

Spring has Arrived!

Spring has arrived right on time as the calendar and daytime temperatures reassure us. Redbud and Saucer Magnolia blooms are fading and Dogwoods are showing their true colors. Here are a few tips to help you and your landscape be prepared for the coming season.

Summer flowering shrubs such as roses and crape myrtles need to be pruned now. This is also a good time to remove any dead or diseased limbs. Azalea, forsythia, spirea and other spring flowering shrubs should not be pruned until May when their blooms are complete. Remember to keep your pruners sharp and clean.

This is also the time to inspect plants for insect and disease problems. Scale is active in the spring and can be controlled using scalecide or summer oil. Fire-blight on pears may begin showing up soon also. Spring is the time to begin disease spray programs on roses and fruit trees. It is much easier to prevent these problems than to try and cure them.

Summer annuals such as geranium, begonia, petunia, and impatiens can be planted after the danger of frost has passed. This is usually around April 10 in north Mississippi. At this time most all vegetables can be sown in the garden. Place all vegetables and herbs in a sunny area and plant according to directions on the label.

If you enjoy planting ornamentals, spring is a wonderful time to get started. Always pick plants that are suited to grow in your area (N MS is Zone 7). You also need to select plants based on your soil pH. A soil test through your local Extension office can provide this helpful information. When purchasing plants at the local CO-OP or garden center, look for the healthiest plants possible. Make sure and check the plant for healthy, white roots.

When planting, dig a wide hole and backfill with an amended soil and water thoroughly. Plants will survive drought periods much better if you water once per week rather than multiple times per week.

A fall pre-emergent would have prevented those colorful winter weeds that are in the lawn now. Likewise, a spring pre-emergent will help prevent those summer weeds from becoming a nuisance.

It is best to wait and fertilize your turf after it has completely greened-up. Remember to apply fertilizers according to your grass type and always follow the directions on the label. Sharpen those mower blades and have a safe and enjoyable Spring!

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