

Gardening Checklist

By Michelle Tako

- Gather your equipment**
 - Focus on the soil**
;Purchase any needed mulch, compost or other soil improvers, along with a good quality fertilizer to ensure a green, lush garden.
 - Find your tools**
;Use garden loppers and clippers to prune shrubs and roses, and a garden shovel to dig holes for new plants. A hoe or garden rake can be used to smooth soil.
- Get started**
 - Evaluate your yard**
;Look for areas that could be improved, plants that need to be removed, and spots that are bare and need greenery.
 - Plan your spring projects**
;Now is the time to plan new flowerbeds, vegetable gardens or any other gardening projects.
 - Build garden structures**
;Erect trellises, finish laying a path or complete construction on any planned raised flowerbeds.
 - Clean up the area**
;Remove any debris, mulch or dead material left from the winter.
 - Improve the soil**
Soil amendments are added to correct specific problems. Peat moss will acidify the soil and retain moisture. Sand is added to improve drainage. Grass clippings or manure will break down quickly and add nutrients to the soil.
 - Pull weeds.**
- Spruce up your shrubs and roses**
 - Prune your shrubbery**
;Prune rosebushes and shrubs as soon as the danger of frost is past, removing dead branches and shaping plants for optimum growth.
 - Feed the roses**
;A good rose-specific fertilizer will get your roses off to a healthy start. Apply once new growth appears.
 - Fertilize shrubs**
;Work an all-purpose granular fertilizer into the soil around shrubs.
 - Plant bare root roses**
These are sold in early spring at nurseries and garden centers, and are heavily pruned roses, packaged without soil. You will find the largest selection of roses during bare root season.
 - Plant new shrubs**
;Look for healthy shrubs as they become available at the nursery.
- Get to work on the lawn**
 - Fertilize the grass**
;Using a grass fertilizer that includes weed-killer will reduce your work later in the season.
 - Reseed the lawn**
;Seed any dead or bare patches with a blend of grass seeds suitable for your area.
 - Tune up your lawnmower**
;Now is the time to sharpen blades, change the oil and fill the gas tank.
 - Check lawn edging**
;Replace any broken or missing edging materials to keep your lawn looking neat and make mowing easier.
 - Start mowing regularly once your grass reaches 2 to 3 inches high.**
- Focus on your flowers**
 - Buy and start seeds**
;Start them indoors if in a cold-winter area; sow outdoors if in a mild-winter zone.

- Prepare your flowerbeds**
;Work soil thoroughly in flowerbeds, adding compost to the top few inches.
- Plant your flowerbeds**
;Plant annuals or other small flowers once danger of frost is past.
- Plant any containers**
;Fill your containers with spring and summer-blooming flowers.
- Plant new perennials**
;You will find the best selection of perennials at the nursery mid-to-late spring.
- Divide perennials**
;Dig up and divide any perennials that have formed large clumps, grown too big for their space or are looking unhealthy.
- Take a look at your trees**
 - Prune dead branches.**
 - Shape small trees**
;Remove branches that spoil the tree's shape, rub against other branches, or block pathways.
 - Fertilize trees.**
 - Plant new trees**
;Stake young trees between two supports for their first year's growth.