

Minnesota Gardening Guide: April

After a long Minnesota winter, many of us are anxious to get out in the garden at the first signs of spring. Although many garden projects require waiting for consistently warmer weather, there are some things that you can do in early spring to get your garden off to a good start.

Prepare the soil

To see if the soil is ready to be worked, use this simple test. Take some soil from the garden and squeeze it in a ball. If it stays together easily, it is still too wet to work. Wait a few days and try again.

Once the soil is dry enough, work in 2" of manure, compost, or peat moss. This will improve the drainage of heavy soil and increase the water holding capacity of sandy soil.



Forsythia shrubs in bloom.

Lawn

If you notice dead patches in the lawn, now is the perfect time to repair them. Use a lawn patch product or grass seed mixed with topsoil. For lawn burns caused by deicing salt or pet urine, water the area thoroughly and apply pelletized gypsum to the soil before re-seeding.

Crabgrass Prevention

To prevent crabgrass from growing in your lawn, keep the grass tall and well watered during dry periods in the summer and fall. For areas where crabgrass is still a problem, use a pre-emergent crabgrass preventer in the spring. Apply to problem areas in mid- to late April (around the time that Forsythia start to bloom). Don't use a crabgrass preventer if your plan on applying grass seed in the area; it will prevent the grass seed from germinating.

Spring Flowering Bulbs

The tulips, daffodils, and other bulbs that were planted last fall should be putting on a good show soon. To keep them going year after year, keep the leaves intact until they die back to the ground. They are needed by the bulb to make energy for the plants to bloom next spring. Remove the spent flowers from tulips and hyacinth bulbs.

Malmberg's is committed to providing quality, locally grown plants and personal service. Stop by any of our three locations and let our knowledgeable staff assist you in finding the perfect flower, plant or accent piece to turn your space into your own personal garden retreat.

Garden Center Locations

20045 County Road 81
Rogers, MN 55311
(763) 428-2061

5120 N. Lilac Drive
Brooklyn Center, MN 55429
(763) 535-4695

2456 125th Ave. NE
Blaine, MN 55449
(763) 746-0580



What can I plant now?

You may already know that you can plant cold-tolerant annuals like Pansies, Violas and Alyssum in early spring, but, did you know that there are also many vegetables that can be planted now? Onion and Potato sets can usually be planted in mid- to late April along with seeds for Beets, Carrots, Chard, Kohlrabi, Leaf Lettuce, Mustard Greens, Parsnips, Peas, Radishes, Spinach, and Turnips.

In late April to mid-May, cole crops like broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, and brussels sprouts can be planted. (For more information on these vegetables, see our Growing Guide *It's Time to Plant Cole Crops*).

Asparagus

Asparagus can also be planted in early spring. Plant in an area that will stay consistently sunny year after year as it is difficult to transplant. Asparagus can be harvested after plants are three years old. Remove stalks when they are 6" - 8" long.

Perennials

Depending on the weather, some of your perennials may be starting to poke out of the ground soon. Early spring is a great time to

make some changes to the perennial garden. When they are less than 4" tall, summer and fall blooming perennials can be easily moved to another part of the garden. Transplanting spring blooming perennials should be done after they have finished blooming.

Many perennials can also be divided in the spring. Overgrown Hostas and Daylilies benefit from being divided which can be done in early spring or early fall. To divide, dig up the entire plant trying to get most of the roots. Split the plant with a sharp spade or knife. Transplant the divisions around the garden and water thoroughly.

Trees & Shrubs

Start out the gardening season by taking care of any winter damage that may have affect your trees and shrubs. Thoroughly water areas that have been exposed to deicing products to flush them out of the soil. Remove any broken or dead branches and remove winter protection like tree wrap.

Apple Scab

Did you notice any of these symptoms on your crabapple tree last July: yellowing leaves, yellow

spots on leaves, leaves dropping? Your tree may have had Apple Scab, a fungus that affects crabapple trees when they are stressed during the summer, like during a drought. To minimize the chance of a problem again this year, clean up all of last years leaves from around the base of the tree. Because the leaf debris can spread the scab, don't put the leaves in your compost pile. You may also want to treat the tree with a fungicide in the spring. If the tree is still relatively small, you could do this yourself. Otherwise, it is best to contact a tree service to safely treat the tree.



Crabapple 'Profusion'

If you have any questions or are new to gardening and looking for a place to start, stop in to any of our garden centers or give us a call at (763) 428-2061. We are happy to help.