



Home Gardener's NEWSLETTER

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April Success Tips

- 1. Plant groundcovers** now so they will establish strong root systems before hot weather comes.
- 2. Plant an herb garden** to add fabulous flavors to your cooking, mint to garnish drinks, camomile for a relaxing tea, and catnip for your kitten!
- 3. Fertilize plants** you didn't last month. Refer to last month's newsletter for what to use.
- 4. Repair or replace lawns** as needed. We have new varieties of grass that use less water, stay greener, and are more disease resistant than grass of just five years ago.
- 5. Apply our iron to citrus**, and azaleas and other acid-loving plants, if the new leaves are yellow between the veins.
- 6. Mulch** all freshly cultivated beds to discourage weeds and hold in moisture.
- 7. Release** our ladybugs and other beneficial insects to control pests naturally.

It's Spring Planting Time!



Preventing Weeds

Save yourself both time and work by preventing weeds from sprouting. Here are three ways to do this.

Apply our pre-emergent to prevent weed seeds from germinating. Apply it to the soil that has been cleared of visible weeds (or use a combination pre-emergent plus weed killer), and follow the label directions.

Mulch to block out sunlight that is critical to weed growth. Mulch also keeps the soil damper, enabling you to more easily pull weeds that do sprout. Keep the mulch an inch away from tree trunks to avoid moisture problems at the crown.

Install our special landscape fabric to provide a barrier to weeds but allow air, water and nutrients to get through to the roots of plants. Use this around the base of shrubs and trees, around bedding plants, in walkways, etc.

Fabulous Flowers!

We're bursting at the seams with flowers this month! Here is just a sampling of all the glorious colorful plants we have now! And remember, we get regular deliveries, and some of these include unusual flowers that are in short supply, so come in often!

Plant a variety for a wonderful assortment of fresh **cut flowers** all spring and summer, such as alstromeria, bachelor buttons, phlox, coreopsis, cosmos, zinnias, penstemon, scabiosa, nemesia, lisianthus, gerbera daisy, salpiglossis, schizanthus, and Shasta daisy. Be sure to include **fragrant blooms** like nicotiana, wallflower, heliotrope, and sweet William. Plant some **edible flowers** to include in recipes and to use as a garnish; good ones are nasturtium, pansy, marigold, scented geraniums, and roses.

Taller plants can be used to improve the charm and appearance of many garden areas, so try some hollyhocks, snapdragons, cosmos, foxgloves, delphinium, dahlias, purple coneflower, rudbeckia, and sunflowers.



Delicious Home-Grown Vegetables

Growing your own vegetables is a healthy family activity, and there's nothing quite like eating home-grown vegetables from your own garden when harvest time arrives. No store-bought vegetable, picked weeks before ripening, can match the flavor and tenderness of a vegetable picked at exactly the right moment!

Warm season vegetables to plant now include tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, corn, chard, eggplant, squash, beets, carrots, and radishes.

Produce more and larger vegetables with our *Kellogg's Earth Rich* and starter fertilizer



WHAT'S NEW AT THE NURSERY

• **5 GALLON ROSES—\$16.99**

Ready to bloom

• **1 GALLON DAYLILIES—\$5.99 OR 3/\$15.00**

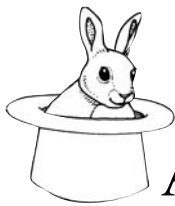
Bright Lemon Yellow

• **1 GALLON YARROW—\$4.99**

Gorgeous pastel flowers

PLANTSKYDD RABBIT REPELLENT—\$14.99

Now in granular form—1 lb cannister



Abracadabra! Small Yard Magic

As land in California becomes more valuable, residential lot sizes become smaller. Here are three inventive ideas you can use to create the illusion of a larger garden in a smaller area.

Curiosity. Don't reveal the entire garden at the entrance. Entice visitors by planting some taller perennials or shrubs that provide just a peek at what lies ahead. Also use fragrant plants to lure guests into the area.

Focal Point. Place the focal point as far away from the entrance as possible, then create a path leading to it. (Tip: A path need only be two feet wide if it winds through your private backyard, but if you need to accommodate a lawn mower, make it three feet wide. The entryway path leading to your front door should be about five feet wide.) Line paths with flowers. This creates an arrow effect that points the way to the focal object.

Single color. Limit plants to one color, but use many shades of that color to create a feeling of variety without overwhelming the eye. Cool colors (like blue) appear to be farther away, while vibrant ones (like red) seem to jump out at you.

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◆ Anyone who has ever grown bamboo knows what a fast grower it is! Bamboo has become one of the world's most popular building materials, known for its strength and beauty. Development of a process that makes bamboo into a rayon-like fiber has produced an extremely soft-textured material that has just entered the marketplace.

◆ Sweet alyssum (the tiny white flowers that grow even in the sidewalk cracks) is a "hyperaccumulator", meaning the plant gathers nickel from soils containing an overabundance of the metal. In recent research, an extract of the alyssum was sprayed on diseased pecan trees. The substance corrected the nickel deficiency, the cause of the disease.

◆ University tests on packets of mixed seeds that are known to attract beneficial insects found that cockscomb (*Celosia cristata*) attracted the greatest number of beneficials. Surprisingly, fennel flowers, which has often been recommended as a potent attractor of beneficial insects, attracted the fewest beneficials.

Beware of Tomato Stalkers!

Tomatoes, the most-planted home garden vegetables in the U.S. may be in danger—a stalker is on the loose!

The obsessive stalker searches for tomato plants, then wraps itself around the plants, caressing them relentlessly. The stalker is a parasitic plant, *Cuscuta pentagona* (dodder), that seeks out the tomato (and several other plants including impatiens) by sensing their odor.

In Penn State University research, the dodder plants ignored water sources and grew toward tomato scents. They even grew in the direction of the tomatoes through curved tubes.

(Don't worry—dodder isn't a problem to our happy California tomatoes!)



Asparagus & Carrots with Pecans



1 cup water + 3 Tbsp, separated
1 lb fresh asparagus, trimmed
2 cups carrots, sliced diagonally
1/4 cup butter

1 Tbsp lemon juice
1 tsp cornstarch
1 tsp grated lemon peel
3 Tbsp pecan halves or slivered almonds

In a 10" skillet, boil 1 cup water; add asparagus and carrots. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, 8-10 minutes, or until vegetables are crispy tender. Drain and remove from skillet to serving dish; keep warm. In same skillet, melt butter. In a small bowl; mix 3 Tbsp water, lemon juice and cornstarch. Mix with butter. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened. Stir in lemon peel, then pour over vegetables. Sprinkle with nuts, then enjoy this healthy, colorful side dish!

Grow Attractive Vegetables

During World War II, the "Victory Gardens" of 20 million homeowners produced nearly 40% of the fresh vegetables consumed in the U.S. In the following decades, the number of backyard vegetable gardens declined for several reasons.



Supermarkets, offering picture-perfect produce, replaced the corner market, and faster transportation methods brought fresh fruits and vegetables to market quicker. Also, people began spending more time at work and vacationing and less time at home.

Now the pendulum is swinging back the other way as flavorless supermarket produce has more pesticide residue, and reports of food-borne illnesses and contamination appear regularly in the news. Plus, consumers are being educated on the health benefits and superior flavor of fresh home-grown foods.

Vegetables can be grown in places other than long rows in the backyard. Many have attractive foliage and can be incorporated into **planting beds** for added greenery. (Leaf crops like Swiss chard and lettuce, plus herbs like cilantro and parsley, can survive with less sun than most vegetables.) Use large **decorative pots** on patios to grow bush varieties of green beans, cucumbers, and squash. Centuries ago in Europe, green peppers were grown as attractive shrubs before they became recognized as culinary plants.



Chives

Vining vegetables such as beans, melons, and cucumbers can be grown on a **trellis** or **arbor**, or along a **fence**. **Window boxes** were made to accommodate herbs.

So start growing vegetables, and know the food you're eating is fresh, safe, and tops in taste!