

Weekly Column for 3-22-10
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Spring is in the Air

Winter is coming to an end, and though we may still have a few cooler days ahead, there is no denying that spring is here. It is time to start putting all that planning into action and deciding what you would like to accomplish in your yard this year. There are many possibilities and perhaps a checklist of things you want to consider when spring is in full effect.

When it comes to indoor plants, they are beginning to respond to the longer and brighter days. This causes new growth for your plants. As the plants grow, remember to remove any old leaves and flowers to make way for more blooms. April would be a great time to prune, clean, and repot houseplants. It would also be a good time to start seeds of cool season plants that you would like to transplant to the garden later.

If you decide to prune your trees and shrubs, you want to make sure you do this while plants are still dormant. If your tree or shrub blooms in early spring, you should prune after the flowers fade. Applying a superior oil spray will help to control scale insects and mites. This should be used when the tips of the leaves start to show from the buds. If you have used tree wrap, it should be removed soon to prevent overheating the bark.

March is also a great time to prepare the garden soil for planting. The soil should not be worked if it is too wet. To be sure that it is ready, take a ball of soil in your hand and squeeze. If it crumbles, then it is ready. If it forms a uniform ball of moist soil, then it is not ready yet. In April, you will be ready to plant cool season vegetables and flowers.

More sun and warmth means the wait for spring is over. It is time to focus on our yards and gardens once again. For a complete spring garden calendar with helpful ideas, you can visit the web at <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/HO-91.pdf>. You can also contact your Elkhart County Extension office or stop by for more information.

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