



# J&L Garden Center

50 Year Anniversary  
1958-2008

The All Season Gift  
and Garden Center

620 North 500 West Bountiful, Utah 292-0421

The Gardening Newsletter

[www.JLGardenCenter.com](http://www.JLGardenCenter.com)

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## March Gardening

2008 is a milestone for J&L Garden Center, it is our 50th anniversary. John Smith & Lloyd Smith (J&L), the founders of J&L Garden Center, had their grand opening on April 12-13, 1958. Our original location was 262 West 400 South in Centerville. J&L moved to Bountiful in the fall of 1973. J&L's original store was demolished in the fall of 2003 to make room for a housing subdivision. Lloyd died in 2001 and John retired in 2002, but J&L Garden Center continues to provide excellent gardening supplies and information. A more detailed history of J&L is available on our website. We are excited about this coming year so please stop by for all of your gardening needs.



## Spring Planting

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 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 weatherman and plan your planting schedule according to the weather, 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 **2008 Gardening Calendar** available that gives helpful hints about spring planting times. Stop by to pick up a free copy or download a copy from our website.

## Garden Fresh 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 seeds earlier than normal, be sure to dust them with **Bonide Garden Dust**, a fungicide. Seeds planted in cold and wet soil may rot before they have a chance to germinate. You can 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.



## Garden Fresh Onions

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 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

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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.

Sow onion seed 1/2 inch deep or plant onion sets one to two inches deep. Plant onions close and then harvest and thin 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.

## Garden Fresh Beans

Beans are a warm-season crop. Beans hate the cold weather, especially 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.



## Garden 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!

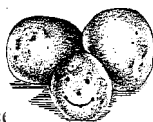
Corn is a hot-weather vegetable. Do not plant corn until the soil is 60° to 65° F degrees. At 50°, the seeds are able to absorb water so they are prone to rotting if they do not germinate quickly. Corn seeds are most sensitive to the cold, wet conditions during the first 24 to 48 hours after planting. 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**.

## 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.

## 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.



## 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 during the summer. Pansies also grow well in full sun and will bloom repeatedly from fall to early spring and even 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 will 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.



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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.



## New Rose Varieties

There are two new **2008 AARS** winning roses. They are: **Dream Come True** (Grandiflora rose - golden-yellow with red) and **Mardi Gras** (Floribunda rose - yellow, orange and pink). In addition, we have **April in Paris**, the **2008 Jackson and Perkins** rose of the year, along with four other new varieties of roses. 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 2008 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.



## Tuberous Begonias - a forgotten flower

Tuberous begonias are a fun and fairly easy flower to grow. They are one of the forgotten spring bulbs. Everyone knows how to plant fall bulbs (tulip and daffodil bulbs). In fact, we are still being asked if we have any tulip bulbs available for spring planting. The secret to starting tuberous begonia bulbs is to plant them early, inside the house. Push the bulb (hollow side up) gently into **Black Gold Potting Soil**. Keep about 1/2 of the bulb above the ground. Do not plant the bulb too deep or it may rot away. Water the soil regularly, but do not water the bulb or its leaves. Do not plant the bulbs outside until the soil is fairly warm and all danger of frost is past.



Start fertilizing the bulbs as soon as two or three leaves start to appear. Fertilize regularly with **Fertilome Blooming and Rooting Fertilizer**. **Osmocote** is another excellent fertilizer that is great to use. Tuberous begonias like the cool, humid, partially

shaded areas of the yard. Tuberous begonias will not tolerate the heat, nor will they flourish in deep shade. Their cousins, Fibrous Begonias, will grow in the more sunny conditions when they are kept moist. Tuberous begonias will not live outside through the winter, so you have to bring the bulbs inside before they freeze. Try a few Tuberous Begonias this spring for something new in your gardens.

## Cannas - an excellent flower

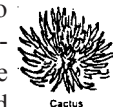
Cannas grow best in the full, hot sun. They look their best when they are planted in groups of three to five; either with all the same color or with multiple colors or varieties. Cannas are easy to plant, easy to grow, and are fun to watch bloom. Perhaps one of the biggest advantages of cannas is that deer don't seem to care for the taste of the canna leaves; deer just seem to leave them alone. They are available in many colors. Some varieties are dwarf, some are tall, some have green leaves, some have bronze leaves, and still others have variegated leaves. They are very nice flowers for any yard.



Plant canna roots outside, after the 'hard-frost season' is past; usually mid-April. You can also plant cannas indoors four to six weeks earlier than you can plant them outside. Cannas are tough plants. Plant cannas in the hottest, driest, rockiest, wettest, and even in the best areas of your yard. Cannas can also be used in and around ponds. Cannas will grow in areas where many other flowers will not survive. Cannas will sometimes even survive outside in the garden without having to be dug and taken inside for the winter. Try a canna or two just for fun.

## Dahlias

Dahlias are available in many different colors, shapes, sizes, and varieties. Dwarf dahlias are nice for borders while decorative and dinner-plate dahlias grow tall, and need to be planted in the center or in the back of your gardens. **Dinnerplate dahlias** have huge blossoms. They are the "Queen of the Dahlias". Their blossoms can grow more than twelve inches in diameter. Many garden clubs have dahlia growing contests to see who can grow the largest and best shaped dinnerplate dahlias. Dinnerplate dahlias can grow very tall, up to 5 to 6 feet tall. They usually need to be staked to protect them from the wind. **Cactus dahlias** can also get very large blossoms, just not as large as the dinnerplate varieties. The petals are very long and have many different shapes. The petals may be long and narrow, like a blade of grass, or they may be long and have a spoon shaped tip.



Plant dwarf dahlias by seed, or from plants, as soon as the ground is warm enough to rototill. The warmer the soil, the faster the plants will grow - dahlias do not like cold weather. Dwarf dahlias like both the sun and the shade, they are pretty rugged plants. They are very colorful all summer.

Do not plant dinnerplate dahlia tubers outside until well after the last spring frost. You can start your dinnerplate dahlias inside, in large containers, but wait until May to plant them outside. Dahlias like warm soil, not cold soil. They like full sun, but will tolerate partial shade. They need to be planted in the best location, in the best soil in your gardens. They do not like to be kept too wet, but they do need consistent moisture. Fertilize dinnerplate dahlias regularly with **Dr. Earth Bud & Bloom Food** if you want to grow the biggest flowers possible.



## Gladiolus can bloom all Summer

Gladiolus can bring beauty and color to gardens and flower beds throughout the summer. Gladiolus blossoms start opening from the bottom and work their way up the stem, opening one or two at a time. The blossom period, of each blossom stem, can be as long as two weeks. They make great cut flowers and will remain beautiful in flower vases for a long time.



Gladiolus are easy to grow by planting them directly in the garden starting mid-April, about the time many trees start to produce leaves. It is not necessary to start them inside. However, gladiolus can be planted any time of the year in protected areas, or in greenhouses, to bloom whenever you want them.

If you want to have gladiola blooming in the garden all summer, plant a few gladiolus every ten to fourteen days for about 10 weeks. This staggered planting schedule will help space their blooming time from summer to fall. Make sure you plan your planting schedule so the gladiolus will have time to bloom before the frost.

Storing bulbs long enough to plant them late is sometimes difficult. Select the corms that have started to sprout to plant first. Put the rest of the corms in a cool area (preferably between 40 to 45 degrees F) to store until it is time to plant them.

Gladiolus will sometimes bloom twice if the first flower stem is removed as soon as it starts to bloom. Do not remove any of the leaf stems, just the blossom stem. Put the cut blossom stem in water and let it continue to bloom inside the house while the plant continues to grow outside in the garden.

Gladiolus are heavy feeders. Fertilize every 4 weeks with **Dr. Earth Bulb Fertilizer** all summer. To help prevent glads from tipping over in the wind, try planting the corm on its side. The blossom shoot will grow sideways for about an inch or two before it starts to grow upright. The roots will grow sideways for an inch or two before they start to grow down. This extra '*side-ways growth*' helps to stabilize the flower stems. You may still have to stake some of the taller varieties to keep them growing upright.

## What do the Numbers Mean?

**Q. When you buy a bag of lawn fertilizer what are you buying?**



**A.** The numbers listed on each bag of fertilizer indicate how much Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium are contained in the bag. Example - **21-7-7 Lawn Food plus Iron** - This bag contains 21% Nitrogen, 7% Phosphorous and 7% Potassium. This bag also contains Iron because it is listed as an added ingredient.

The other 65% of the bag may be anything the manufacturer decides to use. It may be other minerals, sand, perlite, or gypsum. Inexpensive fertilizers usually contain sand. The more expensive fertilizers usually contain other minerals, gypsum or other soil conditioners.

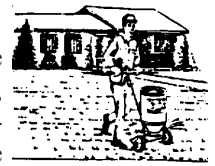
**Q. Why does a 15 lb bag of 33-6-18 lawn food treat a 5,000 square foot lawn and a 40 lb bag of 21-7-7 lawn food treat a 8,400 square foot lawn.**

**A.** A rule of thumb is 1 lb of actual Nitrogen should cover 1,000 square feet of lawn. There are 5 lbs of actual Nitrogen in a 15 lb bag of 33-6-18 lawn food (15lb x 33% = 5lb) so that bag should cover 5,000 square feet. There are 8.4 lbs of actual nitrogen in a 40 lb bag of 21-7-7 lawn food (40lb x 21% = 8.4lb) so that bag should cover 8,400 square feet of lawn.



## 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-**

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### 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.



### 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 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.



### 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.**

### 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 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.

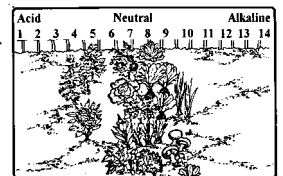


**Gypsum** is a soil conditioner that helps to improve clay soil. However, gypsum changes the chemical structure of the soil, not the physical structure. Gypsum actually helps to improve all soils, not just clay soils. Gypsum improves the soil by adding calcium and sulphur, which allows the soil particles 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.

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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 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**.

## Fruit Tree Care

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 Tree** handout, to help you decide how much fertilizer your trees really need.

## Pruning - It's important

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 en-

courage 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, bridlewreath, 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 snowfalls. 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?

continued from page 6

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.

### Dormant Spray ... It's Important

**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 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.

### Pesticides .... constant change.

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 other 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. 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** seems to be the preferred insecticide this year, but it is new and we do not know how well it really works. Remember to spray pears the same as apples.

### 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, how-



ever, 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 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

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 peach trees. Water them deeply once or twice a month, especially when the fruit begins to ripen.

5. Do not sprinkle peach tree leaves. Coryneum blight is a disease that damages peach trees that can often be prevented by proper watering.

**Some of our most popular varieties of peaches are:**

**Red Haven** This is one of the earliest varieties to ripen.

**Early Elberta** (Gleason Strain) This is a mid-season variety that has yellow flesh and a good flavor. This strain originated in Utah.

**Elberta** This variety has been the standard of comparison for other peaches. It is a large peach with good flavor.

**J.H. Hale** This variety produces one of the largest peaches available. J.H. Hale ripens late. It has a reddish center with a good flavor.

**Suncrest** Large, round, yellow peach with a red blush.

**Indian Free** Large, firm peach. Crimson and cream colored flesh.

## 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. Forsythia plants respond well to pruning even if they have been neglected. You can cut all the branches to within 12 inches of the ground, after they finish blooming. Cut the big stumps right to the ground. Trim the new branch tips when the new growth reaches 24 inches. Your plants may look unusual for a year or two but with proper pruning they will be bushy and bloom spectacularly within two or three years.

The most important thing to remember about growing a forsythia is its pruning time. Forsythia only bloom on one year old wood. Prune forsythia immediately after they finish blooming so they have a chance to grow new branches for next year. 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 plants 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 com-

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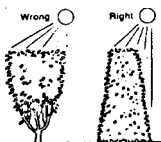
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pract by pruning them every year or two.

**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

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 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 control 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.

## Planting Wildflowers

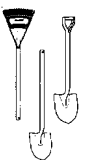
Did you ever consider the fact that every flower you plant in your garden started as a wildflower somewhere? You can see the origins of many of your garden hybrids in the natural landscape around you. The purple and blue asters that grow along the New England roadsides are the parents of most of our 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. Many vegetables have been derived from a wild species or a combination of many species.

## Keep Your Tools Clean and Strong

Use your old lawnmower oil to clean and oil your shovels, rakes, hoes, loppers, and many other gardening tools. Fill a bucket with clean sand and put your old lawnmower oil in the sand. Once you get enough oil in the sand the sand does a great job of cleaning and oiling the tools. Just scrape off most of the dirt and push your tool into the sand. After a day or two remove the tool, wipe off the sand and oil, and your tool will be ready for use. This procedure is espe-



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## The Gardening Newsletter

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cially useful in the fall when you are preparing your tools for winter storage.

Does your rake or hoe fall out of its handle socket while you are using it? It has happened to me more than once. This can be very frustrating when you are trying to do your yardwork. When a tool falls out of its handle it does not mean the tool is junk, broken, or that the tool needs to be replaced. It simply means the handle has dried out and the wood has shrunk inside the metal ferrule. You can make the wood swell again by soaking the handle in water. However, your handle will just dry out and the head will fall off again. Instead of soaking your tool in water, fill the ferrule with motor oil (recycled lawnmower oil works great). Set the tool upright so the oil will soak into the wood instead of running all over. Keep adding oil as long as the wood will soak it up. You may need to add a little oil every week for a month. The more oil the handle soaks the better. The head will stay on its handle longer and your tools will not break as easy. A "dried out" handle is much weaker than a handle soaked in oil.



**Pesticide Safety** - Gardeners should never forget that pesticides designed to kill insects, diseases, and weeds, can be dangerous for people as well. We provide basic information about garden pesticides, but it is up to you, the homeowner, to make sure they are applied correctly and safely. That's why it's so important to select garden chemicals carefully, apply them sparingly, always read the label, and follow all label instructions - to the letter. Even 'safe' organic pesticides can be fatal to humans if improperly used.



## Spring Gardening Class Schedule

### 1. Pruning Classes

*Come learn the basics of pruning*

**Saturday - March 8, 15, 22, 29 at 9:00 am**

### 2. Vegetable & Flower Gardening for Beginners

*This class is great for beginning gardeners and for gardeners that would like a refresher course.*

**Saturday - Mar 22, 29, & April 12 at noon**

### 3. Herb Growing Class

*How to use Herbs once you have grown them*

**Saturday - April 19 at noon**

### 4. Square Foot Gardening

Time and Date to be announced later

### 5. Pond Care Class

Pond care isn't really that difficult.

**Saturday - April 26 at noon**

### 6. Container Gardening

**Thursday April 24 and May 1 at 6:00PM**

Bring your pots and pick out your plants. We will help you plant them. Classroom depends on weather conditions

### 7. Repotting Your Houseplants

Learn how to repot your houseplants. Bring your plants in so we can help you do it. Limit 2 plants. Bring your plants in

**Anytime between 9am - 6pm March 24 - 31.**