



Home Gardener's NEWSLETTER

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March Success Tips

1. Begin re-landscaping and sprucing up your yard with new shrubs, trees, groundcovers, and annual and perennial flowers.
2. Grow more of your own food this year! We have delicious fruit trees, berries, and vegetables that not only taste better, but are often better for you than store-bought produce.
3. Mow groundcovers such as vinca, ornamental strawberry, and hypericum (St. John's wort) now to keep them more compact. Set your mower at 3-5", mow, then fertilize and water in the fertilizer.

March is the time to start planting in earnest! We have everything you need to have a beautiful garden! Take advantage of any rains—they'll help your plants get established.

Plant Cancer-Fighting SUPERFOODS!

Over 4,500 research projects throughout the world show that cancer is "amazingly rare" wherever fruits, vegetables, and whole grains are the main element in the daily diet.

- ☺ **Berries** help fight colon, esophageal, oral, breast, and skin cancers.
- ☺ **Pomegranates** fight breast, skin, prostate, and lung cancers.
- ☺ **Tomatoes** help fight lung, endometrial, prostate, and stomach cancers.
- ☺ **Garlic** helps fight breast, colon, esophageal, and stomach cancers.
- ☺ **Beans** help fight breast and colon cancers.
- ☺ **Broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and kale** help fight breast, liver, lung, prostate, skin, stomach, and bladder cancers.

So get planting a wide variety of fruits and vegetables—it's Spring Planting Time!



STATE TREE:
CALIFORNIA
REDWOOD

Maintaining a Healthy Garden

Time to Fertilize!

Rain and the cycle of the seasons can leach out a lot of the nitrogen and other valuable nutrients from your soil. Awakening roots are hungry! Now is an excellent time to go through your entire yard and feed all the plants. Remember that even if plants look dormant, early spring, starting just BEFORE the plants leaf out, is a key time when roots absorb tremendous amounts of nutrients.



Kellogg's 12-12-12 is an excellent **all-purpose fertilizer** for most plants. Feed **citrus** with *Gardner & Bloome Citrus & Fruit Tree Food*.

For great-looking **lawns**, feed with *Marathon All Seasons*. Your **flowers** will love *Gro-Power*

Some plants have other specific fertilizer needs, so when you come in, *ask us for our recommendations*.

Prevent and Fight Weed Invasion

If you haven't been out in your garden much recently, you may discover an abundance of weeds popping up. Weed killers can really do a good job in getting rid of them, and save you time too.

Ask us what products to use. Our **mulches** and **landscape fabrics** are excellent at blocking weeds from growing. We have weed killers (organic where available) for different purposes. **Pre-emergent** weed killers prevent weed seeds from germinating. **Post-emergent** weed killers kill weeds already growing. **Systemic** weed killers translocate to the root and kill the entire weed. **Broadleaf** weed killers for lawns kill dandelions and other broadleaf weeds without harming the grass.



Beware of Standing Water

If rain water sits in a watering basin at the base of a tree or shrub for more than a couple of hours at a time, it is a good idea to break the basin. Otherwise some roots may drown, resulting in poor plant growth during the growing season. Also, empty the water collecting in saucers and trays under container plants. This will prevent mosquitoes from breeding there, too.

Celebrate Arbor Week!

The nation's first Arbor Day was celebrated on April 10, 1872 in Nebraska at a time when that area of the country had almost no trees or forests. Over a million trees were planted that day. Unlike most of the country, California doesn't just set aside one day to celebrate Arbor Day—we take an entire week! March 7-14 is California's Arbor Week.

Besides making a landscape much more enjoyable, trees greatly benefit our fragile environment, and substantially increase our property values. We'll be glad to assist you in choosing the perfect trees for your landscape.

The Question Corner

The following question came up recently about some of the problems and risks associated with buying plants from big box stores:

Q. *I'm not an expert gardener and I recently attended a lecture by a noted speaker who spoke in derogatory terms about the plants available at the big box stores. I confess that I did not know anything about this. Why are these plants not as good?*

Here is a summary of the informed points made by university ornamental plant specialists Reese and Emald, as printed in *Horticulture Magazine*:

Big box stores don't pay growers for a plant until it sells. If it dies from lack of water, it is the grower who bears the financial loss instead of the national chain.

Some growers have to supply field representatives in order to care for their nursery stock so that the plants do not die at the big box stores.

In order to serve the big box stores profitably, growers simplify

their inventory and supply less interesting plants.

Most big box chains do not hire knowledgeable personnel to provide customer service or answer gardening questions.

Some plants found in big box stores may not be regionally appropriate. When they fail to thrive, the loss is passed on.

Purchasing from an independent garden center benefits the community, as money stays in local circulation.

In conclusion, Emald and Reese observe, "Besides, it's usually the small, individually owned nursery that has the coolest, newest, weirdest plants, not just the most profitable."

Garden Trend Setters

The world's largest cruise ship "Allure of the Seas" set sail on her maiden voyage December 1st, 2010. Before leaving Port Everglades, Florida, hundreds of landscapers installed more than 12,000 live plants and trees for her outdoor "Central Park".



This is actually the second "living park at sea" as her slightly smaller sister ship "Oasis of the Seas" set sail with the first transatlantic-seafaring garden in 2009.

Spring Resolutions for A Great Garden

The National Garden Bureau has declared 2011 "the year of the Tomato and the year of the Zinnia" With spring arriving, plan to enjoy one or both of these two plants while you prepare for a great gardening year by springing into action with these resolutions:

Plan before you plant. You will save time and money, plus grow more and better plants if you plant the right number of each vegetable, small fruit plant, or fruit tree by beginning with an organized and informed plan.

Check your soil. It might need you to add the right organic fertilizers, compost, and other amendments. Adding these early, in late winter or spring, allows them to break down in time to help your plants thrive.

Build Raised Beds. Not only are they space efficient, they warm up and dry out faster in spring, which encourages earlier and better plant growth.

Liberally Apply Mulch Spread a 2-3" layer of organic mulch. This suppresses weeds, conserves moisture, and gradually improves your soil.

Spend Time in Your Garden. Short daily visits (at the crack of dawn, lunchtime break, or right after work) will help keep weeds pulled, problems detected and resolved early, and vegetables picked at their peak.

Harvest Frequently. Many of our favorite fruiting vegetables will produce even better if you pick them often. Have an abundance of zucchini and tomatoes? Share them with neighbors or a food bank!

Plant Spring, Summer, and Fall. Once a plant has finished its cycle, plant something else!



Carrot Raisin Cookies



These healthy golden gems are *scrumptious* too! And if you want a fun project for children, help them plant the seeds, harvest the carrots, and then have fun making these "garden grown" cookies together!

1 egg, beaten	1 tsp. orange or lemon zest (grated citrus rind)
1/3 c. cooking oil	2/3 c. grated carrot
1/3 c. sugar	1/3 c. golden raisins
3/4 c. all-purpose flour	1/4 tsp. cumin
2/3 tsp. baking powder	or 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt	

Cook grated carrot in boiling water for 2 minutes, drain, and cool. Beat egg, oil, and sugar together. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Drop from a teaspoon onto a cooking sheet. Bake in a 300° preheated oven for 10 minutes. Makes 2 dozen cookies.

I've noticed something about gardening. You set out to do one thing and pretty soon you're doing something else, which leads to some other thing, and so on. By the end of the day, you look at the shovel stuck in the half-dug rose bed and wonder what on earth you've been doing. Anne Raver, *DEEP IN THE GARDEN* (1995)