



10809 Honeycutt Rd., Raleigh, NC, 27614

www.homewoodnursery.com



March Garden Planner

Plant

Now is a great time to establish trees and shrubs before the heat is on. Bear in mind that the **average date of the last killing frost is April 15th + or - 10 days**. Warm season plants such as tender annuals and vegetables should be set out after this date. If planted earlier be sure to keep an eye on lows in temps and protect them, if need be.



- ~ Loads of fresh plants are coming into the nursery right now. **Get ready to plant perennials, shrubs, flowering trees, and shade trees before it gets hot.**
- ~ **Plant seedlings of cool-season crops** such as **broccoli, cabbage, greens, lettuce,** and **cauliflower** up to four weeks before the last spring frost. Sow onion sets and seeds of carrots, peas, radishes, spinach, turnips, and leaf lettuce.
- ~ **After weather warms and danger of frost is past, colorful annuals can be planted so start planning now.** Try begonias, impatiens, caladiums, and torenia to brighten shady areas. Plant geraniums, zinnias, marigolds, salvia, verbena and petunias in sunny spots. Others plants to try are hibiscus and bougainvillea for containers, and coleus (for sun or shade depending on variety). Lantana, strawflower, lobelia, bacopa, and sweet potato vine are all easy to grow, vigorous plants.
- ~ **Now is a good time to seed cool-season grasses such as fescue or Kentucky bluegrass, if necessary, though fall is the best time of year to do this.** Your lawn may also require an application of dolomitic lime if the soil tends, as they often do here, to be acidic.

Fertilize

- ~ As weather warms and growth begins, **fertilize pansies** with Ferti-Lome Premium Bedding Plant Food™ or Flower-tone.
- ~ **Once growth commences, begin feeding roses** and con-

tinue to fertilize every 2-4 weeks throughout the growing season.

~ **Fertilize blueberries** at the beginning of the month with Holly-tone™ or any balanced fertilizer.

~ **Now through April is a good time to fertilize trees and shrubs.** Plant-tone™ or Holly-tone™ are good slow-release fertilizers. **Fertilize azaleas, rhododendrons, and camellias with Azalea-Tone™ after they have bloomed** in spring. Take care not harm or kill azaleas by overfertilizing them. For best results have your soil tested or pick up a test kit at Homewood. Remember that young plants need less fertilizer than established ones. **Broadcast the recommended amount of fertilizer around the whole region under the canopy focusing on the “dripline”,** not just in one place or right against the trunk.

~ Depending on the weather, **cool season grasses should be fertilized** sometime between mid February and late March. While your at it, **put down a pre-emergent** such as Espoma Weed Preventer plus Lawn Food™, or Hi-Yield Turf & Ornamental Weed and Grass Stopper™. This is best done by mid-March.

Garden Maintenance

- ~ Remove winter mulch and cultivate beds carefully to remove winter weeds. **Pulling weeds now** makes them easier to control in the future. **Replace mulch** to reduce weed and disease problems, retain moisture, and protect plant root systems from summer heat.
- ~ **Another way to beat the weeds is to put down pre-emergent** which will prevent weed seeds from germinating. Try **Espoma Weed Preventer**. It's non-toxic and can be used around pets and children!
- ~ **Before spring growth starts, move plants** that have outgrown their location or are not receiving the proper garden conditions.
- ~ **Dig, divide, and replant perennials.** Good candidates for division are daylilies, hosta, phlox, ferns, ornamental grasses, coreopsis, lirioppe, and cannas.
- ~ **Begin lawn care regimen** by removing winter debris, dethatching existing lawns, and filling low spots with sharp sand and topsoil. Seed new lawns or lay down sod in April. Sharp mower blades will keep lawns healthier. Check hoses and sprinklers to see that they are in good working condition. Do not fertilize tall fescue after mid-March.
- ~ **Repot and trim overgrown houseplants.** Water thoroughly to re-establish.
- ~ **Preparing new beds** or a completely new garden? **A**



soil test is highly recommended to analyze any deficiencies and help you to correct any problems before investing energy and money in planting.

~ **Suspect a plant has died from winter exposure? Wait until spring has fully sprung** (around late April) to make sure that it has actually croaked. Can't wait that long? Take a nice sharp knife and make nick in the bark to cut away the external hard layer, but not too deep. If you see green, the plant is still alive. Branch tips tend to die first so you can check a few spots down the branch. If you don't see green, try giving the plant a good tug. If it still feels firmly rooted in the ground, consider waiting to see if it will leaf out in late spring or push new growth from the base. **Don't fertilize your plant(s) until you see a good amount of new growth**, water them regularly when needed, and think good thoughts about them. Make sure they have a 3" layer of mulch to protect the roots. If you get to late spring and you still don't see new growth, try pruning the tips of the branches back every few inches until you hit green wood. If you don't hit green wood, then we are sorry to inform you but... **You can also bring us samples and pictures to examine so we can determine why the plant didn't survive and suggest remedies or substitutions.**

Prune

~ **Prune diseased, damaged, or dead limbs from trees and shrubs. This is also a good time to prune for form and to direct future growth**, as well as renovate old overgrown plants but get it done before trees and shrubs start to leaf out. Broad-leaved evergreens and deciduous trees and shrubs typically respond well to a heavy pruning. Avoid hard pruning narrow-leaved evergreens such as juniper and arborvitae. Last bit advice: always have a goal in mind when pruning. Know what you are trying to accomplish in order to make the right cuts at the right time. One good reference book: [Pruning Made Easy](#). Also, come to the nursery or check our Garden Tips page on our website for **our free handout on Pruning Trees & Shrubs**.

~ **As growth buds swell on roses, give them their annual heavy pruning.** Prune away dead wood, and crossed canes leaving between 3 and 6 strong healthy canes which should be cut to about 12"- 24". Make pruning cuts at a 45° angle to prevent water sitting on the cut.

~ **Boxwoods should be pruned before spring growth begins, if necessary.** Plants two years or older and desired as hedges should be sheared by half to promote dense, twiggy growth.

~ **Don't prune spring-flowering shrubs** such as azaleas, rhodies, spiraea, and dogwood until **after** flowering is completed.

~ **Cut back established ivy, liriopse, mondo grass, and oth-**



er ground covers just *before* new growth begins. Liriopse and mondo grass can be mowed if the mower is set at 3".

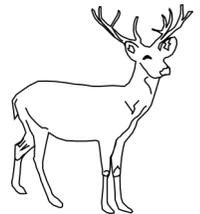
~ **In early spring, cut large butterfly bushes** down to 1-2 feet off the ground. Train them to five or seven stems. Many new varieties are dwarf and do not require pruning except occasionally.

IPM (Integrated Pest Management)

Watch for insects and diseases and treat promptly. Always read and follow label directions.

~ **Deer will be end-of-winter hungry right about now** and willing to eat things they would normally pass over. **Keep an eye out for susceptible plants** such as azalea, rhododendron, Indian hawthorn, and euonymus. Be vigilant with **repellent sprays** such as IMustGarden Deer Repellent or Liquid Fence and **rotate repellent products** to keep deer from becoming acclimated. Ultrasonic repellent devices broadcast noise only deer and those under 30 can hear. Deer-Ex **filament netting can be placed over plants** as a barrier which is removed in late spring.

~ **Japanese maples can get leaf spot problems** especially in rainy years. Once they leaf out it's time to start **spraying them with copper fungicide** to prevent leaf spot disease that comes later in spring.



~ **Japanese ambrosia beetles and other wood-borers will become active in March.** The key is to spray trees **BEFORE** the adults emerge and mate. The main window of opportunity is during the first few sets of days in late winter when the temperature at sundown is above 60° F. Target trees for this insect are **cherry, crepe myrtle, plum, apricot, snowbell, redbud, shumard oak, red maple, dogwood, peach, & wax myrtle**. Spray bark and branches with permethrin spray.

~ **This is a great time to kill overwintering insects** such as mites, aphids, and scale. Spray with All-Season Spray Oil™ when the temperature is between 40-85°F. Don't apply within 24 hrs. of a freeze.

~ **Watch for powdery mildew and blackspot**, two common fungal diseases. Treat with Fung-onil™ or Sere-nade™ Disease Control, an **organic solution** for many plant diseases.

~ Those naughty **aphids will be returning soon** to feed on plants such as roses and other ornamentals plus fruit and shade trees. Stop them with insecticidal soap or horticultural oil. Small infestations can often just be hosed off.

Coming Events

~ Don't miss our **SPRING KICK-OFF PLANT SALE through March 16th!** *All outdoor plants, including perennials, shrubs, trees, vines, and groundcovers are 25% OFF!! (pansies & veggies excluded)*

