

## Master Gardeners: Spring Sprung. Now What? Know What To Do In Your Garden.

Leimone Waite, Master Gardener, March 23, 2019

**Q:** What should I be doing in my yard this month, now that spring weather is here?

**A:** Most people I've talked with the last few weeks are still cleaning up from snow-mageddon. Once this work is done, here's a list of things to do around your yard and garden in preparation for the spring and summer growing season.

Now is the best time to Aerate and fertilize your lawn. Consider putting down a pre-emergent if you had a crabgrass problem in your lawn last year.

While it's still cool, work on hardscapes, fencing and irrigation. Run each station on your irrigation system to make sure they're all working properly without leaks or sprinkler misalignments.



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If you've left perennials or ornamental grasses standing with seedpods to feed and give cover to birds, cut them back now so new growth can prosper.

Consider the replacement of some of your more water-thirsty ornamentals with low-maintenance native plants.

Start mowing weeds and cleaning up any dead materials under plants in preparation for fire season.

If you've not already pruned your roses, it's not too late to thin and shape them, cutting out weak and crossing branches.

When laying out your garden beds, practice plant rotation. Remember where you planted various families last year — tomatoes/peppers/eggplant, cabbage/broccoli/kale, etc. — and plant them in different beds this year to avoid insect and disease buildups. As early as possible, plant cool-season plants such as beets, peas and kale to get in a crop before the heat of summer hits.

Make sure critter-proofing fences and wire are intact. Repair them as needed.

If you use organic fertilizers such as alfalfa meal or green manure, now is the time to dig them into your garden beds. This should be done at least three weeks ahead of planting because soil organisms need time to break these down and deliver nutrients to your plants.

Paint the trunks of your fruit trees or young shade trees with white latex paint and water, half-and-half to help prevent sunscald on the trunks.



Peaches require pruning at least twice per year. (Photo: Jenna Waite)

If you have fruit trees that have not bloomed yet, treat them with a final dormant spray of horticultural oil and fixed copper before flower buds open. This will prevent peach leaf curl and other fungal diseases from plaguing your trees for the rest of the year.

Once your fruit trees blossom, check them on warm mornings for pollinators. If you don't find any bees, pollinate by hand with an artist's brush. Also plant some pollinator-attracting flowers in your orchard. Rosemary works very well and takes little care.

Prune out non-blossoming limbs on early fruit including cherries, peaches and nectarines. Wait to prune apricots until summer; otherwise disease may enter the wounds and cause the tree to die.

If you have drip irrigation, check it to make sure water is being delivered where you want it. Make repairs as needed.

If you grow asparagus, be sure to clean the beds of all weeds before the first sprouts show and give the bed a new layer of compost.

Be sure to visit the various spring plant sales including those at Shasta College, West Valley High School and Turtle Bay.

*The Shasta Master Gardeners Program can be reached by phone at 242-2219 or email [mastergardener@shastacollege.edu](mailto:mastergardener@shastacollege.edu). The gardener office is staffed by volunteers trained by the University of California to answer gardeners' questions using information based on scientific research.*