

Spring Checklist

Time for a spring inspection

Take note of:

- Cold, ice or snow damage on plants
- Beds that will need to be cleaned out
- Hardscaping elements—walls, fences, benches, sheds, trellises—that have shifted, bowed or rotted
- Evidence of new animal burrows from skunks, chipmunks, moles and voles, groundhogs or rabbits. Also, note any deer or rodent damage on woody plants.

Address hardscaping issues now

In early spring before the ground is ready to be worked, focus your energy on hardscaping. These tasks are easier to accomplish while your plants are still resting safely dormant:

- Repair damaged retaining walls
- Level out your stepping stones
- Clean out your gutters
- Fix fences, sheds, trellises, window boxes
- Repair and weed out raised beds

Do a thorough spring cleanup

Maintaining good hygiene in your garden beds will help to keep pests and diseases at bay. Ideally just before your spring bulbs start to pop up, clean the plant debris out of your garden beds:

- Fallen branches
- Matted down leaves
- Last year's perennial foliage
- Ornamental grasses and perennial hibiscus
- Any annuals you didn't remove last fall

Pruning

Follow the general rule that flowering shrubs which bloom on new wood (this year's growth) can be trimmed in spring. This includes summer flowering shrubs like butterfly bush, smooth hydrangea and roses. Their flower buds will be set on the new flush of growth that appears after you prune it.

Divide perennials and transplant shrubs

In early spring when they are just beginning to pop up, divide and transplant any perennials that have outgrown their space or grown large enough to split. In most cases, it's best to divide and move perennials in the opposite season of when they bloom. That means moving summer and fall blooming perennials in spring, and spring blooming perennials in fall. This avoids disrupting their bloom cycle.

Test and Feed your garden soil

Once you know what your garden soil needs based on your test results, talk with someone at your local garden center about which specific fertilizer or mulch to use, always following package instructions for best results.

Maintenance

Garden & Beds

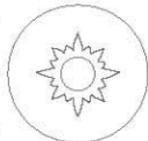
Yard & Lawn

Plant Wish List

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Indicate North



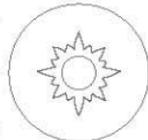
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Summer Checklist

Water Your Garden

If you experience dry summers or a dry weather pattern, you may wish to water your garden to keep it looking its best. Most common garden plants prefer an average of 1 inch of water a week. It's best to apply that inch all at once to encourage plant roots to sink down more deeply in the soil.

When watering, apply water directly to the ground rather than wetting a plant's foliage; water sitting on the leaves can lead to disease. Soaker hoses are great for this.

Apply Compost or Fresh Mulch

Spreading a 2-inch-thick layer of mulch over your soil is one of the best things you can do for your garden. The mulch blankets the ground, shielding the soil from the sun and keeping it cooler. That makes your plant roots happier and also prevents moisture loss due to evaporation.

Raise the Mower

Raise the height of your lawn-mower blade if you have cool-season grasses, such as Kentucky bluegrass, ryegrass, or fescues. More surface area keeps the plants healthier during hot, dry weather.

Weed, Weed, Weed

It's important to pull them from your garden, because weeds steal moisture and nutrients from your plants. Many weeds also encourage insect pests and diseases to move in or take over. Weeds are easiest to pull when they're young and small; moist soil makes this task even easier. Another reason to tackle them while they're young: You want to stop weeds from producing seeds. A single dandelion plant can yield 2,000 seeds in a year.

Watch for Pests

As with weeding, keeping an eye on pests and plant diseases should be done all year. But midsummer is a particularly important time to fight these garden enemies. Some of the more common midsummer problems to watch for include, Cucumber beetles, Grasshoppers, Japanese beetles, Squash bugs, Tomato hornworms and Powdery mildew. Consult your local garden center for treatment advice on common local diseases and pests.

Remove Faded Flowers (Deadheading)

If you remove spent blooms from many of your annuals and perennials, you might see more flowers. Deadheading prevents plants from producing seeds, so they put more energy into making blossoms.

Harvest Vegetables

Don't let hot weather keep you out of the vegetable garden. Continue your harvests to encourage your plants to produce and to limit pest and disease problems. (Insects are attracted to overripe vegetables that fall off the plant and begin to rot.)

Maintenance

Garden & Beds

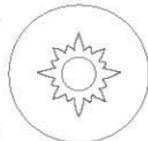
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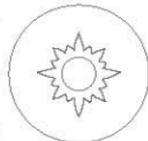
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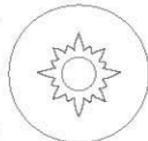
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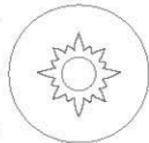
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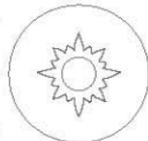
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Companion Plants

Companion Planting in gardening and agriculture is the planting of different crops in proximity for any of a number of different reasons:

Deterring pests: Certain plants act as insect repellents or deter critters.

Attracting beneficials: Some plants also attract beneficial insects.

Shade regulation: Large plants provide shade for smaller plants in need of sun protection.

Natural supports: Tall plants can support lower-growing, sprawling crops such as peas.

Improved plant health: When one plant absorbs certain substances from the soil, it may change the soil biochemistry in favor of nearby plants.

Improving soil fertility: Some crops, like beans, peas, and other legumes, help to make nitrogen more available in the soil.

Weed suppression: Planting sprawling crops with tall, upright plants minimizes open areas, where weeds typically take hold.

Companion Plant Attributes

Nasturtium	Plant Nasturtiums as a sacrificial crop. Cabbage white butterflies will lay their eggs on Nasturtium plants, keeping caterpillars away from your cabbage, kale and cauliflower.
Calendula	Calendula flowers are highly attractive to pollinating insects which will in turn pollinate your zucchini flowers.
Spring onions	Sow spring onions amongst your carrots - the smell of onion deters carrot root fly.
Mint	The aromatic leaves of mint help confuse carrot root fly, who find their host through scent.
Chives	The onion scent will deter aphids.
Garlic	The smell of garlic helps to deter aphids.
Chives, Thyme	The strong scent of these herbs deters aphids and blackfly.
Sweet peas	Sweet peas will attract pollinating insects which will in turn help to pollinate your bean flowers.
French marigold	The pungent smell of French marigolds deters whitefly.
Basil	Basil reportedly improves tomato flavor and the strong scent of their leaves also deters aphids.

Crop**Friends****Foes**

Crop	Friends				Foes
Beans	Beets Broccoli Cabbage Carrots	Cauliflower Celery Corn Cucumbers	Eggplant Peas Potatoes Radishes	Savory Squash Strawberry Tomatoes	Garlic Onions Peppers Sunflowers
Cabbage	Beans Celery Cucumbers	Dill Kale Lettuce	Onions Potatoes Sage	Spinach Thyme	Broccoli Cauliflower Strawberry Tomatoes
Carrots	Beans Lettuce Onions	Parsley Peas	Radishes Rosemary	Sage Tomatoes	Anise Dill
Corn	Beans Cucumbers	Lettuce Melons	Peas Potatoes	Squash Sunflowers	Tomatoes
Cucumbers	Beans Cabbage	Cauliflower Corn	Lettuce Peas	Radishes Sunflowers	Herbs Melons Potatoes
Lettuce	Asparagus Beets Bruss. Spr. Cabbage	Carrots Corn Cucumbers Eggplants	Onions Peas Potatoes Radishes	Spinach Strawberry Sunflowers Tomatoes	Broccoli
Onions	Beets Broccoli Cabbage Carrots	Carrots Lettuce	Peppers Potatoes	Spinach Tomatoes	Beans Peas Sage
Peppers	Basil Coriander	Onions	Spinach	Tomatoes	Beans Kohirabi
Radishes	Basil Coriander	Onions	Spinach	Tomatoes	Hyssop Kohirabi
Tomatoes	Asparagus Basil Beans Borage	Carrots Celery Dill Lettuce	Melons Onions Parsley Peppers	Radishes Spinach Thyme	Broccoli Bruss. Spr. Cabbage Cauliflower Corn Kale Potatoes

Soil pH - Levels and Testing

Soil pH is a measure of the acidity vs the alkalinity of the soil, and determines the capacity of that soil to exchange nutrients with plants growing in it.

Healthy plants should be able to get all of the nutrients they need from the soil. But if your soil is too acidic or too alkaline, those nutrients won't be available, no matter how much fertilizer you add.

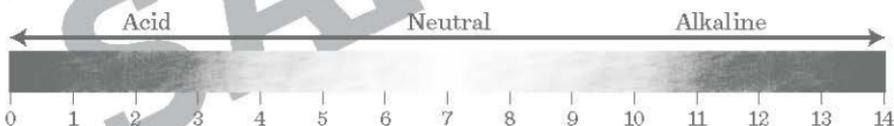
Acidity has a strong effect on the ability of plants to take up soil nutrients as well as upon the well being of soil organisms.

Most nutrients that plants need can be chemically assimilated when the pH of the soil solution ranges from 6.0 to 7.5.

Below pH 6.0 (acidic), some nutrients, such as nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, are less available.

When pH exceeds 7.5 (alkaline), iron, manganese, and phosphorus are less available. So getting your soil pH right is absolutely essential for healthy and nutrient plants.

pH is measured on a scale of 1-14:



A pH below 7 indicates Acidic soil

A pH of 7 indicates Neutral soil

A pH above 7 indicates Alkaline soil

Testing soil pH with a Testing Kit

These can be found at your local garden center. Use a small sample of soil, taken 4-6 inches from the surface, and follow the instructions in the kit. Use the color chart that comes with the kit and match to your soil sample test results. Each color indicates what level pH your soil is.

How to Adjust Soil pH for Your Garden

Most garden soils have a pH between 5.5 and 8.0. This number helps you determine when and how to adjust your garden soil's pH level. If the pH level is below 6, the soil is too acidic, and you need to add ground limestone. If the measurement is above 7.5, the soil is too alkaline for most vegetables, and you need to add soil sulfur.

Limestone - raises soil pH, reducing acidity

Sulfur - lowers soil pH, increasing acidity

How much limestone or sulfur do you need?

All Cooperative Extension Service offices, any soil lab, and garden centers have charts showing how much lime or sulfur to add to correct a pH imbalance.

Record your results in your Garden Planner. You may need to reference your test results at a later date, as they may change over time.

Test your soil annually to monitor what your garden's nutritional requirements are.

Beneficial Insects

Just because an insect is on a plant doesn't mean that it's doing damage. Most of the insects usually seen in the home landscape are either beneficial to the garden or just innocent bystanders. Make use of local garden centers to help identify the suspected pest. Your local stores will be familiar with common insect friends and foes in your area, as well as the safest or most effective method of control.

Spiders



All spiders are predators, and most feed on insects caught in a web. Others, such as jumping spiders and wolf spiders, are active hunters relying on excellent vision to kill their prey. Spiders are often the most abundant predators, hunting on a wide range of plant material in the home landscape.

Lady Beetles



Both the larvae and adult lady beetles are voracious predators that can eat hundreds of aphids in their lifetime. They also eat insect eggs, mealybugs, and other soft-bodied insects and mites.

Ground Beetles



Most ground beetles are nocturnal and have prominent jaws used to kill caterpillars (including armyworms, cutworms, and grubs) and other insects, as well as small snails and slugs. Both adults and larvae are predators.

Hover Flies (Syrphid Flies)



These non-biting and non-stinging flies closely resemble wasps and bees, in that they usually have a yellow abdomen encircled by brown or black stripes.

The larvae are valuable aphid and adelgid predators, capable of consuming over 400 aphids before pupating. Providing food for the nectar and pollen-feeding adults by planting flowers will encourage them to lay eggs in the landscape or garden. Hover flies are excellent at detecting and attacking even low numbers of aphids.

Predatory Wasps



Yellow jackets, one of the most aggressive wasps, nest in the ground or in enclosed paper nests, and are one-half to five-eighths inch long, with black and yellow stripes.

The yellow jacket populations peak in late summer. Yellow jackets are important predators of caterpillars and other soft-bodied insects.

Plants for Pollinators

Honey bees are the most recognizable and primary pollinator. Other pollinators include birds, moths, bats, butterflies and other insects.

Pollinators play a key role in ensuring we have an abundant food supply and a vibrant ecosystem. One way you can contribute to pollinator health is by growing a pollinator friendly plants in your garden. Providing safe and healthy gardens can reduce stress, improve nutrition and supply robust habitats for pollinators.

Spring flowering shrubs

These spring bloomers provide eye-catching flowers for you as well as pollen and nectar for the early bees and beneficial insects.

Azaleas

Lilacs

Forsythia

Fothergilla

Bulbs

Many spring-planted bulbs originate from tropical climates and won't tolerate cold temperatures. Wait to plant these tender bulbs until all danger of frost is past and the soil temperature is above 55 degrees Fahrenheit.

Anemone

Begonias

Caladium

Calla Lilies

Canna Lilies

Crocasmia

Dahlias

Elephant Ears

Freesia

Gladiolus

Lilies

Liatris

Annuals

Planting annuals in the spring and giving them some basic care throughout the growing season will give you a payback of endless summer color. Typically, garden centers sell the appropriate annuals for the season at hand — or soon to come.

Impatiens

Petunias

Geraniums

Marigolds

Zinnias

Ageratum

Mandevillas

Salvias

Sweet Pea Vine

Scaevolas

Pentas

Fruit Trees and Bushes

Some fruit trees and shrubs cannot pollinate themselves, or if they can, then it's not highly effective. In this case, a different variety must be planted nearby to ensure a large harvest of fruits. Plants that generally require a pollinator are:

Dwarf Apple

Blueberry

Pear

Mulberries

Sweet Cherry

Plum

Other fruit trees and shrubs are self-pollinating and do not require another variety to produce a large crop of fruits. In this case, no second pollinizing plant is needed.

Strawberry

Raspberry

Grape

Blackberry

Sour cherry

Nectarine

Peach

Apricot

