

# Ask an Expert – March Gardening Checklist

Julene Reese

03/04/2022

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We are officially heading into gardening season! Consider these tips to help you prepare. Included are links from the Utah State University Extension Gardeners Almanac.

- Plant seeds for cool season vegetables (peas, lettuce, 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 it didn't happen in the fall, add [organic matter](#) to the vegetable garden to help build and amend the soil.
- Avoid [compacted soil](#) by not tilling when garden soil is wet or saturated.
- Consider [backyard composting](#) or vermiculture (composting with worms).
- If storing bulbs, check their condition to ensure that they are firm, and remove any that are soft or rotten.
- If locally available, [plant bare root trees](#) and shrubs, and keep the exposed roots moist until planted.
- Remove protective trunk wrap and burlap from trees in the spring after snow has melted.
- Fertilize spring-flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, fritillaria and crocus.
- Plant cold-hardy pansies and primrose for spots of color.
- [Prune](#) berries and fruit trees such as [apples](#), pears, [peaches](#), cherries, plums and apricots.
- Attend a USU Extension-sponsored pruning demonstration near you. Check with your local county Extension office for information.

- 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 to prepare for the season. Set mower height at 2 1/2 to 3 inches, and mow at this height for the summer.
- Consider including 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 of [damping-off](#), a fungal disease that affects new seedlings.
- Take control measures at bud break for [anthracnose](#) and [aspen leaf spot](#). Both may become prevalent during cool, wet springs.
- Control [rust mites](#) in apple and pear trees after leaves have emerged and expanded to 1/2 inch.
- Apply dormant oil for pears when leaf buds swell. This smothers eggs of the [pear psylla](#) that are laid on buds by overwintering adults.
- Consider taking [soil samples](#) to determine fertilizer needs.
- [Click here to subscribe](#) to the Utah Pests IPM Advisories for timely tips on controlling pests in your yard and garden.
- Consider taking an [online gardening course](#). Courses cover everything from container vegetable gardening and creating the perfect soil, to planting trees and controlling pests. Courses are geared to both beginning and professional gardeners.
- Many of our Master Gardener courses will be held virtually or as a combination of virtual and in-person classes this year. For information about classes around the state, visit [extension.usu.edu/mastergardener/find-a-program](http://extension.usu.edu/mastergardener/find-a-program).
- Further gardening information can be found at [garden.usu.edu](http://garden.usu.edu). Here you will find fruit, vegetable and herb growing guides, information on soil, lawn, yard, tree, shrub and flower care. In addition are monthly tips, the basics of gardening, information on events, classes, and more.

## Contact

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