

Ask an Expert – Is It Spring or Winter? April Tips for Guessing Gardeners

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Temperatures are warming, then cooling, then warming again, leaving gardeners guessing and second-guessing. To help gardeners through the uncertainty, virtual classes will be held on the first Tuesday of each month, April through September. Each class will cover timely gardening and water conservation tips for the first half hour, followed by a question-and-answer session for the remainder of the hour. Presenters will provide participants with real-time guidance on garden planning and management decisions to increase water conservation and enhance plant health.

The first class is held Tuesday, April 7, from noon to 1 p.m. [Click here to register.](#)

Hopefully, temperatures will stabilize soon, and we can get back to gardening. Below are tips and links from the Utah State University Extension [Gardeners Almanac](#).

- Protect fruit blossoms and tender garden plants from late [critical freezing temperatures](#).
- Plant seeds of [cool-season vegetables](#) (peas, lettuce, spinach, radishes) as soon as garden soil is workable.
- Check out over 55 vegetable and herb [fact sheets](#) produced by USU Extension.
- National Arbor Day is April 26 this year. Plant a tree to celebrate! The [USU Tree Browser](#) offers an interactive list of tree species adapted to the Intermountain West.
- Consider planting [peas in the garden](#) every 2-3 weeks (until early May) to extend the harvest.

- Now is a great time to learn how to plant and harvest [asparagus](#) and [rhubarb](#).
- Control young garden weeds by hoeing or hand-pulling.
- If storing bulbs, check to make sure they are firm, and remove any soft or rotten bulbs.
- Wait to prune roses until buds begin to swell to avoid late-frost damage to new growth.
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs (those that bloom before June) after they have bloomed to encourage new flower buds for next season.
- Divide crowded, fall-blooming perennials.
- Divide cool-season ornamental grasses when new growth begins to emerge.
- Apply chelated iron (FeEDDHA) to plants that have had prior problems with [iron chlorosis](#).
- Use organic (wood chips or bark) [mulches](#) to retain soil moisture around shrubs and trees.
- Apply pre-emergent herbicides in late March to mid-April to control annual weeds such as crabgrass and spurge in the lawn.
- Learn about [lawn care and planting](#).
- In compacted sites, aerate with a hollow core aerator when turfgrass is actively growing, usually from April to June.
- Check your [sprinkler system](#) for leaks. Clean filters and fix and align heads.

Pests and Problems:

- Download the [Utah Home Orchard Pest Management Guide](#).
- Learn about common pest and disease problems in [apples](#), [pears](#), [plums](#), [peaches](#) and [nectarines](#), [cherries](#), and [apricots](#).
- Reduce chemical use to help promote beneficial insects in your landscape.
- Treat for [coryneum blight](#) in stone fruits (cherries, peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums) at shuck split, approximately 10 days after flower petals drop.
- Treat apples for [powdery mildew](#) when leaves are emerging (at 1/2 inch green) until June.
- Monitor wet weather during bloom in apples, pears, and hawthorns to determine if you need to treat for [fire blight](#).
- Treat fruit trees for [cat-facing insects](#) like stink bugs to prevent dimples and pucker marks in trees.
- Use preventative controls for [peach twig borer](#) in peaches, nectarines, and apricots to help reduce twig and fruit damage later in the season.
- Control spring-flying [bark beetles](#) in pine trees and other conifers.
- Protect birch trees previously infested by the bronze birch borer by applying a systemic pesticide.

- Watch for [cutworm damage in turfgrass](#) and new vegetable starts.
- Take an online [gardening course](#) to hone your gardening skills.
- Visit garden.usu.edu for information on growing and maintaining the yard and garden, drought resources, gardening courses, and more.

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