



1958 - 2008
50th Anniversary

J&L Garden Center

The All Season Gift
and Garden Center

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March and April Gardening

Spring brings ideal conditions for cool-season vegetables and flowers. Cool-season vegetables and flowers are able to withstand light frosts, so we can extend our growing season by planting them early. On the other hand, warm-season vegetables and flowers cannot tolerate any frost, so they need to be planted later in the spring, after the danger of frost is past.

Don't be in too big of a hurry to plant warm-season vegetables and annual flowers outside this spring. If you plant too early, you may have to replant them when it warms up. It is better to plant many warm-season annual flowers and vegetables a 'day too late' than a 'day too early'. Many factors influence how cold tolerant a particular plant will be. Watch the weather and plan your planting schedule according to the forecast, not according to the calendar. We have several handouts available that have information about the planting times and cold hardiness of some of the common annual flowers and vegetables. We also have our **2009 Gardening Calendar** available which gives helpful hints about spring planting times. Stop by to pick up a free copy or download a copy from our website.

www.jlgardencenter.com/uploads/handouts/2009Calendar.pdf

Pansies and Primroses

Pansies and primroses are two great cool-season flowers. They bloom early in the year, letting us know that spring is just around the corner. Pansies and primroses love cool weather, so they grow great in gardens that are also used for begonias and impatiens later in the summer. Pansies also grow well in full

sun, and will bloom repeatedly from fall to early spring, and even well into the summer, until the temperature gets extremely hot. Some gardeners actually have a few pansies bloom all summer. Treat pansies like petunias. Remove the old plants when they start to fade and plant new ones in the fall. Don't try to keep them alive through the hot summer weather. If you planted pansies last fall, you are probably already enjoying their blossoms.

Primroses will grow and bloom for at least a month or two in the early spring. You can extend their blooming time if you take time to remove the old flowers as soon as they start to fade. A new set of flowers may begin to grow if you remove the old blossoms soon enough. Remember, pansies and primroses love the cool areas, they do not like the hot, sunny areas. We have both of these flowers in stock - ready for planting in your gardens.

Rose Care

Wait until your roses start to send out new leaves before you prune and fertilize them; usually wait until early to mid-April to prune. Pruning roses too early in the spring may stimulate them to start growing before they normally would. This new growth could be damaged by any unseasonably cold temperatures. The general rule for pruning roses is to prune them severely in April, and then lightly trim and shape them all summer, to keep them blooming their best. Don't stop trimming roses until October, when it is time to let them prepare for winter.

Fertilize your roses with **Bayer Rose & Flower Fertilizer with Systemic Insecticide** as soon as you prune them. Fertilize your roses every two months until August 15 with this same fertilizer. This fertilizer will help your roses grow and bloom vigorously while keeping the pesky aphids and thrips under control. In addition, spread one-third cup of **Magnesium Sulphate** (Epsom Salts) around each rose bush when you prune them. Spread another one-third cup of Epsom salts around each rose bush again in mid-July. Your roses will look beautiful all summer. **Magnesium Sulphate** is also great to use in all the flower and vegetable gardens. Put some Magnesium Sulphate around your petunias, marigolds, and tomatoes. You will notice a big difference in their growth.

Garden Fresh Vegetables

Deciding What To Grow. Although it's tempting to grow lots of different vegetables, stick with what you actually eat and enjoy. Make a list of your favorite vegetables and then pick from that list. Consider vegetables that will yield a large, healthy crop and are easy to grow.

For instance, asparagus is fussy and takes at least two years to yield a crop. However, radishes, onions, lettuce, peas, squash, green beans, carrots, and tomatoes are easy to grow, and yield a good crop. Keep in mind that squash is quite prolific,

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so one plant will generally do.

Harvest Regularly. Lettuce, Spinach, and Swiss Chard can be used as it grows. Just cut off a few leaves and let the rest continue to grow. Zucchini squash is best harvested when it is just a few inches long. Many vegetables can be harvested at different stages and will continue to produce during the summer. If it looks like it's ready to eat, it probably is.

Vegetable gardening will spoil you, and buying grocery store produce won't be nearly as appealing. Gardening will not only provide a healthy bounty of great tasting vegetables, but it is also good therapy and exercise.

What About Peas

What can taste better than peas fresh from the garden? Peas are one of the first vegetables to ripen in your garden and they are one of the first rewards of the year for your efforts. Pea plants love the cool spring weather and should be planted as early in the spring as possible. Plant peas as soon as the soil dries out enough that you can cultivate it. If you plan ahead you can roto till your gardens in the fall, so you don't have to wait so long in the spring to plant your peas. If you haven't planted your peas yet, plant them as soon as possible. Try **Early Frosty, Sugar Sprint, Little Marvel, Mr. Big, Sugar Snap, Green Arrow** or **Lincoln** peas.

When you plant pea seeds early, or any other seeds earlier than normal, be sure to dust them with **Bonide Garden Dust**, a fungicide. Seeds planted in a cold and wet soil may rot before they have a chance to germinate. You can also help pea plants to be more productive by soaking the seeds in **Nitragin Garden Inoculant** before you plant them. Garden Inoculant is a natural, nitrogen-fixing bacteria that helps the plants absorb nitrogen from the air and put it into the soil. Garden Inoculant also works great with bean seeds.

Peas love companions. You can grow two crops in the space of one, and provide extra benefits for both. Plant carrot seeds, beet seeds, or onion seeds in the rows along with your pea seeds. After you harvest your peas, and cut off the pea plants, you'll have a nice crop of carrots, beets, or onions growing.

Plant peas and a warm-season crop together. Peas and tomatoes work well together. Plant peas in a ring around the outside of tomato cages in early-spring. The peas will climb the wire. Transplant tomatoes inside the cages as the weather allows. The peas will protect tomatoes from cool weather. The peas will fade away and leave behind an extra boost of nitrogen for the hungry tomatoes.

You can also train peas on a wooden A-frame, covered with netting. Interplant cucumbers between the peas when the soil is warm enough. As the peas fade away, the cucumbers will begin filling in the space, reaping the benefits of the nitrogen left by the peas. Try other types of plants with your peas to see what combination works best in your garden.

Onions Taste Great

Onions are probably grown in more home gardens than any other vegetable. They are one of the early vegetables that you can harvest from your garden in the spring, especially if you plant your onion seeds in the fall, before winter sets in.

Onions can be grown from seed, plants, or from sets. Many gardeners have more success with sets, but you can grow larger onions if you plant them from seed. All onion varieties can be used for green onions if they are harvested at the right time.

Onions can be used as green onions in only 30 days when grown from plants or sets, or 40 to 50 days when grown from seed. Try **Walla Walla, Yellow Spanish, Red Burgundy, or White Spanish** onions. Other excellent varieties include **Candy Hybrid, Tokyo Bunching** and **Crystal White Pickling** onions.

Onions grow best in cool temperatures (55 F to 75 degrees F) until the plants have a chance to produce large leaves and roots. The earlier you can plant onions, the better they will grow. Onions require consistent watering and regular fertilization for best flavor. Unfavorable growing conditions (too hot, too dry, not enough fertilizer) may reduce the quality of your onions. If flower stalks should develop prematurely, carefully cut them from the plant immediately.

Plant onions close together and then harvest them to thin the onions to a final three-inch plant spacing. Try planting radish seeds with your onion seeds. As you harvest the radishes you will be thinning your onions.

Don't Forget Fresh Beans

Beans are a warm-season crop. Beans hate the cold weather, they especially hate cold, wet soil. Wait to plant beans until a week or two after the last frost. If you plant bean seeds too early, they may rot if the soil is too wet and cold for quick germination. Plant a crop of bush beans every two or three weeks from Mid-May until Late-July for an extended harvest season. You can even plant a crop of beans in the same garden area that you grew your early crop of peas. Beans are '*nitrogen fixing*' plants. This means that they can take nitrogen out of the air and '*fix it*' into the soil for all plants to use. Bean plants must have a special bacteria to help them complete the process, so inoculate the seeds with **Nitragin**, the '*nitrogen fixing*' bacteria, right when you plant them. Some of the best varieties of beans are **Slenderette, Blue Lake Bush, Top Crop, Roma II, and Golden Wax**. We also have **Blue Lake Pole** and **Kentucky Wonder Pole** bean seeds available.

Nothing Is Better Than Fresh Corn

There are many different varieties of Corn to choose from. Which variety is the best? That is a question you will have to answer for yourself!

Corn is a hot-weather vegetable. Do not plant corn until the soil is 60° to 65° F degrees. At 50°, the seeds are able to absorb water so they are prone to rotting if they do not germinate quickly. Corn seeds are most sensitive to the cold, wet conditions during the first 24 to 48 hours after planting. If you do try to plant corn seeds early, be sure to dust them with **Bonide Garden Dust**, a fungicide, to help prevent them from rotting.

Plant corn seeds one inch deep. Plant 2 or 3 seeds twelve inches apart. After germination, thin plants to one or two plants every twelve inches. Corn planted too closely will produce smaller ears than corn spaced properly. One half pound of corn seed will plant a 500' row.

For best pollination, plant corn in short, small blocks rather than in long narrow rows. Do not plant different varieties near one another. Corn cross pollinates very easily and the flavor may change if pollinated by an undesired variety. Plant a crop of corn every two weeks from mid-May until late-July for an extended harvest season. Some of our favorite varieties of corn are **Miracle, Incredible, Bodacious, Kandy Korn, Peaches & Cream, Serendipity, Sugar Buns, and Honey Select**.

You may want to invest in a soil thermometer to help determined the best time to plant your seeds.

Garden Fresh Potatoes

Potatoes can be an easy and rewarding vegetable crop in your home garden. Each plant requires up to four square feet. Potatoes can produce up to ten pounds of potatoes for every one pound of potatoes you plant. Plant your potatoes between mid-March and mid-July. Cut your potatoes, dust them with **Bonide Garden Dust**, and let them sit 24 hours before planting them. If you want to store your potatoes for winter use, plant them a week or two later than you plant them for summer use. Potatoes grow best in light, sandy soil. They do not like heavy soil or soil that stays wet. Potatoes that are grown in heavy soil are usually deformed, stunted and sometimes do not produce tubers at all. Potatoes need full sun and lots of fertilizer to produce their largest yield. They will grow in partial sun if they are not kept too wet. You will not get a large harvest in the shade. The best varieties to plant are **Red Pontiac, Red Norland, Lasoda, Norgold Russet and Russet Burbank**. However, don't be afraid to try **Yukon Gold** or **All Blue** for some interesting potatoes.

Gardening For Kids

Most kids love to play in the dirt. Gardening is a fun and educational way for them to learn about plants, and how to grow them, while allowing them to get their hands dirty!



Vegetables are a good choice for the first time gardener. Starting seeds inside the house, or out in the garden, is easy. Anticipating the results can be exciting. Early crops, like peas, produce great results quickly and helps them anticipate their later plantings of beans, pumpkins or tomatoes.

Flowers can also be fun for kids to plant and grow. Sunflowers are a real favorite. Marigolds and zinnias are also extremely easy for kids to grow.

Having their own gardening tools is an added incentive for kids to participate in the gardening experience. We have a large variety of tools and educational supplies, made especially for kids, that will make their gardening experience fun. Using their own gloves, watering can, shovel, or rake, while they are taking care of their plants, gives them ownership of their project.

Gardening, as a family, is a great way to spend quality time together. It provides opportunities to get to know each other, to learn about plants, weeds, and bugs, as well as a good way to teach kids responsibility. There is a real sense of achievement when they can eat their own vegetables, or see their own flowers in a vase in the front room.

Whatever they grow, vegetables or flowers, seeing the results of their hard work is rewarding and will get them excited for the next growing season.

Crop Rotation

Crop rotation is the practice of changing the type of crops growing in a garden each year. Farmers use crop rotation extensively in the management of their fields. Without crop rotation, farmers would suffer heavy losses in their harvest. Home gardeners have a much harder time trying to rotate their crops because of the limited amount of space available, and the types of plants they want to grow in their yard. However, it is always a good idea not to plant the same type of plant, in the same area, year after year. Both insects and diseases multiply in the soil and can greatly affect the plants. A little change helps a lot. We have a handout about crop rotation, if you would like more information.

Saving Seeds for Next Year

If you plan to save your seeds to use next year, you need to be aware of the different kinds of vegetables that you grow. There is a difference in saving seeds from **Hybrid, Non-Hybrid, or Heirloom** plants

Heirloom - must be 'open-pollinated'. They are genetically diverse varieties that have been grown for at least 50 years. They are non-hybrid varieties, and the seeds can be collected and re-planted. Most heirloom varieties are not used in modern 'large-scale' agriculture.

Open pollinated (non-Hybrid) - Pollination occurs by insects, birds, wind, or other natural mechanisms. The variety will grow 'true-to-type', which means the seeds will produce plants identical to the parent plant, year after year.

When harvesting seed, if the best 2/3 of the crop is used for seed, the variety will hold it's qualities. If only the best 1/2, or less, of the crop is used for seed, the variety will improve. Varieties that have been cultivated less than 50 years are not considered heirloom.

F1 Hybrids - These varieties are the results of controlled, special pollination procedures. Generally, two open pollinated varieties are planted side by side, ensuring that every seed will receive pollen from one variety (father) and grown on a distinctively different variety (mother). Each seed is genetically identical. The plant is different than both parents, and has distinctive characteristics from one or both of the parents. Hand pollination, isolation, or physical barriers are often used in the pollination process.

F1 hybrids usually have better qualities, better flavor, higher yields or in some way have better traits than traditional, open pollinated varieties. Seeds from the F1 Hybrids may be sterile.

F2 Hybrids - The seed from the F1 hybrid plants are called F2 Hybrids. The seed will not be identical to the parents, and, the seed will not always produce desirable results. The results from the seed will be random, and you will not know until harvest what the results will be; worse, same or better.

Genetically Engineered - The DNA of the plant has been changed. Through laboratory means, one plant's genetics are implanted into another plant, where it would never have occurred naturally.

If you grow open-pollinated varieties that you like, you can save the best seed and replant it the next year. **If you grow a hybrid variety that you like**, you must go back to the seed source and purchase new seed to plant the next year.

Harvest and Food Storage

Food storage is a **wise investment** for the future. It is an even wiser investment if you practice '**storing what you use, and using what you store**'. We have a handout giving some tips on harvesting and storing 'Vegetables and Fruits'. You may want to learn more about this important subject and start storing what you grow.

Two years ago, we starting stocking many food storage items. We have many of the basics, water barrels, wheat, milk, flour, rice, etc. In addition, we have some items that will make your food storage more palatable; spices, freeze dried mangos, raspberries, peaches, strawberries, peas, broccoli, asparagus, soup mixes, TVP products, and more. Please stop by and pick up a list of the items we have in stock or download a copy from our website.

<http://www.jlgardencenter.com/products/foodstorage.htm>

When considering what foods to store, make your food storage a 'life-style food storage', rather than a 'make-do food storage'. A food storage that matches your family's life-style, means that you store foods that you will use and that you like. If you are going to store food, make sure that the food you store is adequate for the need that you and your family anticipate. This may not be as easy as to achieve as you think.



New Rose Varieties for 2009

There are three new 2009 AARS winning roses. They are: *Cinco de Mayo - floribunda rose - smoky lavender & rust*, *Carefree Spirit - shrub rose- red & white bicolor*, *Pink Promise - hybrid tea rose - pink & cream blend*. It will be hard for you to choose the perfect variety for your yard from our 100+ varieties of roses in stock. They are ready to plant, as soon as the weather cooperates. Stop by and pick up a copy of our 2009 Rose Price List, or download a copy from our website.

Climbing Roses

If your climbing roses are not blooming very well don't give up, just be patient and be sure to prune them correctly. Newly planted climbing roses have their own timetable, they do not grow and bloom like regular hybrid tea or floribunda roses. Many older varieties of climbing roses (Climbing Queen Elizabeth, Peace, Louisiana, Royal Gold, etc.) only bloom on three year old canes so, if you prune them too severely, they will not bloom properly. Most of the newer varieties of climbing roses (Climbing America, 4th of July, Dream Weaver, Candy Land, Blaze of Glory, etc.) will bloom on both old and new canes. These newer varieties may also bloom 2 or 3 times during the summer, making them even more showy than the older varieties. Fertilize and water climbing roses just like bush roses but don't prune climbing roses as severely as bush roses or they may not bloom properly.

Lawn Care

Many gardeners are not exactly sure when to fertilize, when to spray for weeds, how much water to apply, or when to prevent insect and disease problems. These questions may vary from year to year, and from yard to yard, but the basics are:

1. Fertilize your lawn 4 times each year (every two months). Start fertilizing in March or April. Always skip July.
2. Prevent crabgrass (and many other weeds) when the soil temperature reaches 55 degrees - approximately when forsythia plants finish blooming (usually mid-April).
3. Prevent spurge (and many other weeds) when the soil temperature reaches 65 to 70 degrees (usually mid-May).
4. Control dandelions as soon as you see them (April through October).
5. Prevent sod webworms and lawn grubs in April or May. Prevent billbugs in late June or July. Control other lawn insects whenever they are active in the soil (May to October).
6. Control lawn diseases when you see them (May to September). Many lawn diseases can be prevented just by proper watering and fertilizing procedures.
7. Aerate every 2 or 3 years, or as needed. You can aerate your lawn anytime of the year. Aerating your lawn may also help control Nightcrawlers. Chemicals are not very effective in controlling nightcrawlers.
8. Power rake in the fall rather than in the spring. However, aerating is usually better for the lawn than power raking.
9. Water deeply and as infrequently as possible. Do not water every day, even during the heat of the summer. Start watering once a week; then twice a week; then three times a week during the hot summer weather. Cut back to twice a week in September and once a week in October, or as the weather permits.
10. Mow your lawn about 1.5 inches long in the spring and fall. Raise the lawnmower to 2 to 2.5 inches during the hot summer weather.

Lower the lawnmower to 1.5 inches in the fall, when the temperature begins to drop.

Each lawn is a little different and may require special care. Stop by to talk to one of our lawn experts. We have a "Four-step Lawn Fertilizer Package" that provides enough fertilizer for an average 5,000 square foot lawn for the entire year.

Dr. Earth Organic Fertilizers

Dr. Earth fertilizers provide fast growth plus long-term plant and soil health associated with true organic fertilizers. It is not enough to gather a few organic or natural ingredients and mix them with randomly sourced organisms, package them in a box, and expect them to produce a high quality fertilizer. Dr. Earth has conducted extensive research to produce consistent premium products for over 11 years. Dr. Earth uses many premium organic components, mycorrhizae, and seven champion strains of beneficial soil microbes. Their fertilizers provide fast and sustained results that last for months in the soil, providing plant nutrients over a long period of time.

Dr. Earth has ten different blends of organic fertilizers, perfect to meet any fertilizer needs your garden may have. **Bulb Food, Starter Fertilizer, Rose Fertilizer, Azalea Fertilizer, Tomato & Vegetable Fertilizer, Flower Garden Fertilizer, All-Purpose Fertilizer, Bud & Bloom Fertilizer, Fruit Tree Fertilizer, and Tropical Plant Fertilizer.**

Dr. Earth also has an excellent organic lawn fertilizer. This is a premium, slow release fertilizer that consistently feeds the lawn for an extended time. This fertilizer lasts longer than most chemical fertilizers. You only need to apply Dr. Earth Lawn Food three times each year, instead of the traditional four times you apply chemical fertilizers. **Dr. Earth Lawn Fertilizer** contains many beneficial bacteria that can help prevent some lawn problems and diseases. This fertilizer will not cure lawn diseases, but it can help a lawn recover from a disease or other stress problems. We have a handout that gives more details about **Dr. Earth organic fertilizers**. We also have a link to the Dr. Earth Website. Please stop by and pick up a copy, or download it from our website.

Row Cropping or Raised Beds

The most common type of planting is done in rows with a footpath in between for room to weed and tend to individual plants. In this case, it's nice to plan out your rows depending on the needs of each vegetable. Measure and mark your rows for a tidy organized garden.

Many build raised beds for each vegetable type or vegetable combination. They look nice and make better use of space. Raised beds also allow you to build the soil from scratch, only putting into the beds the soil combinations that work best for your vegetables. However, building raised beds also takes more time and money. So it all depends on how you want to use your resources. **'Square Foot Gardening'** is a very popular way of using raised beds. Be sure to attend one of our gardening classes to learn more about this type of gardening.

Feed Your Garden Soil - not just your plants

Your garden's soil condition is the single most important part of gardening success. Without the proper soil conditions, gardening can become a chore, and your plants will not respond and grow the way you want them to grow. Some of the insect and disease problems your plants struggle with during the summer may be prevented just by making sure your soil is in

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good condition before you plant them.

First, remember **Garden Soil is not Dirt**. Dirt is the stuff you wash out of your clothes after working in the yard. Garden Soil is a complex mixture of minerals, air, water, organic matter, microbes, and other critters. Soil is full of life and deserves your attention. With good soil, gardening will be more fun. The soil will be easier to plant in, cultivate, and it will be easier to grow your plants.

Perfect soil is hard to come by in most home gardens and it may take a little extra effort to achieve. The best way to improve your garden soil is by adding **Organic Materials** every year. The best time to apply **Organic Materials** is in the fall, not in the spring. However, most gardeners forget to add **Organic Materials** in the fall, so it is important to add 'well-rotted' **Organic Materials** in the spring. Mix as much well-rotted manure, Bumper Crop, Ferti Mulch, Soil Pep, or other organic materials (within reason) as you can afford. Do not add fresh materials or your plants will actually suffer. You will be amazed how much better your soil is this year than it was last year. Many garden soils may take four, six, or even ten years to completely change, but you will notice an improvement each year.

Improve Clay Soil Conditions

Many garden soils lack the necessary physical structure to hold, or to allow movement of air and water for plants to grow, especially clay soil. Most clay soil needs additives that will hold water (like peatmoss) but that will allow water to drain (like sand). However, adding peatmoss and sand to clay soil may just add to the problem. Clay and sand mixed together may produce 'bricks' instead of better soil. If you want to add sand to clay soil, you must add 'a lot of sand' to improve the soil. Peatmoss mixed with clay may produce a soil that stays too wet, too long. This may cause worse problems for your plants than not adding any mulch at all.

The best way to fix a clay soil problem is to add lots of 'old - coarse' organic materials such as Bumper Crop, Black Forest Compost, manure, compost, or Soil Pep. Perlite is also an excellent coarse, inorganic additive that can help correct clay soil problems. **Do not add peatmoss or plain sand to clay soil.**

Another additive that is available to help improve clay soil is **Utelite, Clay Soil Conditioner**. **Utelite** is a porous rock chip which acts as a permanent reservoir for both air and water. **Utelite** increases the water holding capacity of the soil and it also helps improve drainage within the soil. It does not decompose so it does not have to be added every year. For best results, add as much **Utelite** to the soil as you can reasonably afford. You can mix 10% to 25% to 50% **Utelite** with good results. Add **Utelite**

Recipe for Good Garden Soil

For a 'quick fix' of a 100 square foot area (10'x10') 8" deep use:

5 bags **Bumper Crop Mulch** - It adds organic mulch, 'trace' nutrients, and mycorrhizae.

5 lbs **Ironite** - It adds iron to your soil

5 lbs **Dr. Earth #7 All Purpose Fertilizer**

5 lbs **Gypsum** - It adds sulphur and calcium to the soil and releases nutrients already in the soil.

5 lbs **Natural Guard Soil Activator** - It contains Humic Acid which organically activates the soil with humates.

Mix well into the soil. Plant, and water thoroughly.

You will be pleased with the results.

every year until the soil texture is the way you like it. One cubic yard should cover 450 to 650 square feet about 1/2" thick. We have **Utelite** available by the bag and by the truckload.

Gypsum is a soil conditioner that helps to improve clay soil. However, gypsum changes the chemical structure of the soil, not the physical structure. Gypsum actually helps to improve all soils, not just clay soils. Gypsum improves the soil by adding calcium and sulphur, which allows the soil particles to release other nutrients that are in the soil. Plants can then absorb and utilize the nutrients that were not previously available for the roots to use, even though they were in the soil. Water can then help remove unwanted nutrients the gypsum has released. For more information about improving garden soil please ask for a copy of our '**Garden Soil and Mulch**' handout.

Soil pH

Soil pH is the measurement of how acidic or alkaline the soil is. The pH scale runs from 0 to 14. Numbers from 0 to 7 are acid, and from 7 to 14 are alkaline; 7 is considered neutral.

For Gardeners, soil pH is the number that really counts. Soil pH affects nutrient availability and microbial activity. Most plants grow best at a slightly acid to neutral pH (6.5 to 7) although certain plants have adapted to extreme pH environments in both directions. In our area, most soils have a high pH. The further west you live, the closer to the lake, the higher the pH your soil will be. Some areas have very alkaline soil conditions.

Either test your soil yourself, or have a soil test by USU to determine what steps you need to take to correct your soil condition. To lower the pH of an alkaline soil, use sulfur or gypsum. You will need to apply sulfur or gypsum regularly and in fairly large quantities to correct the pH. You do need a soil test to determine how much sulfur or gypsum you need to buy.

To raise the pH of an acid soil, add gypsum or lime. We have an excellent handout about Garden Soils that goes into more details about the soil pH. Please stop by for a free copy of this handout.

Humic Acid

Humic acid is a natural soil stimulant. It is processed from some of the most concentrated organic materials available. Humic acid is usually composed of 50% carbon, 40% oxygen, 5% hydrogen, 3% nitrogen, 1% phosphorous, and 1% sulphur. Most humic acid was formed when trees and vegetation underwent compaction and heating many thousands of years ago. Over the ages, this organic material was slowly carbonized and became coal. During this compaction process, many of the organic acids and esters, contained within the vegetation, were squeezed out and formed a pool on top of the coal. This pool dried, aged, and became a layer known as shale. This layer of shale is the source of humate, which contains humic acid. Because of its vegetative origin, this material is very rich. It benefits all plants when incorporated into the soil.

Humic acid helps chelate many nutrients and helps bind them to soil particles. Chelated nutrients that are attached to soil particles, are easier for plants to absorb and use. Magnesium, iron, calcium and many other 'trace elements' are just some of the nutrients that humic acid helps plants utilize more effectively. Humic acid helps the fertilizer you apply reach the plants easier. It also helps to release nutrients, already in the soil, that your plants have not been able to absorb and utilize.

Add humic acid to the soil as you rototill your gardens in

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the spring. You can also spread humic acid on your lawn, just like fertilizer. It can be applied any time of the year - spring, summer, or fall. Humic acid is not a fertilizer, but your plants will respond as if you just fertilized them. If your lawn needs a little 'extra help' during the hot, summer weather, apply humic acid instead of lawn fertilizer to green it up. Humic acid helps all plants become more healthy. It can actually help prevent, and help plants overcome, insect and disease problems. We have 20lb and 40lb bags of Humic Acid called **Natural Guard Soil Activator**.

Fertilizing Fruit Trees

Besides pruning and dormant spraying your fruit trees, fertilizing them should be a high priority each spring. Fruit trees must be fertilized early each spring if they are to produce high quality fruit every year. Fruit trees need more fertilizer than shade trees or pine trees. Fruit trees should be fertilized at least six weeks before they bloom. Do not fertilize your older fruit trees after their blossoms drop, or your trees may produce too much undesired growth later in the year.

Young trees (up to 5 years old) benefit from the use of **Fertilizer Stakes**. Older trees (more than 5 years old) benefit more from a good garden fertilizer, such as **16-16-8 Multipurpose Fertilizer** or **Dr. Earth #7 All Purpose Fertilizer**, than from fertilizer stakes.

Too much fertilizer can be just as bad for fruit trees as not enough. Stop by and pick up a **Fertilizing Fruit Trees** handout, to help you decide how much fertilizer your trees really need.

Pruning - It's important to do it right

One of the most important jobs early each spring is pruning. Prune plants to make them more eye appealing, to correct potential problems, to keep plants healthy and strong, to encourage more blossoms, and to 'just make-plants-more-beautiful'. Pruning helps you keep your plants growing the way they should -or at least the way you think they should grow.

The best time of year to prune is '**RIGHT NOW**', whatever time of year it is; especially if the plant has a problem. Preventative pruning and major pruning should be done early in the spring, while the plant is dormant. Minor pruning, shaping, and trimming can be done all summer as needed. Don't prune plants heavily in the fall, when plants are getting ready for winter. Wait until the plants actually go dormant in the fall or winter before pruning them.

Early-Spring: Pruning during winter dormancy helps the tree produce a vigorous burst of new growth in the spring. The tree's framework is easy to see and major faults can be easily detected and repaired. Prune grapes in January or February. Prune fruit trees just before they start to grow in the spring.

Prune summer flowering trees and shrubs (such as rose of Sharon, potentilla, butterfly bush, golden rain tree, and hydrangeas) anytime before they start growing in the spring.

If your main goal for spring flowering trees and shrubs, is to have as many flowers as possible, wait until after they have finished blooming to prune them. Prune all your spring flowering trees and shrubs (such as lilac, forsythia, wisteria, bridle-wreath, flowering cherry, flowering pear, and quince) later in the spring or early in the summer.

Summer: Pruning after the burst of new growth helps to slow down or '*dwarf*' a plant. You can control the suckers and branches you don't want to grow, without stimulating new

branches to take their place. You can also reduce the number of leaves on the plant, which will also help to slow down the plant's overall growth.

Fall: Fall pruning helps to prevent damage from heavy snow-falls. Fall pruning also helps eliminate unwanted insect and disease problems. Major fall pruning should be kept to a minimum so that you do not stimulate new growth, too late in the year, that would be prone to winter injury.

Winter: Some trees will bleed sap if they are pruned heavily in the spring. This sap loss is not usually harmful, but it may invite insect or disease problems. Prune trees that bleed either in the late-fall or during the winter. Maple trees, birch trees, beech trees, dogwood trees, willow trees, grapevines, and some flowering trees will bleed sap if you prune them in the spring.

Pruning is an art, not a science. Even though there are correct principles and steps for pruning, there is not '*one best way*' to prune a tree or shrub. Unfortunately, trial and error is usually the best teacher. Many gardeners are reluctant to prune because they are not sure how to prune, or they are afraid of making a mistake and injuring their plants. Plants are usually very forgiving and will often recover from incorrect pruning - your plants may take a few years, but they will usually recover.

1. Start pruning the tree while it is still young. The cuts will be small and the tree will grow the way you want it to, right from the beginning.

2. Start with a visual inspection of the tree. Start at the top and work to the bottom. Remove defective parts such as dead, diseased, broken, narrow crotched, and hanging branches (except in weeping trees) before you try to shape the tree. Stand back and look again. What has changed, does it look better or worse?

3. After removing any defective branches, trim and shape your tree according to the type of tree it is. Knowing what shape and what size your tree should be is helpful in determining how much to prune. If the tree is too dense, remove a few of the branches to 'open it up' but make sure to keep the tree uniform. If the tree is too tall or wide, trim some of the branches part way back, but keep the tree uniform.

4. Stand back and look again. What has changed, does it look better or worse? Repeat this step until you are satisfied with the results.

It's Time To Dormant Spray

Dormant spray is the single most important spray of the year, because it prevents and kills more insects than any other single spray during the year. **Dormant Spray** is an insecticide that you apply before plants begin to grow, while they are still dormant. Dormant oil (not motor oil) can be sprayed alone. It can also be mixed with another insecticide such as **Malathion** or **Lime Sulfur**. All plants benefit from **Dormant Spray**, especially fruit trees, raspberries, roses and evergreens. Sometimes the only way to kill certain insects (pear psylla, juniper scale, spider mites, etc.) is with dormant spray.

Wait to apply **Dormant Spray** until the buds of your plants begin to swell. Be sure to spray your plants before the buds completely open. The best time to apply Dormant Spray is early in April. Thoroughly spray the upper trunk and branches. Do not spray the lower trunk because many beneficial insects lay their eggs in this location.

Unfortunately, dormant spray does not kill all insects. You

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may also have to spray later in the year as needed. For example, dormant spray will not kill the worms that get in apples, cherry fruit flies, peach tree borer, aspen borer, or root weevil. These insects either live inside the tree or they live in the soil during the winter. Dormant spray only kills those insects it comes in contact with. We have an information sheet about using dormant spray. This sheet will further explain how to use this important spray. Please stop by and pick one up.

Integrated Pest Management

I (IPM) is a pest control strategy that uses a variety of complementary strategies including: mechanical devices, physical devices, genetic, biological, cultural management, and chemical management. It is not *Organic Gardening*, but it does include many *Organic Gardening* concepts. There are three stages: prevention, observation, and intervention. It is an ecological approach with a main goal of significantly reducing or eliminating the use of pesticides while at the same time managing pest populations at an acceptable level. To learn more about IPM be sure to attend our class which will be taught by Jaydee Gunnell, one of Davis County's Extension Agents. It will be held on Saturday April 18 at 10am. For more info, you can also go to:

<http://extension.usu.edu/?q=IPM>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Integrated_pest_management

Pesticides ... Constant changes

There is constant change in the chemical industry. It is hard for us to keep ahead of all the changes, so I am sure it is even more challenging for home gardeners to understand all of the changes.

Malathion, Neem and **Spinosad** are some of the chemicals that we will be recommending this year for use on apples and pears. They don't last as long as Diazinon used to, so you will have to spray more often. Listed below are a few of the pesticides that are safe to use.

Neem Oil - This is not a new pesticide; we have been selling it for several years. Neem oil is an organic oil derived from the Neem Tree grown in Australia. Neem oil smothers and kills many insects and diseases without having a toxic impact on humans. It also repels many insects for up to two weeks. It is safe to use within a few days of harvest on most vegetables and fruits, including apples. You have to be careful using it in hot weather because it is an oil and may burn leaves. We have a handout explaining Neem Oil.

Spinosad - This organic insecticide controls worms (caterpillars). It does not control many large insects, chewing insects, or beneficial insects and spiders. It controls codling moths, leaf miners, fruit worms, thrips, cabbage worms, tomato worms, and a few beetles. This product does not always kill the insects fast, but the insects do stop feeding on plants immediately. The insects may still be present for several hours, or days after application, but they are not causing any damage. **Spinosad** is safe for fruit trees and vegetables. It can be applied close to harvest.

Eight - This is an organic insecticide that has safer properties than an inorganic insecticide named **Sevin**. **Eight** contains *permethrin*. It is labeled for use on fruits, vegetables, flowers, shrubs and trees. It cannot be used on apple or pear trees for controlling codling moth - at least for now. **Eight** controls most insects, both good and bad. **Eight** does not have a long residual, making it a good choice for controlling most insects in the vegetable garden, especially close to harvest. **Eight** is a poison, even though it is classified as an organic insecticide, and must be treated accordingly. **Eight** is a good alternative to **Diazinon, Sevin,** and **Malathion**.

Cedar Oil. Remember your grandma's cedar chest? The cedar odor is a natural repellent for many insects. Cedar oil does not kill insects, it only repels them. However, repelling an insect is just as good as killing it when you are trying to protect your plants. The insect just decides to visit your neighbor's plants instead of yours. **Natural Guard Lawn, Plant & Pet Insect Spray** contains cedar oil. It is labeled for use on vegetables, fruits, lawns, and pets. It specifically lists Cherry Trees, Apple Trees and Pear Trees. This might be a good alternative in controlling the worms in these fruit trees. Since it is so new, we do not know how well it

works, but I think it is worth a try. Be careful using cedar oil during hot weather, oil can burn leaves and fruit if it is too hot.

If you have Apple Trees

Apple trees need extra, regular spraying if you don't like to eat worms with your fruit. The time to begin controlling the worms in apples is usually three weeks after they bloom. Timing is critical and one spray is not enough, unless you are on a high protein diet and like to eat worms. Spray your trees every 7 to 10 days with **Malathion, Sevin, Neem,** or a fairly new organic pesticide - **Spinosad**. **Spinosad** will be the preferred insecticide this year, but it is new so we do not know how well it really works. Remember to spray pear trees the same as apple trees.

If you can't, or don't want to spray

If your shade trees are too tall to spray, or if the trees require several sprayings each year, you might try using **Bayer Tree & Shrub Systemic Insecticide**. This is an insecticide that you just mix with water and pour around the trunk of the tree. It is absorbed by the roots and is translocated throughout the entire plant. It gives 12 month protection against many insects with just one application. **Bayer Tree & Shrub Systemic Insecticide** effectively controls most sucking insects including aphids, scale, thrips, and mealy bugs. It controls many chewing insects such as leaf eating beetles, and bark beetles. It is also very effective controlling many tree borers, including aspen borer, ash borer, and birch tree borer.

Bayer also has this product mixed with a fertilizer that gives even faster control over these insects. This combination is called **Bayer Tree & Shrub Protect and Feed**. Both of these products can be safely used on ornamental trees and shrubs. The best time to apply this insecticide is in the spring or early-summer, however, it can be applied anytime during the year.

Bayer Tree & Shrub Systemic Insecticide, and Bayer Tree & Shrub Protect and Feed, may not be used on fruit trees or around other edible plants.

Borer Killers

Bonide Borer Killer contains permethrin. This product is safe to control borers in all fruit trees. It can even be used to control many other insects such as aphids, and beetles in fruit trees, shade trees and in vegetable gardens.

Orthene is available to control borers in pine trees, birch trees, ash trees, and other ornamental trees. It is very effective in controlling root weevil and leaf eating beetles. It cannot be used on fruit trees.

Merit is the product in the Bayer Tree & Shrub Systemic Insecticide. It is great for borer control in Ornamental Trees. It cannot be used on fruit trees.

Eliminate Nuisance Fruit

E Plums, crabapples, pinecones, maple whirlygigs and cottonwood's cotton can sometimes be reduced or eliminated. Obviously the best defense against unwanted or nuisance fruit, dropping all over your lawn or the sidewalk, is not planting trees with nuisance fruit. However, many of us have trees that are quality trees, most of the year, until their evil twin arrives and drops debris all over the lawn.

There are chemical sprays available to help eliminate nuisance fruit. However, these sprays have to be applied each year and timing is critical. The trick is *'the chemical must be applied while the flowers are open but before the fruit can set'*. For

most flowering trees there is only a ten day to two week window of opportunity to make a successful application.

Since the key to success in controlling nuisance fruits is timing, now is the time to think about these applications and watch for the flowers to appear. This will ensure that you do not miss the window of opportunity for spraying this spring. A foliar spray of **Florel® Fruit Eliminator** can be used to reduce or eliminate undesirable fruit development on many ornamental trees and shrubs such as crabapple, cottonwood, elm, ornamental plum and pear, maple, oak, pine, sweetgum, and sycamore.

Peach Trees

Peach trees are one of the easiest fruit trees to grow and take care of in this area. Gardeners in many other areas of the country cannot grow peach trees because of their climate. Peach trees will not survive temperatures below -20 F. Late frosts also prevent peaches from being grown in certain areas. Gardeners in Cache Valley have a difficult time growing peaches and nectarines because of the short season.

Peach trees are relatively short-lived trees. They generally live twenty to twenty five years but they may live a little longer if they are properly cared for. If you follow a few guidelines you can grow and harvest peaches successfully for many years.

1. Prune peach trees heavily every spring. This job is the most important project for the year.
2. Thin fruit heavily every summer. If you leave too much fruit, the branches may break.
3. Treat for peach tree borer every year starting in July. Repeat in August and September.
4. Do not over-water older, established peach trees. Only water them once or twice a month.
5. Do not sprinkle peach tree leaves. Coryneum blight is a disease that damages peach trees that can often be prevented by watering properly.

Forsythia Plants

The first sign of spring each year is when the 'fabulous forsythia plants' start to flower. Forsythia plants are often used to determine when you should apply crabgrass control and to plan when to do many other gardening chores.

Forsythia plants are practically pest and disease free. They are pollution tolerant and aren't too fussy about where they grow. Although forsythia grow best in full sun, they will tolerate partial shade. Forsythia plants are hardy shrubs that are easy to grow. It is not unusual to see a plant full of flowers, even after 20 years of neglect.

An important thing to remember about growing a forsythia is its pruning time. Forsythia only bloom on one year old wood. Prune forsythia plants immediately after they finish blooming. If you prune a forsythia in the fall, or just before it blooms, you are removing its flowers. To keep your forsythia plant in bounds, remove about one-third of its branches each year. With just a little care, your plant will keep its youthful appearance and bloom for years.

Try something different by trimming your forsythia shrub into a tree. Pick one straight, healthy, upright stem and remove the rest. Remove all the side shoots to 4 or 5 feet and then trim the rest of the branches to form a small round ball. It will probably take a few years of pruning to get the desired shape but you will end up with a colorful tree 6 to 8 feet tall.

Flowering Shrub Shape Up

To keep flowering shrubs looking their best, you need to prune them. The best time to prune summer-flowering shrubs

(potentilla, spiraea, weigela, roses, etc.) is during the winter or early-spring, while they are still dormant. The best time to prune spring-flowering shrubs (lilac, forsythia, snowball, wisteria, quince, etc.) is after they finish blooming, in the early-summer.

Flowering shrubs that bloom on new wood can be pruned more severely than flowering shrubs that bloom on old wood. Forsythias, potentillas, spireas, privets, weigelas, and viburnums bloom on new wood and are easy to train and prune. Lilacs, climbing roses, wisteria vines, and rhododendrons bloom on older wood, so be a little more conservative when you prune these types of plants. You can keep all your shrubs more compact by pruning them every year or two.

Pruning tip: Try to keep the tops of your shrubs a little narrower than the bottoms. By keeping the bottom a little wider than the top, sunlight can reach all the leaves and the plants will stay bushier at the bottom, instead of losing the bottom leaves. This is very critical when you are trying to keep a hedge uniformly bushy.

The easiest method of pruning many of the shorter flowering shrubs is to cut all the stems down to within a foot or two of the ground. You can cut the stems longer or shorter as needed, depending on the type of plant you are pruning and how tall you want it to be. Dwarf spiraea, potentilla, dwarf privet, and even the dwarf barberries respond well to this type of pruning.

To rejuvenate a tall shrub, remove some of the larger branches completely to the ground. Leave the smaller branches to grow back in their place. After removing the large branches, make sure the shrub still looks uniform. You may need to trim a few of the remaining branches back to maintain the proper balance. Follow this procedure every year to keep your older shrubs looking their best.

Weed Preventers for the Garden

A few weeds can't hurt right? Wrong. Weeds pull nu-
trients away from your vegetables, which can affect the health of your plants and even the taste of your homegrown vegetables. Make weeding a daily habit, and it will be so much easier. Pick a few weeds a day or face the drudgery of digging out a weed overgrown garden. No fun. Don't go there.

Besides cultivating the soil and physically pulling the weeds, there are easier ways to keep weeds out of gardens. Many chemical weed preventers are available that are safe to use in both the vegetable and flower gardens. **Treflan®** is one of the most common weed preventing chemicals because it can be used safely around vegetable plants and in flower gardens. Treflan only kills seeds as they germinate, so it will not harm young seedlings. Treflan will not control roots growing from perennial grasses or from plants that have already germinated. The best time to apply Treflan is after all your plants are planted and growing for at least a week. You can enjoy your garden, without very many weeds, for the rest of the summer. **Treflan** is also sold as **Preen®**. An organic weed preventer that is safe for the vegetable garden is **Corn Gluten**. This weed preventer is a by-product of corn processing. It safely prevents weeds but it does have to be re-applied often. This product is sold as **Concern Weed Preventer Plus®**.

Casoron® is another popular weed preventing chemical that is much stronger, and prevents more weeds than most other common weed preventers. Casoron is great to use around shrubs, trees, and along fence lines. Casoron prevents weeds

J&L's Newsletter Coupon

One
Perennial Flower
of your Choice

25¢

In a 4" Pot
Regular Price \$2.98

Choose From Daisies, Dianthus, Asters,
Coreopsis, Campanula, Foxglove, many, many more!



Buy More
Perennial Flowers
In 4" Pots

20% OFF

Limit: one purchase per coupon
No limit on number of
4" perennials purchased.

1,000's to choose from!

Selection limited to supply in stock. Coupon expires April 30, 2009

J&L's Kid's Coupon

Limited to kids 95 years old and younger.

One
Pea Seed Packet

25¢

Choose from Early Frosty, Little Marvel, Lincoln
Regular Price \$1.49



Kids Gardening
Gloves, Hats, and Shoes

20% OFF

Limit: one purchase per coupon.
No limit on kids items purchased.

Selection limited to supply in stock. Coupon expires April 30, 2009

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up to nine months. It is much safer to use in home gardens than soil sterilizers because it will not kill existing plants, it only kills emerging plants. **Be careful using Casoron and all weed preventing chemicals. Do not use more than directed because the chemicals can build up in the soil and may become a problem.**

Casoron cannot be used in the vegetable or flower gardens, but it is labeled to prevent weeds in shrub areas and around trees. Casoron can also be used in the raspberry patch and in the rose garden. Stop by to learn more about these labor-saving, weed-preventing chemicals. We have a handout available about many of the weed preventing chemicals.

<http://www.jlgardencenter.com/handouts.asp>

Planting Perennial Flowers

Did you ever consider the fact that every flower you plant in your garden started as a wildflower somewhere? You can see the origins of many of your garden hybrids in the natural landscape around you. The purple and blue asters that grow along the New England roadsides are the parents of most of our perennial garden asters. Garden phlox comes from a native plant that grows wild in the Southern United States. Gaillardia daisies cover the meadows throughout the west.

Other common garden flowers come from wildflowers of

foreign lineage. Canterbury Bells, Foxglove, and Delphinium are from wildflowers in Europe. Peonies originate in China. Many herbs such as sage, lavender, and rosemary are from the hillsides of the Mediterranean region. Most annual flowers are from tropical countries such as Mexico.

Square Foot Gardening-

The U.S. News and World Report magazine printed an article about 50 things to improve your life in 2009. This list was divided into ways to improve your money, your body, your mind, your world, and your play. Square Foot Gardening made this list.

'Plant a Square-Foot Garden' By Kim Clark U.S. News and World Report Posted December 18, 2008

'Even apartment dwellers can grow fresh vegetables with a little effort. Even klutzy, brown-thumb apartment dwellers can cut their food bills, eat better, and reduce their carbon footprint. Just plant a "square-foot garden," says Mel Bartholomew, author of "All New Square Foot Gardening".'

To read the article about 50 things to improve, go to:

<http://www.usnews.com/features/news/50-ways-to-improve-your-life/50-ways-to-improve-your-life.html> or
<http://www.usnews.com/articles/news/50-ways-to-improve-your-life/2008/12/18/plant-a-square-foot-garden.html>

Square Foot Gardening can help you do less work, save money, and can even make gardening more fun. Be sure to at-

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tend one of our classes on Square foot Gardening this spring to learn more about this 'Fun-Gardening' topic.

Trees of Interest

Norwegian Sunset Maple. The Norwegian Sunset maple is an upright, oval tree (40' Tall, 30' Wide). The attractive green leaves turn yellow to orange in the fall. It will tolerate heavy, clay soil and alkaline soil conditions.

Tricolor Beech. This attractive tree is slow growing. (25' Tall, 15' Wide) The leaves are multi-colored in the spring: pink, red & purple. The colors fade, and the leaves burn, during the hot summer weather. This tree prefers cool areas in the yard and will not tolerate 'wet' soil conditions. It is an excellent selection for most yards.

Pink Weeping Cherry. This impressive, graceful tree grows 10' tall and 10' wide. It's blossoms are spectacular in the spring and the weeping branches are full of life all summer and winter.

Wates Golden Pine. This is a low maintenance pine tree that has green needles that turn yellow during the winter, adding a real eye catching specimen in the yard. It grows 15' to 30' tall and 10' to 20' wide. This is a nice tree for small areas.

Water Birch. This native, shrubby-tree is also know as River Birch. It grows along streams and rivers. It has reddish-brown bark and usually grows as a clump, without a single stem. It grows 20' tall and fairly wide. A nice tree for small areas.

Black Alder. This tree is medium to slow growing. It grows 30' to 50' tall. It is very hardy and disease resistant. It grows well in areas that have a high water table. It produces small cones that resemble pinecones. If you want something different, try this tree.

Spring Gardening Class Schedule

Free classes held in our indoor classroom at J&L

Saturday, March 7

Pruning Guidelines 9:00 am

Saturday, March 14

Pruning Guidelines 9:00 am
Square Foot Gardening 12:00 noon

Saturday, March 21

Pruning Guidelines 9:00 am
The Basics for Beginning Gardeners 1:00 pm

Saturday, March 28

Pruning Guidelines 9:00 am
Lawn Care & Renovation 1:00 pm

Saturday, April 11

Square Foot Gardening 10:00 am
Basic Gardening For Kids (& Parents) 1:00 pm

Saturday, April 18

Integrated Pest Management 10:00 am
(organic & chemical controls for the gardens)
Herb Gardening 1:00 pm

Saturday, April 25

Pond Care 10:00 am
'Bloom Master' Hanging Baskets 1:00 pm

Friday, April 17 and Friday, April 24 - 4 to 6 PM

Container Gardening Workshop --Pick out your pots and flowers. J&L's Employees will help you plant them.
(Classroom depends on weather conditions)