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## GARDENING TIPS FOR MARCH

### PLANTING:

- **Annual Seeds:** If it's a warm spring, many annuals can be planted now (alyssum, poppy, pansy, bachelor's buttons, dianthus, snapdragons, scarlet flax, calendula and strawflowers). Try a small planting, not your whole bed just in case.
- **Lilies:** Plant at the end of the month: calla lilies, montbretia, and tigridia.
- **Tuberous Begonias:** Start indoors on top of the soil, about 2" apart, then fill in and cover so tops are just covered. Don't water until leaves start. If soil is very dry, mist or sprinkle lightly.
- **Gladiolus:** For early bloom, plant corms as soon as the ground can be worked (they'll stand a light frost). Plant every two weeks until mid-July so you can have continuous bloom. Plant large corms 6" deep, medium 4" and small 2". Try to plant in a different location from last year.
- **Vegetable Seeds:** You can plant hardy crops (cabbage, beets, brussel sprouts, broccoli, peas, radishes, spinach, turnips) when it begins to warm up. A good sign is when the maple leaves begin to come out. Do not firm soil over the seeds and don't plant them as deep as usual. Try a small crop.
- **Evergreens:** Rhododendrons, camellias, etc. can be planted as soon as soil is dry and light enough to be worked.
- **Berries:** Set out blackberries, boysenberries, and loganberries in a well-cultivated soil and in full sun. Give them plenty of room. Don't expect fruit for a year.
- **Trees:** Plant when the soil is ready. If the soil sticks to your shovel, or you hit high water when digging, do not plant.

### FERTILIZING:

- **Lawns:** You can begin applying complete fertilizer this month, if the weather is not unusually cold.
- **Trees:** Feed with a high nitrogen fertilizer. Try to get the fertilizer near the roots. One method is to make holes with a crowbar 2 feet apart and 18 inches deep around the trees drip line. Pour fertilizer into these. Mixing it with sand gives the soil better absorption. Figure one pound for each 1" circumference of the tree. Use a commercial mix, cottonseed meal, or blood meal.

- **Holly:** They need fertilizer now for next Christmas' berries. Use a high phosphorous and potassium food that is suitable for rhodies.
- **Bulbs:** Put bone meal around daffodil and other early flowering bulbs. This will help develop the bulbs' strength for next year's growth.
- **Delphiniums:** Top dress with lime.
- **Asparagus, rhubarb:** Use a manure mulch and rock phosphate, or a complete fertilizer.
- **Black Raspberries:** These like moderate quantities of wood ashes-berries are sweet soil lovers.
- **Blueberries:** Like acid fertilizer. Put a mulch 6-8 inches deep around the plants.
- **Roses:** Fertilize after pruning. Do not fertilize newly planted roses until they have mature leaves.
- **Geraniums and Fuchsias:** Move to a lighter, warmer place indoors. Feed with  $\frac{1}{2}$  strength fertilizer.

## PRUNING:

- **Hedges:** Spindly hedges can be helped with a hard pruning. Cut them to the height you want. Remove any old, weak stems at ground level.
- **Clematis:** If yours bloom in summer, prune it now. If it is a spring bloomer, cut back the flowering portions when it is done blooming.
- **Forsythia:** You can do some cutting back when you cut branches to bring indoors for forcing. Once the flowers fade, cut old, leggy stalks that haven't produced well, cutting them back to the ground. Remove about one third of the plant each year, concentrating on old or weak wood, to limit size.
- **Heather:** Winter flowering types can be sheared a bit before new growth starts.

## SPRAYING:

- **Lawns:** Apply iron sulfate to inhibit moss.
- **Slugs:** As the days begin to warm, slugs need to be baited. Besides baiting, you might try the following methods to get rid of them. Try placing 4" boards to give the slugs a hiding place, then collect them every morning and dispose of them. Make a trap by putting beer in a can or container with openings in its cover, set into the ground.

## GARDEN TIPS AND HINTS:

- **Spring Blooms:** Try forcing blooms by taking branches (flowering quince, crab apple, forsythia, etc.) indoors. Cut on a mild day, put in water in a cooler, dim place (such as your garage). When they begin to bloom, bring them indoors and enjoy.
- **Compost:** Your compost should be turned a couple of times a month as the weather warms up. Keep covered with plastic so the rains won't leach out the nutrients.
- **Planting Trees:** If you or the soil are not ready to plant your bare root trees, lay the plants in a shallow trench and cover the roots deeply with soil or sawdust. They may be kept for several weeks this way. It is important to make sure that the roots do not dry out. When you are ready to plant, make sure you dig your hole the same depth as the roots and twice as big around. Cut off any broken or mushy roots. Mix soil with a compost (such as Black Forest Soil Conditioner) and

use Dr. Earth Starter Fertilizer (follow instruction on back of box for amounts). Water your plant in well with Fertilome Root Stimulant.

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