



# Home Gardener's NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2010  
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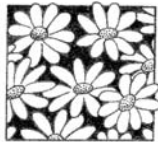
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## **M**arch Success Tips

**1. Bait for snails and slugs.** The extra rains we've had this year means these pests are already multiplying. Now is the time to bait and stop them from breeding and causing damage! Use *Sluggo* (this is safe to use around pets).

**2. Start planning & planting** for a more beautiful yard this year, with good stuff to eat! Include in your edible garden some of our delicious *fruit trees, berries, herbs, and vegetables.*



**3. Prune** *camellias, azaleas, flowering cherries,* and other *spring-blooming plants* AFTER they bloom.

**4. Tune up and repair** automatic sprinklers and drip systems. Check to make sure heads are working properly and aimed correctly. Flush sediment out of drip systems and clean or replace emitters as needed.

**5. Keep on top of weeds** this month by hand pulling weeds or using our weed-killers. We have products that prevent weed germination, and others to kill existing weeds. Let one of our experts help you select the most effective products for your particular situations.

## Spring Fertilizing Guide

**F**ertilize now! Roots are already busy absorbing nutrients—they begin this process even before you see much top growth and it's important that a good supply of nutrients is freely available to them. Here's what to use for the healthiest, most colorful garden ever!



### **FOR LAWNS**

Use *Best Turf Supreme.*

### **FOR FLOWER BEDS**

Use *Gardner & Bloome Rose & Flower Fertilizer.*

### **FOR FEEDING IN GENERAL**

Use *Gardner & Bloome All Purpose Fertilizer.*

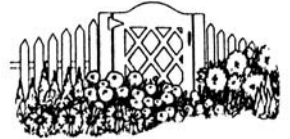
### **FOR FRUIT TREES and CITRUS**

Use *Gardner & Bloome Citrus & Fruit Tree Fertilizer.*

**WE CAN HELP YOU FIND THE RIGHT FERTILIZER FOR YOUR PLANTS—ASK US!**

## Plant a Cottage Garden!

**C**ottage gardens began in Europe (especially England) in the 18th century. A cottage garden was the front yard of a modest dwelling, with hedges to keep out roaming livestock. This randomly designed garden had a path leading through it and the cheerful, rambling appearance was often packed into a small area.



The plants in a cottage garden were an informal mix of *annuals, perennials, herbs, vines, shrubs, and vegetables*—a great mingling of colors, sizes, and textures. To get this carefree look, you need to experiment with bloom times, colors, heights, textures, etc.

To plant a cottage garden, use our *roses and other flowers, climbing plants and vines,* as well as edible plants like *herbs, fruit trees, blueberries and other berries, and vegetables.* Have fun, remember it's a work in progress—*so feel free to be creative!*

## Three Cheers for Vegetables!

**T**here is so much available to plant this month, that it almost makes a person dizzy! This is an excellent time to plant cool season vegetables like *lettuce, chard, parsley, beets, radishes, and carrots.*



Warm season vegetables starting to arrive mid March include *tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, melons, squash, and corn.* You can plant these now and be prepared to protect them from an unexpected cold snap; or prepare your soil now and wait a little until the cool weather has finally passed.

The first step for a great vegetable bed is to prepare your soil. Dig in lots of our *Gardner & Bloome Harvest Supreme* to provide the extra nutrients vegetables need to produce a bountiful crop.

## Growing Plants Upside-Down

**A**ny space, especially a sunny patio or balcony, instantly becomes a garden with this clever growing idea. Our **Topsy-Turvy® Tomato Planters** can easily be moved to warm locations in case of a late cold spell. They save space, avoid weeds and many pests, are easier to harvest, and are fun!

We also have a variety of *cucumbers, hot peppers, zucchini, eggplant,* and even *herbs* that love growing *Topsy-Turvy®!* Follow the directions that come with *Topsy-Turvy®* and fertilize regularly. We recommend filling with our *Gardner & Bloome Potting Soil.*

## Plant Like a Pro

### TWO PLANTING MISTAKES TO AVOID:

#### 1. **Loose soil settles** after watering.

Failure to take this simple fact into account is why many people plant too deeply. They are setting the plant in at the right height, without remembering that the soil will settle (the deeper you dig the hole, the more it will settle), lowering the level of the entire plant.



In almost all cases (tomatoes are an exception), the trunk of a plant needs to be at the same soil level as it arrived in the pot. If the trunk is partially covered with soil, it is much more likely to get crown rot. Crown rot will either kill the plant, or it may just cause it to grow more slowly. Also, if the grafted section is covered, there are further problems.

Sooooo, plant a little high so that once the soil settles, the trunk will be at the same soil level it was in the pot.

#### 2. **Here's a trick** the professionals use when planting seeds or plants in containers to make sure that the soil has good contact with roots and a uniform soil firmness from top to bottom: *Poke* into the soil at several spots with your fingers or a stick. *Then pat* the top of the soil. Most people only *pat* down the top of the soil with their hands, which firms the soil at the top but can leave large gaps in the soil further down.

**Would You Believe** . . . plants may have kind of a social structure? According to recent research, *impatiens* will grow roots as fast as they can when planted with genetically unrelated plants. When placed with "relatives", less energy is devoted to root production—suggesting that these plants are programmed to share resources with family members, but push strangers away through competition.

## Brain Food From the Garden

Want to do better on exams? Here are some *healthy foods from your garden* that will stimulate both children's and adult's brain power for optimal performance!

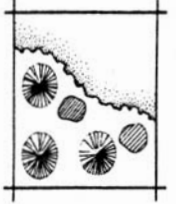


**Salad De-stressor:** When the stress levels rise, instead of reaching for something salty or sweet to nibble on (aka high-calorie snacks), grab a stalk of celery or eat a large green salad. **Why?** Studies show that *phytalides* in celery stalks and *lactucarium* in lettuce are natural sedatives that can help relieve nerves.

## Make Your Yard More Space-Efficient!

There are some things you can do to make your garden SEEM LARGER and more colorful, as well as CREATE MORE USABLE SPACE.

A simple, uncluttered look makes an area appear larger. For a focal point, try a smaller *single-trunked tree*. Use plants with *delicate flowers* and *foliage* that are in proportion to the garden. *Avoid large-leaved plants* that take up both visual and actual space. *Vertical elements* (vines on trellises, hanging baskets, etc.) provide color without taking up too much ground space.



Make the house one 'wall' of the garden with a trellis covered with a flowering climber.

Use a fence that is designed to allow light to come through for property borders—such as a picket fence which gives the illusion of more space.

Rotate your containers, keeping the ones in full bloom on display. Keep others with immature plants out of view until they are at their peak.



## Delicious Vegetable Medley

Here's a great way to enjoy all these healthy vegetables from your own garden—if you plant them this spring!

Carrots (parboiled 3 minutes)  
Cherry tomatoes  
Squash—various types for color  
Chopped bell pepper, potatoes,  
& red onion

Other harvested vegetables  
1 Tbs. butter or olive oil  
Fresh herbs like rosemary, thyme,  
dill, or basil to taste  
Water (approx. ½ cup)

Combine ingredients and steam until tender-crisp. Just before steaming is complete, add any leftover cooked vegetables like peas, corn, green beans, etc. Top with shredded garlic-flavored jack cheese and heat until cheese is melted.

## When is Soil TOO WET?

Cultivating or walking on wet soil compacts it, causing it to close the tiny air spaces between soil particles. This lack of aeration results in poorer plant growth.



To determine if your soil is too wet to work with, simply squeeze a handful of it in your hand. If it forms a dense ball that sticks together or if you can squeeze water out of it, be patient and let it dry out more before cultivating.

If the soil is too wet to work with, use the time to plan and buy your plants—most soils dry out enough after a few days of sunny weather.

## Fun With Gardening Numbers

- Q. How long would you have to search to find a four-leaf clover in a patch of clover?  
A. Allow at least 30 minutes and somewhat longer if the clover is mixed in with grass. Bonus fact: there are 300 species of clover!
- Q. How many crocus blooms do you need to yield one ounce of saffron used in cooking?  
A. 4,000.
- Q. How many petunia seeds are found in one ounce of seeds?  
A. 300,000!

