

Gardening Tips for Spring

by Shawn Jadrnicek

With the coming of warm weather I'm sure everyone is itching to get out in the sunshine and start working in the garden again. If you're scratching your head wondering what you should do and where to start here are a few tips to help you out. Late winter is a great time to prune your plants that flower after June first as well as your fruit trees.

Please take note that Crape Myrtles should not be wacked in half. All that is needed to prune these beautiful trees is removal of dead branches, inward pointing shoots, and suckers coming out of the base. Thinning cuts that remove branches at the main lateral will heal faster than heading cuts that are indiscriminant in nature.

If you want some free plants early spring is also a great time to dig up and divide your perennials and ornamental grasses. Dig up summer and fall blooming perennials when the new growth is a few inches high. Ornamental grasses should be cut back to within 4-6 inches of the ground and then divided before the new growth begins.

Now is a great time to mulch your trees and shrubs out to the drip line. Mulch will help hold moisture in the soil so you won't have to water as much when things heat up. Keep the mulch at least 6 inches away from the trunk to keep the bark dry and prevent disease problems. It's always a joy to experience the first warmth of the year outside in the garden with nature in your hand.

Shawn Jadrnicek an agent with the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service for Colleton/Jasper County. To sign up for the next Master Gardener class call (843) 549-2595 ext.113.