

## Spring Garden tips

The calendar says Winter—but out our windows, the weather says spring into action for Spring!

It's time to think about those early spring gardening activities that give us a great excuse to get outside into the beautiful Solano sunshine. So, here are some tasks that will please your garden and satisfy your urge to “play in the dirt”:

### **FRUITS & VEGGIES**

- If you're lucky enough to have fruit trees, your young trees are hungering for fertilizer. For citrus trees, use half the amount of annual fertilizer and save the other half to be applied in August. (Jot that down on your calendar—your citrus trees will thank you for your efficiency.) For citrus in containers—divide the annual amount into fourths and fertilize quarterly.
- If you planted a winter cover crop, now is the time to chop and dig it up. You can add compost, well-aged manure or other soil amendments at this time.
- Thinking ahead—plan on planting vegetable beds about 6 weeks later.
- Cut back perennial herbs to promote lush new growth.

### **FLOWER BEDS & BORDERS**

- It's been a glorious year for camellias and azaleas. Now is the time to fertilize them monthly through June.
- If your perennials have suffered frost-damage, it's OK to prune it off now. Just check to make sure no unexpected frosts are heading our way.
- Pay attention to your soil. We are so anxious to “dig in the dirt” that often we're out in the garden working the soil before it has had time to dry out. That can destroy soil structure.

So avoid digging wet, soggy soil. It should be moist but dry enough to crumble in your hand when it's squeezed. That's a great readiness test.

### **RETURN OF THE GARDEN PESTS**

(No—it's not the latest sci-fi movie!)

- Monitor plants in the garden—this is the time-sucking pests such as whiteflies, scale, and aphids find a “delicious home”.
- A reminder--Always use the least toxic methods to rid your garden of pests: hand-picking or spraying with water is a great starter.
- “Graduating” to organic insecticides or insecticidal soaps is a good next step.
- Remember: broad-spectrum insecticides kill beneficial insects along with those unwanted pests.

- Set out yellow jacket traps now. This is the best time of the year to trap queens and reduce unwanted yellow jacket population growth.
- Bzzzzzzzz! Sting! Keep a watchful eye out for all containers, unfilled holes, etc. that hold standing water. Keep them water-free. That's the best defense against mosquito breeding. With these lovely warmer temperatures, mosquitoes start emerging.

Following these few easy tasks will set the stage for a glorious spring. Enjoy!