

Gardener's Corner

April 2024

Spring has sprung, as they say. It's time to get busy in the garden. So to get started, below are some tips and tasks from the **Missouri Botanical Garden (MBG)**.

You can plant trees and shrubs as soon as you can work the soil. Some of those bested planted in spring are butterfly bush (Buddleia), dogwood (Cornus), rose of Sharon (Hibiscus), black gum (Nyssa), redbud (Cercis), Magnolia, tulip poplar (Liriodendron), birch (Betula), Ginkgo, hawthorn and most oaks (Quercus). Check for Eastern tent caterpillars which may be in the forks of tree branches.

MBG also suggests if you grow roses, you can fertilize them with a balanced formulation when they have about 2 inches of new growth. Also, remove winter mulch from roses and work in some compost into the soil. Prune the dead and weak wood from broadleaf evergreens. Evergreens and deciduous hedges can be pruned now but wait on boxwoods until after the last average frost date, April 15. Weigela, Viburnum, Rhododendron, and Lilacs should be pruned after they finish flowering.

Now is the time to transplant hardy annuals. Perennials such as Virginia bluebells can be transplanted after they bloom but prior to the foliage disappearing. Easter lilies can be transplanted about 2-3 inches deeper than they grew in the pot once they finish blooming. In late April, you can start planting summer bulbs such as caladiums, gladioli, and cannas.

For those relatively new to gardening, there is a timely article about creating a garden in the latest issue of **Garden Design**. You can find *How to Build a Flower Garden in 3 Steps* here:

https://www.gardendesign.com/how-to/start-a-flower-garden.html?utm_source=article-newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Flower-Garden-101-3-28-24#google_vignette

Hostas are very popular in the garden--they grow in shade, come in many varieties and are green and lush throughout much of the hot summer season. While the article focuses on growing in Minnesota, many good tips are here on growing these plants including when and how to divide them and their overall care. They can be found on the **University of Minnesota Extension's** website: <https://extension.umn.edu/flowers/growing-hostas-minnesota>.

Tuesday, April 23rd is the annual Pear Buy Back! Day sponsored by the **Missouri Invasive Plant Council** in partnership with **Forest ReLeaf** and the **Missouri Department of Conservation**. The partnership will host "buyback" events in locations around the state. Show a photo of a cut-down Callery pear from your property and you will receive a free native tree when you register from March 15 to April 15 at the following site: <https://moinvasives.org/2024/01/12/callery-pear-buyback-2024/> While it looks like the St. Louis site is sold out, there are some relatively close sites where you still may be able to participate.

Some virtual programs of interest in April are the following:

Wednesday, April 3 – noon to 1:00 p.m. **K-State Garden Hour** Webinar Series: Companion Plants in Your Garden. Check for additional programs and register at:
https://ksu.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IxljvtedRu-pvfFA6Kzvxw#/registration

Saturday, April 20 – 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Flowers and Their Meanings (Online Lecture) offered by the **US Botanic Garden** and presented by Karen Azoulay, author. Register at:
<https://app.livestorm.co/u-s-botanic-garden/flowers-and-their-meanings-online-lecture?s=28eac601-4d59-4859-a2d6-93fa861b079a>