



# Home Gardener's NEWSLETTER

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## April Success Tips

**1. It's Spring Planting Time!** This is a perfect time to be outside planting, and it's a great time to come in and see all the beautiful plants we have carefully selected for gardens in our area.

**2. Tomatoes and other vegetables** taste at least twice as good when you grow them in your own yard and pick them at the peak of ripeness. We have a large number of luscious varieties to choose from.

**3. Plant strawberries** in strawberry jars for patio displays and fresh wonderful fruit.

**4. Release our ladybugs,** decollate snails, and praying mantids now to help control pests naturally.



## Time for Spring Lawn Care

Your lawn will reward you with luxuriously plush green growth if you show it a bit of kindness this month.

**Fertilize:** Apply *Kellogg's 12-12-12*, using a hand or push spreader for a more uniform application.

**Reseed:** To repair bare or thin spots, first remove dead grass and then roughen the soil with a metal rake to a depth of 1/4 to 1/2 inch, then spread the grass seed. Next, apply a fine layer of our *Kellogg's Topper*, firm the soil, and keep it moist by watering lightly twice a day in the beginning. For a quick and easy fix, resod!

**Mow:** Healthy turf requires regular mowing. Your grass will be less stressed if you cut no more than 1/3 of the height each time. Grass varies greatly by variety as to the proper mowing height, from 1/2 to 3 inches. Bring in a lawn sample for helpful advice.

**Aeration:** For large compacted lawns, rent an aerator. For aerating smaller lawns, or compacted sections of lawns, use a hand aerator. Water the area deeply the day before aerating so that the aerator will penetrate further into the soil.



## Dizzy With Daisies!



Daisies—a perky flower with a sunny yellow face framed by white petals, right? Actually, dozens of plants are called "daisies", and come in a wide variety of colors, forms, and sizes. These cheerful flowers are easy to grow, and extremely prolific. Use them for borders and groundcovers, fill hanging baskets and other containers, and cut for flower arrangements.

**Gloriosa daisies** (rubdeckia, black-eyed Susan) have prominent purplish-black centers with gold, mahogany, orange, or russet petals. They make a striking border on their own or with a collection of many kinds.

**Euryops** are shrub daisies that blanket themselves in bright yellow blossoms. Use as a border wherever there is full sun and good drainage, or plant in containers for the patio.

**Argyranthemums** are compact forms of marguerite daisies. These shrubs are spectacular in borders, mass displays, and containers. **Blue marguerites** (Felicia, not really a marguerite at all) are a favorite blue daisy that grows just 1 1/2 feet high.

**Osteospermums** (freeway daisy) are white to dark purple. These daisies love to trail, and do well alongside driveways and paths, in borders, rock gardens, hanging baskets, and on slopes.



**Gazanias!** These low-growing plants have flowers with bright yellow, orange, white, or rosy pink blossoms. Use clumping garzantias as borders or in rock gardens. Trailing types cascade beautifully over walls and from hanging baskets, but also do well on level terrain.

Other wonderful daisies to watch for now and during future visits include: **Shasta daisies** (the classic white flower), **Erigeron** (Santa Barbara daisy), **Echinacea** (coneflower), **Coreopsis**, **Arctotis** (African daisy), **Gaillardia** (blanket flower), and **Paludosum daisies**.

## Trees and Weeds

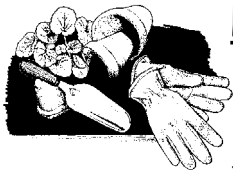


Weeds compete with garden plants for moisture, nutrients, and light. A university test found that fruit trees in regularly weeded beds grew 75% larger and produced four times as much fruit compared to trees in unweeded beds!

Growing weeds can be removed by hand or use *Monterey Remuda* to eradicate weeds and their roots from around trees and shrubs. **TIP:** Don't allow weed killers to drift onto desirable plants while you are spraying. If any plants are next to weeds, spray on calm days, and ALWAYS use a piece of cardboard to shield good plants from the spray drift. This insecticide is inactivated by soil.

To keep the beds around trees and shrubs free of germinating weeds, mulch or use a preemergent weed killer such as *Greenlight Amaze* (for around ornamental trees and shrubs) to save tedious weeding time. Follow the label directions.

**Pottery Clearance— While Supplies Last!**



## Healthy Hands

While gardening provides wonderful physical and psychological therapy, it is important to protect your hands from any accidental injury.

Wearing sturdy gloves will help prevent scratches, cuts, and punctures from thorns and other sharp objects. Bacteria, fungi, fertilizers, pesticides, and insect bites can cause minor to major infections once the skin is broken. Promptly clean all lesions with soap, water, and peroxide. Seek medical attention immediately for deeper wounds; you may need a tetanus shot if your last one was more than 10 years ago.

Remember to use the right tool properly. Strains can result from bent or twisted wrists, as well as motions repeated for more than 15 minutes, so relax while you rotate your gardening activities around your garden. Invest in ergonomic tools without contoured, finger-molded handles. Improperly fitting grips may result in unnecessary muscle aches and calluses.

## Lifestyle Landscapes

Besides enhancing the beauty and value of your HOME, good landscaping should also meet the needs of PEOPLE and PLANTS. To ensure your landscape serves you, consider the following guidelines when planning activity areas. Once you know your PEOPLE needs, we'll be able to help you select the appropriate plants.

You'll want an unobstructed view of **children's play areas** from the kitchen or main living area windows. Locate this space away from floral display areas or other sensitive spots. Use hardy, child-proof plants.

Keep **barbeque or picnic areas** near the house thereby minimizing the distance to transport food and supplies back and forth. Plants should branch high enough to stay out of people's way.



Take a week or two to observe **heavy foot traffic patterns**. Anticipate how these may be impacted (and need to be modified) by your newly designed activity areas. Most walkways should accommodate at least two people walking side by side.

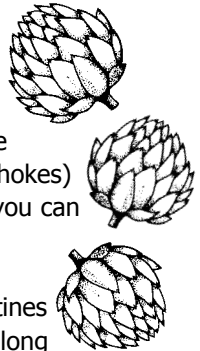
Increase your **garden enjoyment** from inside your home by situating displays or borders for viewing. Vegetable and cut-flower gardens can be hidden or placed further away from the house.

Plan **work or service areas** where you can hide them from sight. Dense shrubs work well to block such areas from view. Plants can also be used to block and reduce noise.

## Choice Dips for your Artichokes

*Why settle for the same old mayonnaise standby when you can serve artichokes with a variety of party dips?*

Rinse four large artichokes and trim stems and small bottom leaves. Add 2-3 inches of water to a large pot (or fill 1/3), stand artichokes in the water, and cover. Bring water to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer 25-40 minutes (depending on the size of the chokes) Remove when base stems can be easily pierced with a fork. Or, you can bring out a nutty flavor by grilling or roasting your artichokes.



*Each of these dipping sauces serves four.*

Add a **buttery crunch** to your artichoke by crumbling 4 saltines into a small microwaveable dish with 8 TBS butter. Microwave long enough to melt (not boil) the butter.

**Spice up** a cup of mayonnaise by mixing with 3 TBS pesto sauce; or mix chili sauce or ketchup, with lemon juice or vinegar, and add salt & pepper to taste.

For a **sweet and sour** dip: combine ¼ c. prepared mustard with 2 TBS each cider vinegar, soy sauce and honey. Mix thoroughly.

## Family Plant Legacies Part 2

Four years ago, a 114-year-old **Boston fern** nearly expired. Evelyn Edwards, the second generation to inherit a division of the family legacy took the ailing plant to a garden center expert (smart lady!) who recommended a bigger pot and fertilizer. Responding to emergency care, the plant now enjoys daily misting and regular feedings. Special winter care includes transporting the fern indoors to a cool back bedroom when the temperature drops below 45 degrees. Later this year, the root ball will need to be sliced in half or quarters and repotted. "Keeping it in the family is most important," says Evelyn.



Kid's

JACOB Madison  
Corner

Michael EMILY

Andrew

Isabella

ETHAN Olivia

Joseph

ABIGAIL

### Grow Names In The Garden!

Hurray Spring! What a wonderful time to make garden memories together and discover the miracle of planting tiny seeds and harvesting big, fat carrots a few months later! Starting plants from seed teaches valuable lessons in responsibility and observation (Which seeds grew fastest? How often did they need water? Do home-grown vegetables taste better?!)

An easy way to personalize a child's garden is to grow flowers or vegetables in the form of his or her name. Here's how:

Use a stick to write names in loose soil. If you have lots of space, names can be printed in block letters. Choose low-growing annual flowers such as marigolds, or a vegetable like lettuce from our fresh seed selection and sprinkle them into the lines. Use your hands or a board to press the seeds down, water lightly, and watch the name appear!

*One of the healthiest ways to gamble is with a spade and a package of garden seeds. --Dan Bennett*