

Ready! Set! Plant! It's Spring!

March Success Tips

1. Plant a berry garden! We have utterly delicious blueberries, plus strawberry plants that will provide a crop of luscious berries in just a few short months.

2. Plant flowers and plants with colorful foliage to beautify your landscape. Last chance for **SUMMER-BLOOMING BULBS** — plant beautiful dahlias, gladiolus, lilies, and begonias.



3. Plant roses now and you'll have your first incredible flowers very soon. Try some of the wonderful recent award winners we have— some of these will sell out quickly.

4. Control weeds this month to keep ahead of them. We have weed killers—including some new organic weed killers—that make gardening much easier. Come in and benefit from our expert advice on which ones to use—don't waste your time applying a product that doesn't work well.



Early Spring Tree Care

Healthy trees will be sure to thrive with a little bit of help from you this spring.

❖ Remove grass growing around the trunk. Grass absorbs water and nutrients the tree needs for healthy growth, and some grasses produce chemicals that inhibit tree growth.

❖ Spread a layer of fresh mulch in a circle (reach beyond the drip line for a young, fast growing tree) around the trunk, 2-4 inches deep. Keep the trunk dry (to reduce fungal problems) by leaving a gap between it and the mulch.

❖ Feed trees and shrubs now with *Greenall Multipurpose 16-16-16*.

Plant a Successful Vegetable Garden!

Delicious homegrown vegetables are a privilege everyone can enjoy. Here's a checklist to get you started successfully.

☑ **Choose a sunny spot** away from overhanging trees—full sun helps most vegetables grow better and increases production.

☑ **Sharing:** Check with a neighbor or friend—perhaps you can share crops and successive plantings to diversify your harvest. That's how they did it in the "old days"!

☑ **Varieties:** Choose the family favorites and experiment with a few of our delicious new varieties!

☑ **Row orientation:** Run the rows north and south for maximum sun exposure. Run the rows across any slope to prevent erosion. Place sprawling vegetables like zucchini and melons on individual mounds.



SOIL PREPARATION

Adding organic material every year to your vegetable garden improves poor soil and makes good soil even more productive. Use *Greenall Soil Booster* and add *EB Stone Organic Sure Start*, mixing thoroughly and deeply to encourage deep rooting.

WHICH VEGETABLES TO PLANT NOW

Plant beets, carrots, radish, cabbage, lettuce, parsley, chard, broccoli, cauliflower, and onions. As the weather warms, start planting warm season vegetables, including tomatoes, peppers, corn, beans, melons, and zucchini. Keep these plants warmer and growing faster by covering them with our row covers.

Time to Feed Plants!

March is the key month to fertilize your plants. Tests show the optimum time for spring feeding is just prior to plants leafing out. Plants may look dormant, but their roots are actively growing at this time and in need of a ready supply of nutrients. If you happen to miss this period, just fertilize as soon as possible. *Greenall Multipurpose 16-16-16* is an excellent all purpose fertilizer for most plants. *Whitney Farms Organic Lawn Food* or *Scotts SuperTurf plus Weed Control* are the best fertilizers for lawns at this time of year. Use *EB Stone Organic Azalea Camellia Gardenia Food* for camellias and azaleas. Some plants need specific fertilizers, so when you come in, ask us for our recommendations.



FERTILIZING SUCCESS TIP: Place the fertilizer out to and just beyond the drip line (the area directly underneath the outermost leaves of the plants). Apply fertilizer to the ground and not to the leaves. If any fertilizer gets on the leaves, rinse it off.

Super Vegetable, Super Food!

A hhhh, broccoli—frequently misspelled and possibly America's most unappreciated vegetable. But mom was right; we should ALL be eating our broccoli! Here are a few of broccoli's benefits: it is high in fiber and contains two times more vitamin C per calorie than oranges, broccoli also helps prevent birth defects, it forms healthy blood cells, and research shows it contains chemicals that help the body detoxify cancer-causing agents, thus reducing the risk of cancer. What a super food!



Broccoli is fairly easy to grow as a spring and fall crop and will continue to develop side heads after the large, central head is removed. Harvest your broccoli when the flower ends remain tightly budded and a dark blue-green color. Yellow buds make attractive blooms, but are over mature.

Raw broccoli retains the highest nutritional value, but it is also tasty steamed, baked, stir-fried, and makes an excellent addition to soups and salads. With the help of your food processor, raw broccoli can be hidden in pasta sauces, mixed into ground meats, replace parsley, snuck into soups, and baked into brownies and muffins.

Kid's Corner - Adopt a Tree

Are your children disconnected from nature? Why not encourage them to adopt a tree to study? Spring is the perfect time to walk around your yard, neighborhood, park, or school grounds in order to pick a tree to observe through the coming seasons and years. Bring along a notebook for journaling and drawing, pen or pencil, and camera.



Once your child has chosen his or her special tree, here are a few questions they can answer for future journaling during summer, winter, and fall excursions:

- K What did I name my tree?
- K Why did I adopt this tree?
- K Where is my tree located?
- K What kind of tree is it?
- K How is my tree different from neighboring trees?
- K How tall is my tree?
- K How wide is my tree?
- K What does the bark feel like? Look like? Smell like?
- K Does my tree have leaves or needles?
- K What kind of insects or birds like my tree?
- K Can I climb it?!

Why not plant a tree while your kids are small, and journal its life together? It's the perfect way to celebrate California's *Arbor Day* March 7-14, 2008!

Home Value Enhancements

Spring is the ideal time to renovate your landscaping to keep it looking its best and add improvements. The *American Society of Landscape Architects* recommends homeowners **invest 10%** of the home's value in landscaping. Not only will you enhance the value of your property, but you will enjoy all the advantages your improvements provide. Consider the following statistics:



e Landscaping offers the highest return on investment of any home improvement—recovering 100 to 200% at selling time! Source: *Money Magazine*.

e Mature trees often have an appraised value of \$1,000 to \$10,000. Source: *Council of Tree and Landscape Appraisers*.

e You can reduce your air conditioning costs up to 50% by using plants to shade your walls and windows. Source: *American Public Power Association*.

e Trees reduce annoying noise up to 50% and mask unwanted noises with pleasant sounds. Source: *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*.

Tangy Roasted Broccoli & Peppers

Colorful & easy to make, even kids love oven-roasted broccoli!

- 1 lb fresh broccoli
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 Tbs. lemon juice
- 1 red pepper, cut into strips
- Parmesan cheese



Preheat oven to 450°. Mix olive oil with minced garlic, lemon juice and salt. Cut broccoli into florets and place single-layer in baking dish. Toss with oil mixture. Add red pepper strips. Roast for 12 minutes, or until tender. Sprinkle with as much fresh grated parmesan cheese as you desire, and enjoy!

Family Plant Legacies Part 1

Seven years ago, fond memories of her grandmother's *rose garden* inspired Sue Kendall to try her own hand with roses in Fresno. Now, this self-proclaimed "beginning gardener" shares a stunning array of 320 rose plants representing 279 varieties with grateful admirers and photographers. "Roses are very therapeutic. You can just go out there, and it's so peaceful," says Kendall.



If you are ready to start your own legacy, *ask us to help you* pick out the varieties that will grow best in your garden!

Stay tuned for *Family Plant Legacies Part 2* coming in our next newsletter!