

Bluestem Breezes
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April's Gardening Checklist

I am writing this column with a sky full of sunshine and promises of increasing temperatures throughout the week. By writing on April Fool's Day, I hope the forecast is no joke. I am ready for spring-time weather, and I imagine you are as well.

Before we jump full force in to the outdoor tasks awaiting us, why not spend a few minutes to make sure every item made it on to our list? The following is a partial list of items we should hopefully accomplish in April. I hope you find this useful in your own yard this spring!

Vegetables & Fruits:

- Start fruit tree spray schedule as growth begins.
- Harvest asparagus until spear size decreases.
- Plant new and prune established fruit trees.
- Plant beans, corn, and vine crops in late April.
- Turn the compost pile after a long winter rest.

Flowers:

- Cut back last year's growth from perennials.
- Fertilize spring flowering bulbs.
- Divide perennials.
- Plant new and prune established rose bushes. Don't forget to fertilize, too!
- Plant annuals from seed and transplants.

Lawns:

- Fertilize cool season lawns with slow release nitrogen fertilizer.
- Zoysia should not be fertilized this early; nutrients go to weeds and not to the dormant grass.
- Spot treat broadleaf weeds (dandelions, henbit, chickweed, etc.).
- Check mower and make needed repairs. Mower blades likely need sharpened as well.
- Mow lawn as needed – bluegrass 2" and tall fescue 3".

Trees and Shrubs:

- Prune spring flowering shrubs (forsythia, lilac, etc.) after flowering.
- Prune trees as needed.
- Plant new trees and shrubs.
- Remove grass from base of young trees and shrubs to prevent lawn mower and line trimmer damage.
- Apply mulch layer around trees and shrubs.

House Plants:

- Remove winter dust from leaves by gently rinsing with room temperature water.

- Replant as needed, increasing pot size by 1”.
- Begin summer fertilization of plants.
- Do not move plants outside until night temperatures remain over 60°F.
- Fertilize amaryllis and keep in bright light to encourage new leaves.

For a complete April Garden Calendar, and to obtain calendars for each month of the year, visit:
<http://www.johnson.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=118>.

For additional information gardening information, visit the Extension Office (215 Kansas, Courthouse, Alma; kamayer@ksu.edu; 765-3821). For Bluestem Breezes archives, check out wabaunsee.ksu.edu.