

Garden Club Horticultural Hints

April 2020

Gardening is your best outdoor time!



If you have nurseries where you usually shop, help them out by buying gift cards now. The nurseries will benefit from the cash flow and you will be greeted warmly when you go in to pick out your plants when they open for business. While many nurseries are open now, not all of them may be following the guidelines on social distancing as much as you might be comfortable with. Call and ask before making the trip!

If it is within your financial means, one of the best things you can do for your favorite nursery is to purchase a gift certificate from them now.

| | | | |
|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Peas (later - leeks) | cilantro | Carrots and beets | |
| Tomatoes (plant later) | | Cucumbers | North |
| Second crop corn | | Winter Squash | Summer Squash |
| Early corn | | Winter Squash | Summer Squash |
| | | Chard and arugula | Late green beans |
| Winter squash | Summer squash | | Early green beans |
| Cucumbers | | | Spinach and turnips |
| Okra | | | Chard/Chinese cabbage |
| Red and green lettuce | | | |

Ready your vegetable garden for spring! Repair any fence issues caused by winter damage. If you haven't already done so, order seeds by phone or computer (though reports say seed companies are swamped with orders). Lay out your vegetable beds on paper to save time when the soil is ready to plant. This month, you can plant your 'cold weather' crops, including spinach, peas and beets



Is it still too cold to garden, or do coronavirus concerns have you stuck inside? Watch the videos offered by Grow Native Massachusetts. For several years they have brought in experts on native plants such as Doug Tallamy, Larry Weaner, Claudia West, and Bill Cullina to speak at the Cambridge Library. Videos from these lectures are available (free!) on their website. Learn in the comfort and safety of your home. And you can always order their books online if you are hungry for more.

Finding very little to admire in the yard right now? Go hunting for some Mayflower plants. aka Trailing Arbutus. It is a low, shrubby plant that blooms early- to mid-spring with pink or white flowers. Each flower is male or female but you'll need a hand lens to tell them apart. And don't try to transplant it to your home woods – it doesn't transplant. That trait is notable because it got the name Mayflower from some of those just off that boat!



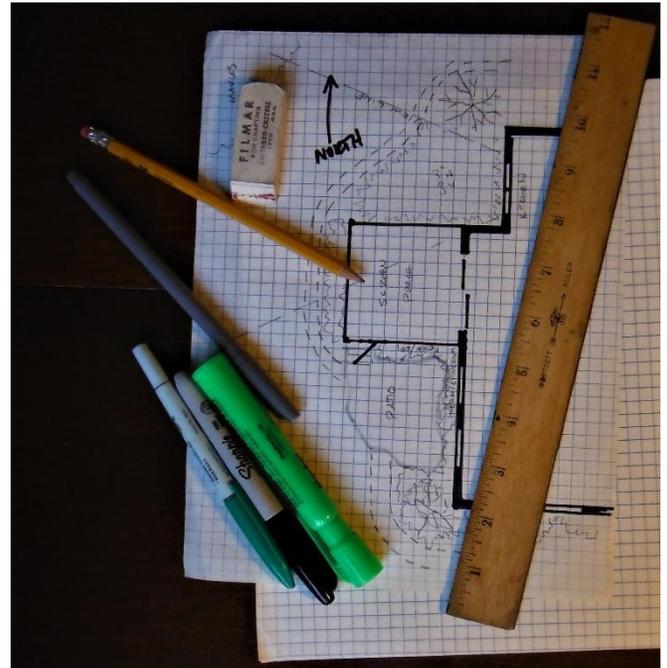
Good news! Gypsy moths will be severely affected by a naturally occurring soil fungus this year.





Plan ahead to Spring 2021. This month, look around your garden and decide where more spring bulbs could provide welcome color. Then take one or more photos of the site, mark them up, and store the photos under a title such as ‘Where to plant next fall’. A few minutes now will spare you trying to remember, six months from now, what you wished was there back in the spring.

Plan additions and alterations to your home garden. Remember what you didn’t love last year? Put some time into finding solutions. Nurseries and their staffs, normally hard to reach at this time of year, are much more likely to be available on the phone or on line right now



It’s easy to keep a safe six feet distance in your yard and garden, so get out there when the weather allows. Clean up your dead leaves, remove dead stalks from perennials that you left up to benefit birds – or because winter got here before you finished the fall clean-up.



Now’s the time to fertilize all your bulbs. A sprinkling of all-purpose organic fertilizer around bulb foliage now will help them build strength for the future. And, never cut down the foliage (or braid it) before it has yellowed, or you are prematurely removing the food source that builds next year’s flowers.



Written and created by Betty Sanders. For more horticultural suggestions for March and throughout the year, please visit www.BettyOnGardening.com