

Ask an Expert – March Gardening Checklist

Utah State University Extension horticulturists

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It's not too early to think about the gardening season! Consider these tips to help you prepare. Included are links from the Utah State University Extension Gardener's Almanac.

- Plant [cool-season vegetable](#) seeds, such as peas, lettuce, and radishes, as soon as garden soil is workable. Consider planting [peas in the garden](#) every 2-3 weeks (until early May) to extend the harvest.
- If you didn't get to it in the fall, add [organic matter](#) to the vegetable garden to help build and amend the soil.
- Avoid [compacted soil](#) by not tilling wet or saturated garden soil.
- Once snow is melted, consider taking [soil samples](#) to determine fertilizer needs.
- Consider [backyard composting](#) or vermiculture (composting with worms).
- If storing bulbs, check to make sure they are firm, and remove any that are soft or rotten.
- If they are locally available, plan to plant bare root trees and shrubs, keeping the exposed roots moist until planted.
- Remove protective trunk wrap and burlap from trees after the snow has melted.
- Fertilize spring flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, fritillaria, and crocus.
- Plant cold-hardy pansies and primrose to add a pop of color.

- [Subscribe to the Utah Pests IPM Advisories](#) for timely tips on controlling pests in your yard and garden.
- [Prune](#) fruit trees such as [apples](#), pears, [peaches](#), cherries, plums, and apricots.
- Attend a USU Extension-sponsored pruning demonstration near you.
- Apply horticulture oils at bud break (delayed dormant) in fruit trees to control overwintering insect pests.
- Apply pre-emergent [herbicides](#) in late March to mid April to control annual weeds such as crabgrass and spurge in your lawn.
- Sharpen mower blades and prepare for the season. Set mower height to mow 2 1/2 to 3 inches tall, and mow at this height during the summer.
- Consider planting a native fruiting species in the landscape, such as [chokecherry](#), [elderberry](#), [serviceberry](#) or [currant](#).

Pests and Problems:

- Download the [Utah Home Orchard Pest Management Guide](#) for tips and information.
- Be aware that [aspen leaf spot](#) may be prevalent during cool, wet springs. Control measures should be taken at bud break.
- Control [rust mites](#) in apple and pear trees after leaves have emerged and expanded by 1/2 inch.
- Learn about [damping-off](#), a fungal disease that affects new seedlings.
- Be aware that [anthracnose](#) may be prevalent during cool, wet springs. Control measures should be taken at bud break.
- Apply dormant oil for pears when leaf buds swell, which smothers [pear psylla](#) eggs that are laid on buds by overwintering adults.
- For more tips, visit garden.usu.edu. Here you will find information on gardening courses, growing and maintaining the yard and garden, drought resources, and the Extension Gardener's Almanac with tips for each month.

Contact

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