

Maintaining a balanced life in your gardening.

April Gardening Tips

By Chanshare Farms

It seems that life is constantly throwing me curve balls, requiring me to readjust in different ways in order to maintain a good balance. When work is relaxed, my personal life is hectic, and when personal life is slow, house projects take the fore front. Mother Nature understands that you need balance and since your lawn won't require much of your attention this month, your garden will pick up the slack.

April is a good month to buy and plant trees and shrubs. It is the only time to purchase bare root trees, these trees are usually cheaper and work well for the home owner. When planting bare root trees dig the hole about 12". Cut off roots growing to the sides that are too long and do not fit into diameter of the hole. Don't just stick the tree in the hole and pour in soil. Hold the tree up and layer the roots, filling with soil, in sections. Remove all rocks from the soil in the hole to prevent air pockets. Fill the hole $\frac{3}{4}$'s full of soil packing the layers as you go. Fill the remainder of the hole with water and let sit over night, filling in the rest of the soil the next day but don't pack the last $\frac{1}{4}$. When finished the soil nearest the trunk of the tree should be high enough that no water will collect near the trunk. Water standing against the trunk will quickly create disease problems. Water the tree once a week for the rest of the summer.

Now is a great time to spend in the garden controlling weeds and getting things cleaned up. Watch for any insects or diseases that start to appear with warmer temperatures. It is important that you clean up any old or dead plant material from your yard. They serve as excellent hiding places for insects and disease. These can become a great source of problems in the landscape later on in the growing season. Following is a list of garden plants and vegetables you can start now.

- Plant your cool season vegetables now (peas, lettuce, radish, spinach).
- Start warm season vegetables (like peppers, squash, melons, and cucumbers) inside for transplant outdoors after the last frost.
- Plant trees, shrubs, perennials, and cool season annuals like pansies. Divide and transplant perennials that have become overgrown.
- Remove the dead heads of spring blooming bulbs such as daffodils, crocus and tulips but don't cut back leaves until they start to yellow. Prune tea roses before they leaf out but don't prune climbing and shrub roses until after they bloom.

If that doesn't give you enough to do in the yard come over to my home and I will put you to work. Nature is all about balance. Don't overdo it this month but put in some time and you will reap the benefits later in the year.

As always, happy gardening!

