

Your Spring Garden To-Do List



SET UP A CONTAINER GARDEN

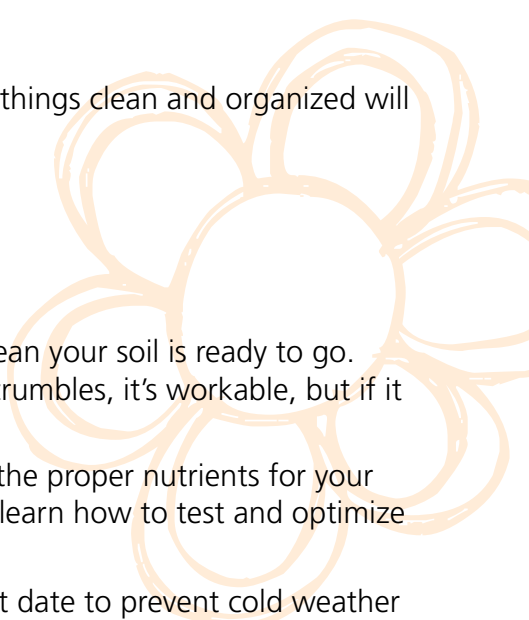
- Disinfect pots by soaking them in a 10% bleach solution for ten minutes. This kills bacteria, fungi, viruses and other organisms that can harm your plants.
- Remove mineral deposits and debris on clay pots with steel wool or a wire-bristle brush. Plastic pots can be cleaned off with a scoring pad. Rinse and let dry.
- Ensure pots have proper drainage. If your pots were not made with drainage holes, you can drill some yourself.
- Figure out how much light your plants need, as well as how much your space will get. Remember that outdoor tables can give your plants the leg up they need to soak up more sun!

CARE FOR YOUR GARDEN TOOLS



- Tune up your lawnmower. Make sure to check your mower's manual for specific details and recommended maintenance schedule.
- Clean your gardening tools. This includes removing soil from blades and hinges with a clean cloth, removing sap with a proper cleaner and using steel wool or sandpaper to remove rust.
- Keep those tools sharp! Use a whetstone, file or motorized sharpener to make your tools more effective and safer to use.
- Create a designated spot to store and maintain your tools. Keeping things clean and organized will make yard work feel more like a pleasure, instead of a chore.

GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY

- Test soil for workability. The snow may be gone, but that doesn't mean your soil is ready to go. Grab a handful of soil and squeeze your hand into a fist. If the soil crumbles, it's workable, but if it compacts, you need to let it dry out more before planting.
 - Test the pH of your soil. Soil that's too acidic or alkaline won't have the proper nutrients for your plants, so you'll want to check with your county extension office to learn how to test and optimize your soil.
 - Sow seeds and transfer seedlings outdoors after your area's last frost date to prevent cold weather from damaging your plants.
 - Be on the lookout for pests and weeds right away. It's much easier to get rid of unwanted plants and animals before the problem gets out of hand!
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