

WEEKLY NEWS COLUMN
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MARCH GARDEN GUIDE

Spring is just around the corner and producers can be preparing their gardens now. The Cowley County Extension Office has resources available to producers to help improve their lawns and gardens including Kansas Healthy Yards and Communities, an initiative of K-State Research and Extension to have yards and communities that enhance our quality of life through earth-friendly practices. The following is the monthly garden guide for the month of March from kansashealtyyards.org.

The month of March brings the official first day of spring, longer days, and more time to work in the evening with daylight savings time. Get ready for the full rush as your lawn and garden break out of their winter dormancy.

Vegetables and Fruits

- Prepare soil for spring planting.
- It is best to perform a soil test before fertilizing to determine needs. If there are no soil test results, fertilize the garden with 1 to 2 pounds of 10-10-10 per 100 square feet. Soil tests can be submitted to your local K-State Research and Extension Office to have results and recommendations tailored to your specific garden and soil type.
- Plant:
 - o Potatoes, peas, onions, lettuce and other salad crops.
 - o Asparagus, rhubarb, and strawberries.
 - o Broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage in late March.
- Start seeds inside for tomatoes, peppers, and other warm season vegetables.
- Apply dormant oil to fruit plantings to reduce scale and mite insects.
- Make a fungicide application to control peach leaf curl.
- Finish pruning fruit trees, grapes, raspberries, and blackberries.
- Remove mulch from strawberries when growth begins.

Flowers

- Plant pansies, snapdragons, calendulas, and other cool loving annuals.
- Clean up the perennial bed by cutting back foliage and removing winter mulch layer. Divide and plant perennials in the garden.
- If dry, prepare soil for planting by adding compost or other organic matter.
- As growth begins, fertilize gardens with a balanced fertilizer.
- Start seeds indoors under lights for transplanting to the garden.
- Plant new roses. Remove winter mulch from existing roses and prune.
- Cut ornamental grasses back to within 3 to 5 inches of the ground.
- Fertilize spring flowering bulbs such as tulips and daffodils.
- Cut seed pods from spent bulbs.
- Help control iris borers by destroying old foliage before new growth begins.
- Unwrap mail order plants immediately and keep them cool and moist until planting.

Lawns

- Spot spray for dandelions, henbit, and chickweed.
- Apply crabgrass preventer in late March through mid April for best results.
- Seed thin areas in bluegrass and tall fescue lawns.
- If no fall application of fertilizer was made, fertilize bluegrass and tall fescue.
- Mow grass ½ inch lower to remove winter debris. Do not scalp.

Trees and Shrubs

- Pruning:
 - o Prune trees, except birch, maple, and walnut, which are best pruned after leafing out.
 - o Wait to prune spring flowering shrubs until after they bloom.
- Mulch tree and shrub plantings up to 4 inches deep, keeping mulch away from trunks.
- Fertilize trees and shrubs.
- Plant new trees in the landscape.
- Remove tree wraps from young trees for summer growth.
- Rake and clean groundcover planting.

Miscellaneous

- Sharpen and repair garden tools.

For more information on lawns and gardens, contact the Cowley County Extension Office
221-5450, 441-4565.

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