

GARDEN CLEAN UP - SPRING

As the weather begins to warm, the last of the snow melts away and the birds begin to sing. It is time to wake up the garden and get ready for Spring.

Here are a few tips to help you along.

Clean up all debris from gardens and lawns. Gradually remove winter mulch/soil from hilled up roses. Use your hands rather than a rake so as not to damage the roots of your plants. Remove tree and shrub wrappings such as tree netting or burlap that was used over the winter months for protection.

Apply dormant oil sprays before leaves or flowers show signs of breaking dormancy; that is, before "bud break". Wait until as close to bud break as possible before applying oil sprays. *Do not apply oil during freezing weather or on windy days.

Use pre-emergent herbicides to prevent crabgrass, when the forsythia blooms start to fade. Make sure it doesn't get on areas where you will be planting your own seeds.

Begin planting your vegetable garden. Peas, lettuce, escarole, spinach, radishes, carrots, beets, and onions should all be planted when the daffodils start to bloom and the common lilac bush has leafed out. When peach and plum blossoms are in full bloom, plant cold tolerant vegetables. Plant potatoes when the serviceberry flowers.

Now is also a great time to transplant small trees and shrubs, including Rhododendrons and Azaleas. This can be done once the ground is thawed, but while the plant is still dormant (before new leaves have emerged).

Perennials may be dug and divided as they emerge, especially those that will get very large later in the year. Also note if any spring bulbs need thinning. Mark colours and varieties while blooming. You may forget by the time they are ready for digging. Dig and replant any frost heaved plants or shrubs and cut back ornamental grasses before their new growth.

Test your soil in different areas and make improvements (Soil testing is available from University of Guelph). Till in manure or other soil amendments.