

MARCH-

On your mark, get ready, GROW! Spring is coming!!!

Waiting for spring is the hardest part of gardening! To pass the time constructively, you need to do a little planning. Knowing when to start your seeds and transplant them outdoors will help to maximize your harvest. There are no hard rules for this, it's dependent on the climate for your particular area, as well as the weather at the time.

1. When the growing cycle for your current vegetables is over, yank 'em out, cut, and compost. If you're still waiting on lettuces, carrots, beets, etc., go ahead and leave them in until the weather gets too hot.
2. FERTILIZE! Add amendments/compost and let cook for a week or two. Bu's Blend, Malibu Compost, N'Rich and /or chicken manure are good additives.
3. Start seeds indoors, if you haven't already. Tomatoes, summer squash, melons, cucumbers, peppers, eggplant.
4. Grow seeds indoors for 6-7 weeks and protect from cold nights when you finally plant them in your garden.
5. Start saving clear plastic milk or water bottles to use as mini-greenhouses. Remove their caps and cut off their bottoms to cover the seedlings when planted in your garden. This will protect them not only from the elements but from 'critters' as well.

Successful gardens result from both planning ahead and paying attention throughout the growing season until harvest. The amount of time and effort you know you'll be able to give to your garden this year should determine how extensive it will be.

It's very hard to resist planting a lot, especially when the seeds are so small and the tiny plants are so cute! Come spring, a lot of us are eager to overplant, only to be swamped with tomatoes and overwhelmed with zucchini. Limit yourself to the amount of space and number of plants you'll be able to take care of well when they're mature. Then you'll be pleased with your successes rather than disappointed with your attempts.

Also, try something new, if just for fun. Adding something new will give you a new adventure. Maybe you might even discover a new favorite!

Maintenance:

Harvest peas as they are ready, depending on the variety. Allowing them to mature too fully on the vine will stop further blossoming.

Pluck off strawberry blooms through May. This helps to concentrate the plant's first real burst of fruiting energy into large sweet berries rather than small tart ones.

Roses - Fertilize and mulch when there is 4" of growth

Weed, weed, weed (weeds go in the recycle barrel and NOT in the compost bins)

Prepare to cover existing plants if frost is forecast