

# Flowercraft Garden Center

San Francisco's #1 Nursery

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# HOME GARDENER'S NEWSLETTER

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## March Success Tips

- 1. Begin dressing up your yard** with our new shrubs, groundcovers, trees, and annual and perennial flowers. Add fresh colorful flowers to bare or colorless areas.
- 2. This is a great time to plant vegetables!** Start with vegetables like *lettuce*, *peas*, *carrots* and *beets* that thrive in cooler weather. As the weather warms, start planting *tomatoes*, *peppers*, *zucchini*, and other warm-season vegetables. If in doubt as to the best time to plant a certain vegetable, ask us when you are in the store.
- 3. Give drip irrigation systems a spring tune-up:** Clean filters by flushing out sediment under running water, and clean or replace emitters.

## Multi-Talented Groundcovers

Ground covers can be colorful, drought tolerant, and versatile. They'll beautify bare areas, control erosion, and can even reduce or replace lawn areas.



For **light shade**, use *campanula*, *hosta*, *liriope*, *pachysandra*, *vinca minor*, and some kinds of *moss*.

For **sunny areas** use *African daisies*, *artemisia*, *shrub roses*, *gazania*, *ice plant*, *isotoma*, *creeping rosemary*, *dwarf mondo grass*, *cerastium* (snow-in-summer), *sedums*, and *ornamental grasses*.

Not all plants are labeled "groundcovers". **Culinary herbs** like *creeping thyme*, *creeping oregano*, *camomile*, and *rosemary* make fragrant and edible groundcovers. Ask us to show you some of our many other low-growing, attractive plants. We are sure we can help you find something that meets your landscaping needs!

Looking for something that has **low water needs**? We have some excellent choices—ask us to show them to you.

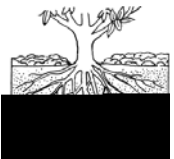
Many of these plants are permanent, so take the time to carefully prepare your planting bed. Mix in *Greenall Planting Mix*, and mulch around the plants to help prevent weeds. Once established, many of these plants require very little maintenance. Until that time, you'll need to water regularly between rains, fertilize and keep the area weed-free.

## Spring is for Flowers!

Hooraay for Spring! Is your green thumb itching? New plants are arriving weekly! Here are some outstanding flowers you can continue to plant this month: *snapdragons*, *stock*, *dianthus*, *alyssum*, *campanula*, *delphinium*, *coral bells*, *Iceland poppies*, *pansies* and *violas*, and many more, plus a wide selection of perennials.

As the weather begins to warm a little, start looking for *English daisies*, *marigolds*, *petunias*, *long-blooming impatiens*, *lobelia*, *erysimum* (wall-flower), *linaria*, *osteospermum*, and many others. Remember to amend your garden soil by mixing in *Greenall Soil Booster* and *Greenall Sure Start*.

## Optimum Fertilization Time



Even though plants appear to be dormant, underground their roots are in need of nutrients to absorb for abundant growth. This is why March to early April is such an important time to fertilize! If you want to get your plants off to an advantageous start; those roots need to be fed in order to promote healthy plant growth in the months ahead.

An excellent all purpose fertilizer is *EB Stone Organics All Purpose Fertilizer*. For a healthy lawn use *Scott's Weed & Feed*. Many plants need specific fertilizers, so when you come in, we'll be glad to guide you to the appropriate one.

## Grow Great Early Tomatoes!

The dreary winter months are drawing to an end and it is time to prepare for a succulent harvest of fresh, juicy tomatoes. Start planting tomatoes in mid-March. Follow these simple tips and you'll be among the first to enjoy a long season of sweet vine-ripened tomatoes.



- ✓ **Buy our healthy, vigorous transplants.** Select some early maturing varieties, such as *Early Girl*, which not only starts producing early, but is an excellent long-season bearer. We have many varieties to choose from!
- ✓ **Prepare the soil** by mixing in *Greenall Soil Booster*.
- ✓ Find the **sunniest spot** in your garden. Tomatoes thrive on heat and need 6-8 hours of sun a day. Planting against a south-facing wall is great.
- ✓ **Plant deeply.** Bury the lower part of the stem (additional roots will form along the buried stem).
- ✓ **Stake the plants** to get them off the cold, wet-ground. Pinch out suckers twice a week.
- ✓ Tomatoes need a **uniform supply of water**. Too much can rot the roots, too much fluctuation will promote blossom end rot.
- ✓ **Mulch** to help maintain uniform soil moisture, reduce weeds and soil compaction, and to help keep fruit clean. Black plastic helps absorb heat; if you use an organic mulch, hold off until the soil warms up more because it moderates soil temperatures.
- ✓ **Keep the plants warmer and speed growth** by using our *Wall-O-Waters*.
- ✓ Four to six weeks after planting, **start feeding on a regular basis**.

## Top 10 Countdown

What hobby is practiced by more people in this country than any other? Gardening of course! Counting down to the most popular motivation cited, here are **the top 10 reasons people love to garden**. Which benefits inspire you the most?

10. **Living legacy!** Gardens and gardening activities can build lasting memories when shared with children and grandchildren. Experience the joy of tasting a tomato fresh from the plant, or adorning a table with flowers.

9. **Emotional satisfaction!** Tending a garden can contribute to a sense of well-being through stress-relieving weed pulling, successful harvests, or the enjoyment of a private retreat (to name just a few).

8. **Competition!** Winning is fun! Skills can be shown off at club shows or fairs, and may even bring national recognition or financial rewards.

7. **Creative outlet!** Try "re-decorating" your yard with a new color scheme each season, experimenting with new plants, or design a setting that reflects your personal style.

6. **Expanded social circles!** Share information with neighbors, join a club, or have internet friends answer questions about plants.

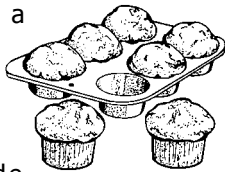
5. **Monetary benefits!** These include increasing one's home resale value by 15% and saving on your grocery bill by growing your own vegetables and fruit.

4. **Learn something new!** Gardening is intellectually stimulating and becomes an absorbing and challenging hobby.

3. **A sensory feast!** Wind whispers through ornamental grasses, some leaves are a pleasure to touch, and gardens abound in fragrance, color, and beauty.

2. **Exercise for a healthier body!** Whether mowing, planting, or harvesting, gardens provide an important commute-free resource for cardio and aerobic exercise.

1. **Safe & healthy food!** The *best solution* to avoid additives, preservatives, or contaminated foods while eating fresh and tastier fruits and vegetables.



### FOOD GARDENING ON THE RISE!

The *National Gardening Association* estimates the number of households that tend fruit and vegetable gardens increased from 22 to 25 percent in 2008!



## Small Space Fruit & Vegetable Gardens

Have limited space? Don't despair! Follow these suggestions and even with small spaces, you'll have enough room to grow great tasting berries, herbs, tomatoes, carrots, lettuce, and other greens.

**COMPACT PLANTS**—Choose varieties that are bred to go into small spaces. These will most likely have *tiny*, *baby*, *dwarf*, *patio*, or *pixie* in their name. The mature size of each plant will help determine how many you can fit into your space.

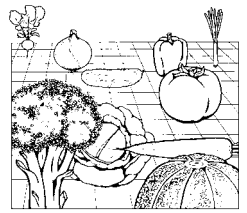
**HANGING BASKETS**—Use these small planters for herbs and place them near your kitchen for easy harvesting.

**INTERCROPPING**—Plant fast maturing vegetables next to slow maturing kinds. For example: you can harvest radishes first, thus allowing more space for slower growing beets and carrots.

**VERTICAL PLANTING**—Vining pole beans, cucumbers, and squash, trained up on supports or a fence, all take up less ground space.

**SUCCESSION CROPPING**—Every 2-3 weeks, plant a few new quick growing beans, zucchini, or lettuce for just enough produce all summer long.

**CONTAINERS**—With good drainage and enough root space, *anything can be planted in a container*. Vegetables like celery, swiss chard, and many lettuces all have decorative foliage that are attractive as well as tasty. Container favorite: strawberries. Don't forget our herbs and dwarf fruit trees!



## Low Fat Berry Muffins

Got berries? They're great with milk, but try blueberries, strawberries, or raspberries straight from your garden to make these delicious and healthy muffins!

$\frac{1}{4}$  c. each brown sugar (packed)  
and granulated sugar  
1 c. each flour and yellow cornmeal  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. each baking soda and salt  
1 tsp. ginger

1 lemon ( 2 Tbs. juice + grated peel)  
1 egg  
8 oz. low fat plain yogurt  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  c. skim milk  
1 c. berries

Combine dry ingredients. Add lemon, egg, yogurt, and milk, stirring just until blended. Add berries. Spoon into 12 greased muffin cups. Bake at 425° for about 15 minutes, then enjoy while warm, or serve as a healthy snack.

## Recycle Your Old Hoses

The first hose was invented in 1762 for fighting fires and was constructed from hand sewn linen. Modern-day rubber hoses are highly advanced, but both weather and kinking can shorten their lifespans.

Before spring gets into high gear, take a moment to check your hoses and replace any that need to be retired.

HERE ARE SOME GREAT WAYS TO RECYCLE OLD, WORN OUT HOSES:

Slip a piece of rubber tubing over **wire handles of buckets**. Ahhhh, what comfort! Hose segments covering **swing-set chains** will protect those tender little fingers. Attract nocturnal **earwigs** into 6-inch hose segments placed around your garden. Shake earwigs out into soapy water. To **protect tree bark** from chaffing, wrap pieces of old hoses around the wire used to stabilize young trees. Create a crude **soaker hose** to save water by crimping the open end and wrapping it with wire, then poke or drill holes in the hose where you need them to water plants.

