

APRIL

MAINTENANCE

- ⊙ Thin seedlings of basil, carrots, green onions, lettuce, and other vegetables that were sown too thickly; cut them out at ground level with scissors.
- ⊙ Mulch the soil. To save water, smother weeds, and keep soil cooler, spread 1 to 3 inches (depending on the size of the plant) of bark chips, compost, wood shavings, or other organic material under shrubs and trees, and around flowers and vegetables. Keep mulch away from stems, trunks and emerging perennials.
- ⊙ Mow evergreen groundcovers on highest setting.
- ⊙ Prune azalea, forsythia and other spring-flowering plants after they bloom.
- ⊙ Trim ornamental grasses.
- ⊙ To eliminate fruit on olives, liquidambar and ornamental plums, apply Florel Fruit Eliminator anytime once they begin blooming through full bloom.
- ⊙ **Mosquitoes** are already showing up in our gardens. Empty dishes, pots and saucers of water. Use Mosquito Dunks in ponds and fountains. If you have holes in trees which collect water, squirt a teaspoonful of Horticultural Oil into the hole.
- ⊙ If you are encouraging birds to your garden with food and flowers, don't forget drinking water. Keep the bird bath clean and full all year round (yes, even in winter).
- ⊙ To learn more about conserving water in Redwood City, phone 650.780.7436 for a [water conservation](#) analysis.
- ⊙ Plan to clean your pump filter more frequently in the spring and summer months to come.
- ⊙ April and May are good months to divide overcrowded plants in your pond.

FERTILIZING

- ⊙ Feed citrus, roses, and fall-planted shrubs and ground covers.
- ⊙ Lightly fertilize other trees and shrubs (heavy fall fertilization is best).
- ⊙ Fertilize groundcovers on Memorial Day and Labor Day until well established and then only about Memorial Day.
- ⊙ Deciduous fruit trees can be fertilized around Memorial Day and Labor Day with Master Nursery Fruit Tree & Vine Food or a month earlier with Dr. Earth Citrus & Fruit Tree Fertilizer.

- ⊙ Start feeding potted plants every two to three weeks with half-strength liquid fertilizer, or apply a controlled-release fertilizer according to package directions.
- ⊙ Feed spring-blooming acid lovers such as azaleas, camellias and rhododendrons after they finish blooming.
- ⊙ Correct chlorosis. If plants such as camellias, citrus, gardenias, and grapes are chlorotic (they show yellow mottling between green leaf veins), spray leaves with a foliar fertilizer containing iron and zinc. For long-term results, apply chelated iron or an acid-forming fertilizer containing chelated iron.
- ⊙ Fertilize warm season turf. If you leave lawn clippings, you can reduce fertilizer use by 30 to 50 percent without any danger of thatch or unsightliness.

PEST/ WEED CONTROL

- ⊙ Bait for slugs and snails, or handpick them at night.
- ⊙ Blast aphids off tender new growth with a hose, or spray leaves with insecticidal soap.
- ⊙ If Rose Slugs have left your rose bushes with small irregular holes in the leaves in the past, spray now with Orthenex if any bushes show symptoms.
- ⊙ Spray apple and pear trees for codling moths after the petals have dropped.
- ⊙ To help prevent thrips on gladioli, soak bulbs 2 to 3 hours in a weak Bleach or Lysol solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts water).
- ⊙ Now is the best time to treat lawns for grubs to prevent raccoons and skunks from digging and rolling up your turf later this summer. Advanced Lawn Grub Control is available as a spray or pellets and will eliminate the grubs and other meaty things in your lawn which the raccoons and skunks feed on. Or, Beneficial Nematodes, microscopic parasitic worms, can be sprinkled on the lawn and will only attack grubs, fleas and harmful larvae. Molemax or Grants Mole Repellent doesn't kill anything but works quite well in chasing away gophers, moles and skunks.
- ⊙ Trimec Plus is the only product to control wild onion and nutsedge in lawns or tilled areas. It will also control oxalis.
- ⊙ Pinch new growth of fuchsias to make the plants bushier. Fuchsia mites cause the leaves to crinkle up and appear gnarly. U.C. Davis recommends spraying once a month with Sevin, starting when the first leaves are about one inch long. If you had mites last year, start spraying as soon as you prune.
- ⊙ Check plants for spittle bugs, (the larva of leaf hoppers) and blast them off with a stream of water or spray with Pyrethrin found in Master Nursery Rose and Flower Insect Spray or spray with Malathion.

PLANTING

- ⊙ Finish planting summer-blooming bulbs such as callas, dahlias, gladiolus, cannas, and tuberous begonias. Plant gladiolus bulbs in 2-week intervals through April, May and June for continuous bloom. Plant bulbs about 4 times the depth of the bulb. If you plant the bulbs 4 to 6 inches apart, the plants will act as stakes and support one another.
- ⊙ Plant calendulas, dianthus, forget-me-nots, pansies, and other cool-weather flowers.

- ⊙ Plant bare-root perennials (perennials purchased through mail-order sources are often shipped this way). Before planting, carefully untangle the roots. Spread them over a cone of soil in the center of a good-size planting hole. Refill the hole, burying the roots to just below the crown (where new foliage emerges).
- ⊙ Plant seedlings of warm-season vegetables such as eggplants, peppers, and tomatoes.
- ⊙ Sow beans, beets, carrots, cucumbers, lettuce, radishes, sweet corn, and Swiss chard if you haven't already done so.
- ⊙ Plant herbs such as basil, chives, parsley, sage, and thyme.
- ⊙ Plant nasturtiums now. They are easy to grow from seed.
- ⊙ Plant sunflowers in stages so you'll have continuous bloom throughout summer.
- ⊙ If needed, now is a good time to roll out new sod or sow grass seed.
- ⊙ Now through mid-May is the best time to plant groundcovers, as they become easily established before the heat of summer. Erigeron, Ceanothus and Manzanita are excellent groundcovers for hot, dry locations (though they do need water while becoming established).
- ⊙ Most water garden plants can be planted now.

SHOPPING

- ⊙ Six-packs and pots of annuals and perennials will tempt you.
- ⊙ Herbaceous and tree peonies are blooming about now and are available in 2 or 5-gallon cans. While both prefer cold winters, tree peonies perform a little better in our mild winter climate. Plant in full to mostly sun, amending the soil liberally to facilitate drainage and add two inches of mulch. Plant so that the roots are only one or two inches below the soil surface. Bare roots are usually available by the first of May.
- ⊙ Explore the vast selection of plants (in particular, luscious heirloom tomato varieties) at the popular annual Spring Garden Market organized by the Master Gardeners of Santa Clara County. For date and location, check <http://www.mastergardeners.org>.
- ⊙ Make plans to attend: Native Plant Sale, April 7 at Hidden Villa, Los Altos Hills; the Wildflower Show, April 14- 15 at Mission College, Santa Clara (details on both: <http://www.cnps-scv.org>); and the Going Native Garden Tour, April 29 in locations all over Santa Clara County (details: <http://www.goingnativegardentour.org>).