US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

GreenScapes Seasonal Planner

GreenScapes
Environmentally Beneficial Landscaping

SPRING

March | April | May

Flower and Vegetable Gardens

- Prepare new planting beds and gardens by mixing in one to three inches of compost.
- Pull weeds when they first start growing, while soil is moist and roots are short, before they go to seed.
- Buy plants that resist disease and use less water.

Tree and Shrub Beds

- Prepare new tree and shrub beds by mixing compost into the entire bed (not just planting holes).

Lawns

- Start mowing, about three inches high for most lawns in northern states; two inches for lawns in southern states. "Grasscycle"—leave the clippings for free fertilizer.
- For lawns in poor condition: aerate, overseed and top-dress with a quarter-inch to half-inch of compost.
- Fertilize lawns if needed in May with "natural organic" or "slow-release" fertilizer.

Watering

- Check soil moisture at plant roots before watering—don't water until they need it.
- Lay out soaker hoses in beds and cover with mulch.
- Prepare sprinkler systems by testing, adjusting and repairing leaks.

Composting

- Harvest compost from your bin. Throw any uncomposted sticks or stalks back in for another cycle.

SUMMER

June | July | August

Flower and Vegetable Gardens

- Mulch flower and vegetable beds with compost or grass clippings to conserve water and control weeds.
- Use fabric row covers to keep pests off sensitive vegetables.
- Identify bugs before you spray, squash or stomp—they may be "good bugs" that eat pests.

Tree and Shrub Beds

- Mulch shrub and tree beds with shredded wood, leaves or bark once a year to conserve water, reduce weeds and feed the soil.

Lawns

- Mow regularly, and leave the clippings on the lawn.
- Keep mower blades sharp to reduce lawn damage and brown tips.
- Consider saving water by letting some lawn areas (ones that don't get heavy traffic) go brown and dormant until fall.

Watering

- Water at dawn to reduce evaporation.
- Water lawns one inch per week, if no rain, or let go brown and dormant (but water enough to moisten root zone once a month).
- Start and re-check watering systems, and adjust for weather. (Don't water when it rains).

Composting

- Add yard debris to compost pile; water pile to keep it moist. Place pile in shade or cover to hold moisture.

Let nature do the work. Incorporate greenscaping practices into your lawn and garden care. | Learn more at **www.epa.gov/greenscapes**

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FALL

September | October | November

Flower and Vegetable Gardens

- Pull emerging weeds in beds when ground is moist and before they develop deep roots.
- Mulch garden beds with leaves or compost to reduce winter weeds and feed the soil. Or plant winter cover crops in open beds.
- Prepare new planting areas by digging in compost.

Tree and Shrub Beds

- Mulch tree and shrub beds with leaves, shredded wood or bark.

- Plant trees, shrubs and many perennials in early fall to give them a good start.

Lawns

- Improve thin areas of lawn in September–October by aerating, overseeding and top-dressing with compost.
- Fertilize lawns with "natural organic" or "slow-release" fertilizer in September to develop healthy roots and crowd out weeds.
- Plant new lawns to give them the best start before next summer.

Watering

- Reduce watering during cooler weather.
- Shut off and drain watering systems if you expect a freeze.
- Put away exposed soaker hoses, or re-cover with mulch if left out.

Composting

- Clear unwanted garden growth and compost it for spring. Keep pile as moist as a wrung-out sponge.

WINTER

December | January | February

Flower and Vegetable Gardens

- Rake winter leaf mulch back onto beds if winds blow it off.

- Weed beds once during winter to prevent weeds going to seed.

Tree and Shrub Beds

- Prune fruit trees and other woody trees and shrubs while they're dormant (December–February). If you have questions, check with your local Cooperative Extension office or a nasery.

Lawns

- Tune up yard equipment; sharpen mower blades. Plan drip irrigation or soaker hoses for beds and container to conserve water.
- Winter is the time to plan for spring.
- Check storage areas for unwanted chemicals, and dispose safely. Call your local solid waste agency for details. Plan to replace plants that have disease or pest problems.

Watering

Let nature do the work.

Composting

- Continue to add fruit and vegetable scraps, coffee grounds, egg shells, nut shells, and house plant leaves and stalks from inside your home to your compost pile year round.

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For questions about lawn and garden care in your region, contact your local Cooperative Extension office by visiting **www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension**.