

SPRING GARDEN CHORES CHECKLIST

By Kit Smith

UCCE El Dorado County Master Gardener

Springtime can be one of the busiest times of the gardening year. Here's a checklist of things to consider, now that the weather is warming up:

- Plant summer bulbs like dahlia, gladiolus, canna and tuberose.
- Start feeding roses with a complete fertilizer.
- Cut flowers of spring blooming bulbs and immediately place them in 100-degree water in a clean vase to enjoy indoors.
- Feed acid-loving plants such as azalea, rhododendron, gardenia, camellia, hydrangea and Japanese maple.
- Feed your lawn with a high nitrogen fertilizer.
- Remove weeds before they flower.
- Fertilize citrus and keep feeding monthly all year.
- Prepare vegetable beds for when the soil is warm enough to sow seeds or transplant tender plants. For tomatoes, that temperature is 55 degrees.
- Pick up spent camellia blooms.
- Deadhead spent spring bulb blooms leaving the leaves to continue to produce food that will be stored in the bulb for next year's blooms.
- Plant bare root trees and plants just as they are about to break dormancy. At that time, they are full of growth hormones. Plant them slightly above the soil line and keep them watered.
- Apply three inches of coarse mulch several inches away from tree and shrub trunks. Mulch reduces water evaporation, prevents weeds and buffers soil temperatures.
- Rid the yard of snails and slugs, but use caution with pesticides especially if children or pets will be exposed.
- Take cuttings of roses, azaleas, geraniums, carnations, chrysanthemums and succulents to start new plants.
- Avoid pruning frost sensitive plants until the danger of frost is past. Susceptible plants include Rose of Sharon, hibiscus, gardenia, bougainvillea and fuchsia.
- Move frost-sensitive potted plants brought indoors for the winter like poinsettias, citrus, ficus, Christmas cactus, plumeria and certain succulents, once all danger of a late frost is past. At that time, it is all right to prune out leaves and twigs on other plants left outdoors that are frost-damaged or look burned.

Learn the basics of home sprinkler and drip irrigation systems at our "Irrigation" class, this Saturday, April 14th. The class is from 9 a.m. to 12 noon and is held in the Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive in Placerville. There is no charge for the class.

Mark your calendar for the 3rd Annual Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale on Saturday, April 28th. We'll have a great selection of annuals, perennials and vegetables for sale. Hand tool sharpening will be available for a small fee. There will be gardening presentations on growing tomatoes and giant pumpkins and composting. The sale is from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. and will be held in the Veterans Memorial Building parking lot.

Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512. Walk-ins are welcome. The office is located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our Master Gardener website at http://ucanr.org/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mgenews/>. You can also find us on Facebook.