigolds, and zinnias.

* If you want to plant some flowers in shady areas here are some to choose from; non-stop and tuberous begonias, caladium, coleus, firecracker flower (*Crossandra*), impatiens, and geraniums.

* Spring is a wonderful time to plant new trees and shrubs. Just remember a few pointers; don't dig the hole deeper than the root ball, plant so that the top of the root ball is at the same level as the surrounding soil, do not add fertilizer to the planting hole and water the newly planted tree or shrub daily (if the soil is well-draining) until the plant begins new growth.

* In the herb garden you can plant basil, chives, dill, borage, oregano, mint, rosemary, sage, sweet marjoram and thyme.

* Add new mulch to areas where it has thinned out. Aim for it to be three to four inches thick around all plants - including citrus! Just make sure to keep the mulch at least six inches away from the trunk of citrus trees.