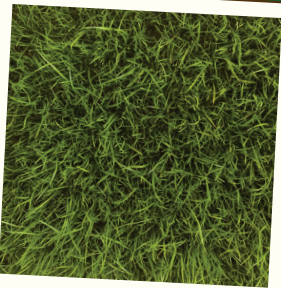


We Beautify the World

MONTHLY TO-DO LIST



GRASS

- Begin Bermuda grass seeding when nighttime temperatures remain at 65 degrees. Covering with mulch helps keep birds under control.
- Bermuda over seeded with rye will resume growth when we have 65 degrees nighttime temperatures. You can encourage last year's Bermuda to come out of dormancy and gradually kill the rye grass by mowing every four days and lowering the blade each time.
- Spray or hand pick weeds now or they will be problematic later. If killed or removed before they flower at the end of their life cycle you will have less weed seeds in the soil to germinate next season. In rock areas most weeds can be controlled with pre-emergence herbicides.



FLOWERS

- Allow your wildflowers to go to seed. They will produce a natural healthy feast for birds as well as reseeding themselves to come up again next year.
- The second half of April is a good time to start removing your winter flowers to prepare for summer flowers. Don't cheat on soil preparation for new flowers and vegetables. Bone meal and blood meal are great organic amendments to add to the soil. Be sure to include a granular fertilizer that contains at least 20% phosphorus to help with root establishment. Don't be tempted to buy late season winter flowers from nurseries no matter how nice they look or how low they are priced. Their season is over and they will decline rapidly.



TREES & SHRUBS

- Pay special attention to deciduous fruit trees, providing adequate soil moisture for fruit sizing in the late April and May period.
- Two to five year old citrus trees transplant most successfully. Larger, older trees are more costly, harder to transplant, and suffer more from transplant shock. It will generally be three years after transplant before fruit production and that is the same whether you plant a 2 year old tree or a 10 year old tree. Keep new plantings well watered for two weeks and then lengthen your irrigations out gradually until you are watering once a week.
- As the weather warms, adjust your irrigation timer to water more frequently. Be sure the system runs long enough to wet the soil to a depth of at least 8" for turf and flowers, 1' for groundcover, 2' for shrubs and 2' to 3' for trees. Keep watering of desert trees to a minimum. They don't need much water and they will put any extra water into excess growth that you will have to prune.
- Tree water use increases rapidly during this period of leafing out and gradually higher air temperatures.
- Apply nitrogen and zinc to pecan trees to produce normal size leaf growth and to enhance kernel development. Pecans also need more water than most other shade trees.
- If the normally upright leaves of agaves look wilted, the agave weevil may be the culprit. The agave weevil especially likes the Blue Agave. It is best to treat preventatively with insecticide labeled for the insect.
- Prickly Pear may develop fuzzy white patchy scales. This is the cochineal scale insect that will devastate the appearance of the pads. Wash them off with a strong spray of water.
- Saguaros that have black fluid dripping from them need to be treated quickly. This is a bacterial infection. Treat by cutting the affected tissue from the plant back to healthy green tissue and then spray the wound with a 10% solution of bleach in water and allow to air dry.
- You can and should remove stakes from all trees staked more than a year ago.



VEGETABLES

- Plant seeds: beans (lima & snap), black eyed peas, carrots, cucumber, jicama, melons, okra, summer squash, green onions, peanuts, radishes, scallions, green beans.
- Plant transplants: artichokes
- Place shade cloth over tomatoes to keep bugs away.
- If you haven't pruned your herb garden, now is the time to do it. For frost damaged herbs, look for new growth emerging on the lower half of the plant. Use sharp shears to cut the plant back by 1/3 to 1/2 or more, down to healthy new side shoots. Add new compost and water well.
- Fertilize producing vegetable gardens.

APRIL

MONTHLY TO-DO LIST

April is our transition month in the desert, when the temperatures start to get up toward 100°F. If we have had winter/spring showers we'll see beautiful wildflowers all over the Valley. As the weather warms up, you'll have to begin increasing the amount of water. Plants will indicate when they need water by having drooping, wilted leaves. Note the time interval; this will tell you just how many days between watering.

BUG TALK:

With warm weather, expect to see more aphids on vegetables, shrubs, fruit and shade trees. Spritz them with water with a few drops of dish soap added from a spray bottle which can be very effective especially if they are on your vegetable crops.



Your Desert Garden

Monthly DON'T List for April

- Don't prune citrus except to remove dead or damaged wood and branches obstructing pathways, views, or structures.
- When pruning, never remove more than ¼ of the total plant unless you are doing renovation pruning. Always use sharp, quality pruning tools. Use hand pruners for cuts up to ½", loppers for cuts up to ¾" and saws for cuts over ¾". If you perform renovation pruning, complete the work by April 15th. Pruning later will expose unprotected wood to the potential of sun burn before new foliage can shade the wood.
- Don't cheat on soil preparation for flowers and vegetables.
- Don't use insecticides on herbs. Most bugs, including aphids, can be handled by spraying with your garden hose. If a plant become heavily infested with aphids, just get rid of it.
- Don't fertilize dormant Bermuda grass until late April or May.
- Too much fertilizer can cause salt burn and too little can cause nutrient deficiency problems. Water both the day before and immediately after applying granular fertilizers.
- Don't water grass at night when the temperatures are coolest as this fosters the growth of fungal diseases.
- Don't mow when grass is wet. This also may result in fungal disease.
- Don't delay on weed control. Spray or hand pick weeds now or they will be problematic later. If killed or removed before they flower at the end of their life cycle you will have less weed seeds in the soil to germinate next season. In rock areas most weeds can be controlled with pre-emergence herbicides.
- Don't use a pre-emergent in an area where you are going to plant veggies and flowers from seed. It will prevent seeds from germination. It will not affect transplants.
- If you are growing a lawn from new seed, don't plant seeds now. Wait until May.
- Bird holes in saguaros scab naturally; don't try to repair them.

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