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## M arch/April Tips

1. Make 2012 your most **beautiful and productive** ever! March and April are busy months with preparing soil and planting flowers, vegetables, and landscaping plants.
2. Besides **veggies**, we have **blueberries** and all kinds of other **berries** that promote good health, plus **citrus** and **fruit trees**. Enjoy a bountiful, healthier 2012!
3. **Prune all spring-flowering plants after they bloom**, including camellias, flowering cherries, flowering quince, ceanothus, etc.
4. **Check your sprinkler and/or drip irrigation systems** for winter damage. Replace broken or clogged sprinkler heads and emitters. Reset timers. Prune back foliage that will soon block sprinklers.
5. Try our wonderful **Plant Skydd rabbit repellent** and take care of those bunnies!
6. Come and see our second shipment of potted **bare-root roses**!

## Strawberry Shortcake Anyone?

Plant strawberries now and enjoy giant, juicy-sweet red berries this summer! Here are some important planting tips.



Choose a place with good drainage and thoroughly mix in our soil amendment and starter fertilizer. Planting depth is very important. The soil level should

be at the middle of the crown, with the tops of the roots just barely covered.

Keep the bed free of weeds by spreading 2-3 inches of mulch under and around the plants. This also helps conserve moisture and prevents fruit from touching the soil. Prevent overcrowding, which is one cause of small fruits, by pinching back the runners as needed.

If space is limited, plant strawberries in containers—they even do well in hanging baskets!



## Tips for Your Spring Veggie Garden

There are so many exciting vegetables to plant during March and April that it almost makes a person dizzy!

☞ Plants like *lettuce*, *spinach*, *carrots*, *bok choy*, *kale*, and *chard* can be planted even while the weather stays cooler.



☞ Warm season vegetables including *tomatoes*, *cucumbers*, *eggplant* and *peppers* prefer not to be planted too early—they like warm soil. Wait until late March to plant these.

☞ As the weather warms more, start planting *melons*, *squash*, and *corn*, too.

☞ Prepare your soil by mixing in *Gardner & Bloom Harvest Supreme* plus *Liquid Gro-Power*.

☞ Our *Boost Anti-Oxidant Vegetable Collection* will be here by April!

## Plant for a Colorful 2012

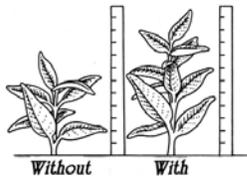
As spring arrives, we will start spilling over with more and more color! Plant some **beautiful annuals** to quickly adorn your landscape, including new varieties of old favorites such as *petunias*, *marigolds*, *cosmos*, and *impatiens*.



☞ **Perennials** (including *geraniums*, *gaillardia*, *coreopsis*, *rudbeckia*) also provide tons of long-lasting color. Include vines (*clematis*, *trumpet vine*, *jasmine*, and *honeysuckle*) for "heavenly" color that reaches to the sky.

☞ Now is the time to plant **summer-blooming bulbs** like *gladiolus*, *dahlias*, *freesias*, and *lillies*!

☞ Check out our many excellent types of **new flowers** too!



## Spring Fertilizing

Early spring is one of the most critical times to fertilize. Roots are growing actively and it's important that a good supply of nutrients is readily available to them. Strong root growth now will help promote good

plant growth in the months ahead. Here's what to use.

**Lawns:** Use *Best Turf Supreme*.

**Fruit trees:** Use *Gro-Power Premium Citrus & Avocado Food*.

**General purpose:** Use *Gro-Power Plus*.

If you see yellow leaves on acid-loving plants, ask us what to use.

Spring  
Trees & Shrubs  
Roses  
Bulbs  
Vegetables  
Flowers  
Citrus  
Herbs  
**Planting Time!**

## Invasive Parasite Alert

**J**apanese dodder (JDOD) is a noxious weed that was introduced to California in 2004 and, at last count, had already spread to 15 counties. It is currently under an eradication program in California as a high priority regulated pest.

This parasitic vine, originally from Asia, can grow rapidly—*up to six inches a day!* JDOD has a broad range of host plants, and has been found attacking, covering, and sometimes killing ornamental shrubs and fruit trees, oaks, willows, as well as crop plants, annuals, and perennials.

Mature JDOD stems are comparable in size to cooked spaghetti. This annual plant has slender, yellow stems with red spots and striations, and small scale-like leaves that drape from its host plant in stringy clumps.

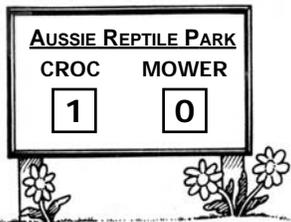
If you believe you have discovered an infestation of JDOD, *do not try to control it!* Small pieces of this vine can be spread through pruning, composting, or other improper disposal of plant material. *Contact the county agricultural commissioner* who will help you properly identify it and control it. More information can be found on the California Department of Food and Agricultural website.

## Elvis the Crocodile Attacks Lawnmower

**O**perations manager Tim Faulkner was caught off-guard recently when a cranky croc lunged out of the water to wrestle an "invading" lawnmower from Faulkner's grasp and drag it into his salt water pool. Elvis, who has a reputation for aggressive behavior, was brought to the Australian Reptile Park following his capture in Darwin harbor where he had been attacking fishing boats.

Once captured, the massive 16 foot crocodile pulled the mower underwater and waited for it to drown for more than an hour. Faulkner explains Elvis' behavior as fairly typical for a crocodile: *"Once he got it, he just sat there and guarded it. It was his prize, his trophy. If it moved, then he would attack it again."*

Keeper Billy Collett distracted Elvis with a piece of kangaroo meat while Faulkner jumped into the pool to retrieve the disabled mower. Elvis lost two teeth when he punctured the top casing. The mower will never work again. The complete attack can be enjoyed on YouTube.



## Time-Saving Garden Tips

**T**he New Year is underway and with the passing of February, only 83% remains! If you find the days slipping away faster than you can keep up, here are a few time-saving gardening tips:

**Practice Xeriscaping:** Drought-tolerant plants help save both water and watering time. Grouping plants with the same water needs together is also a great time and water saver.

**Plant "Native" plants** (which can include California natives and some beautiful plants from similar climates, like the Mediterranean). These plants have an advantage over specialty plants that are not adapted to thrive during our weather extremes.

**Plant Up Containers:** plants thrive if they have a proper size container and are fed and watered when they need it. Plus you can move them around to create a fresh new look.

**Use Raised Beds:** Put in a few raised garden beds every year and you'll grow more crops in less space. This makes vegetables and strawberries easier to weed and water, plus simplifies the addition of organic material.



**MULCH!!!** We can never say enough about the high impact mulch has on saving time. It suppresses weeds, moderates the soil temperature, and cuts down on watering time. Let mulch work for you!

## Spring Honey Vegetable Medley

**P**repared in a skillet, or quickly stir-fried, these lightly sweetened vegetables are sure to please!

2 TBS. butter	4 green onions, sliced
1 lb. green beans, trimmed	6 TBS. honey
½ lb. asparagus, trimmed	6 sprigs fresh cilantro
6-10 radishes, trimmed & halved	½ tsp. salt
1 small red onion, sliced	Sesame seeds (optional)

Melt butter in skillet; add green beans, cover and cook, stirring occasionally for about 5 minutes. Add asparagus, radishes, and red onion. Cook approximately 5 more minutes (until tender-crisp), stirring occasionally. Stir in green onions, honey, cilantro, and salt. Cook about 1 minute, or until slightly thickened. Toss lightly with sesame seeds and serve.



**T**he state of Texas has declared 2012 **Lady Bird Johnson Centennial Year** to honor the woman who many call *"the Environmental First Lady."* Lady Bird Johnson is credited with being the force behind President Johnson in passing the 1965 Highway Beautification Act, establishing our California Redwood National Forests, and championing native plants and wildflowers. *What a wonderful legacy Lady Bird has left us!*



*"My heart found its home long ago in the beauty, mystery, order and disorder of the flowering earth. I wanted future generations to be able to savor what I had all my life." ~ Lady Bird Johnson, 2002*