

Ask an Expert – March Gardening Checklist

03/02/2021



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. Use the code "**Grow5**" at checkout to get \$5 off.
- Explore more gardening tips on Extension's newly designed [yard and garden website](#).