



“What’s Growing On...”

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Inside this issue:

Rutgers on the Radio	1
From the Desk of..	1
Control of English Ivy	2
Daffodils	3
Roses	3
Forcing Branches	4
Aronia Melanocarpa	5
Grubs	6
Helleborus	7
Strawberries	7
Star Magnolia	8
Pruning Lilacs	8
May Day	9
MG Classes	10
Upcoming Events	10
Robins	11
Garden Checklist for March	14
Things to Do for April	15
Checklist for May	15-16
Available Fact Sheets	17
Check out our Website	18



RUTGERS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION ON THE RADIO

For agriculture news and horticultural tips, listen to me, Pam Burton, on the RCE Agricultural Program on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday on SNJ Today AM 1240 at **12:40 pm** announcing local workshops, seminars, and horticultural tips.

From The Desk of Pam Burton

How often have we heard or said “Spring is my favorite time of the year!”. Agreed! It’s that wondrous time of year where we come out from hibernation and start doing those garden chores that we planned for in the cold winter months. Seed catalogs cast aside, we partake of some early spring seeding and delight in the time-worn honor of feeling the soil sifting through our fingers. The days are thankfully longer, good news for both us and our plants. Sure signs of spring are evident in the bulbs bursting out, the green buds are popping on trees, the bluebird sightings and ladybird beetle invasions (fly away home!). It’s a time of renewal.

Be sure to check out your plants for any overwintering damages that they may have suffered and take what measures you can to improve the plant vigor. As plants, we are governed by the weather. Whether we can work the soil is incumbent on the weather conditions. Plants are affected by the weather and those effects may not become evident until the next season.

One of my goals as Cumberland County Master Gardener Program Coordinator is to highlight the places that are unique to our county. Toward that end, we have visited several nurseries that are in Cumberland County and we have a significant presence at Wheaton Arts in Millville. You are invited to come see us at the Wheaton Arts Eco Fair the first Saturday in May where we will be selling the ever-popular Ramapo tomato plants! Be sure to get there early! The early bird gets the worm.



Control of English Ivy

A recent question came to the Help Line asking how to remove a well-established stand of English Ivy without using any chemical control methods. I discovered that this may be a lesson in futility, but did give the person the material that I gathered.

English Ivy or *Hedera helix* is an invasive vine that will grow into thick groundcover and has climbing vines which form small rootlets that will attach to any surface. English Ivy can be detrimental to landscapes by outcompeting natives and taking over the forest floor, the shrub layer and the canopy. It can be very heavy hanging in trees and can contribute to loss of tree limbs. The thick mat of English ivy created on the forest floor can accelerate rot and provide a hidey hole for vermin. Additionally the English Ivy takes away the water and nutrients from other plants, causing stress to those plants. There are both mature and juvenile forms of *Hedera helix*. The mature form has thick woody stems and leaves with no nodes. The juvenile plant has leaves with 3 to 5 lobes and herbaceous stems.

To control English Ivy all plant material will need to be removed from the soil due to its' ability to grow from any root or stem parts. Time and again the edu websites I visited suggested that it would be very difficult if not impossible to remove a mature stand of English Ivy without using pesticides. Options were given that included hand pulling, mowing the ivy low or using a weed-eater to buzz the ivy back to its nodes of growth. Be sure to bag the vines in heavy duty bags as you go. One word of caution is to wear gloves as the sap has been known to cause skin irritation. Once the ivy is pulled, dug, or weed whacked you can put a layer of cardboard down and cover it with at least 8 inches of mulch for at least 2 years.

Again, I have to stress that all of the edu websites I visited strongly suggested that removal of a stand of English ivy required both mechanical and chemical control. If you are going to use pesticides, please make certain you read the label and follow all of the instructions closely. Wear protective clothing and safety devices as recommended on the label and bathe or shower after each use.

Resources:

University of Tennessee; <https://utextension.tennessee.edu/publications/Documents/W231.pdf>

Washington State University; http://county.wsu.edu/mason/nrs/noxious/Documents/Mason_English%20Ivy%20Weed%20Alert_FINAL.pdf

North Carolina State University; <http://www.ncsu.edu/goingnative/howto/mapping/invxse/englishi.html>

Oregon State University; <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/19802/ec1595-e.pdf>



Daffodils

It's an exciting day when we see the first bloom of daffodil in our memory gardens. My Mom has a memory garden full of various bulbs from loved ones and I would strongly suspect that many moms have gardens like this with blooms full of happy memories.

These happy flowers are available in a variety of flower forms and color combinations. I am always on the lookout for mass planting of these perennial spring bulbs. They work well in many settings including as a naturalized ground cover, under trees or shrubs, in rock gardens, as an edging and are suitable for forcing indoors, as detailed in Rutgers Fact Sheet FS 128.

Daffodil bulbs are best planted in fall in a well-drained medium to heavy loam soil in full sun or light shade. The individual flowers will happily face the sun when they bloom. After enjoying the early spring bloom, remove the dead bloom, but allow the foliage to remain on the plant for eight weeks. The leaves directly help manufacture the food for the plant. It is during this time that the bulb development occurs and the flowers form for next year's growing season.

After the foliage has died down, division of the bulbs may be necessary which usually occurs five to ten years. Dig the bulbs and allow them to dry in shallow trays or onion sacks in a cool well-ventilated place for several weeks. Do not lay them out in the full sun and be certain not to pile them one on top of another. After they are dry, remove any old, dried skins and roots. Also, remove any offsets from the mother bulb that can be separated easily. After dividing, hold the bulbs until fall in a cool, dry location for fall planting. Be generous and share the bulbs with your friends and family so they can have part of you in their memory garden.

Resources:

University of Florida: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fp423>

University of Missouri: <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G6610>

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, Publication HO-11-W



Planting Roses

Roses are a good choice for Mother's Day, as they like to be planted in the Spring. Decide what type of rose you want to purchase and look for the thickest blemish-free canes. Choose your planting site carefully and match up the site to the conditions that roses thrive in best. Test your soil before planting. Roses enjoy a pH of 6.0 to 6.5. Make certain there is at least 6 hours of sun with good well drained soil.

Make the hole at least 18 inches in diameter and 12 to 18 inches deep. In southern Jersey (or Down Jersey as I like to call it) the plants can be set so the bud union is placed at the soil level and a 2 to 3 inch layer of mulch can be laid to conserve moisture and control weeds.

Water deeply once a week and use a rose specific fertilizer in early spring after the new growth has started and enjoy the blooms.



Forcing branches

Today we're going to talk about getting an early jump on spring by bringing some branches in from the cold to force for blooms and fragrance. There are any number of choices to force including the more commonly thought of shrubs such as forsythia and pussy willow as well as some that might not readily come to mind including cherries, Eastern redbud, lilacs, magnolias, quinces, red maple and serviceberry.

You can start to consider forcing branches to bloom when temperatures rise above freezing in late January and February. Select long, thin branches that are healthy and disease and pest free. Six to 18 inches is a good rule of thumb. It is essential to make certain that the branches have many plump buds and be sure to cut a few more branches than you expect to use in case some don't absorb the water satisfactorily. When cutting the branches, use a sharp blade and cut the branches near a side bud or junction, just as you would when you are pruning the shrub. Consider the overall look and shape of the shrub and try to select branches from crowded spots where they will not be missed.

When you bring the branches indoors, place the cut branches in a container of warm water and make a second cut on a slant just above the previous cut. This will help prevent air from entering the stem through the cut end which might block water uptake. After about ½ hour, fill the container with cool water and be sure to change the water every day. Keep the container in a cool partially shaded location and add some floral preservative to help control bacteria.

It can take one to eight weeks for the blossoms to open depending on the natural bloom time. The closer to their natural bloom time that you cut the branches, the sooner they will open. There is a possibility that the branches will root and should that occur remove the branch from the water when the roots are 1/4 to 3/8 inches long and trim the branch to about 6-8 inches. Pot the branch and keep it moist until permanent roots are formed. When warm weather arrives, enjoy planting your new plant outdoors, but try to provide some protection for 1-2 years.

Resources:

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service; <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/ho-23.pdf>

University of Nebraska; <http://lancaster.unl.edu/hort/articles/2008/forceshrubs.shtml>

University of Delaware; <http://www.udel.edu/udaily/2013/jan/force-blooms-012313.html>

University of Illinois; <http://urbanext.illinois.edu/forcing/>



Aronia melanocarpa or Chokeberry

This native shrub is largely overlooked so when I began researching Aronia I was amazed at the amount of information available. Basically, the reason for this increase in interest is that it is being considered as the new alternative crop for organic fruit production. It was noted that one of the reasons consumer acceptance has been held back for Aronia is its unfortunate common name of chokeberry.

Aronia is a multi-stemmed deciduous shrub native to eastern North America and the Aronia species have tremendous potential for use as ornamental landscape plants and as an edible fruit crop. Aronia prefers neutral to slightly acidic, well drained soils located in full sun. This shrub multi-tasks by providing clusters of creamy white flowers in late spring and offers beautiful fall foliage that contrasts with wonderful clusters of dark berries. This thick bush grows 5 to 10 feet in height and can be used as a windbreaker. It's important to thin the older canes every few years to maintain productivity of the fruit.

The Aronia fruit is about the size of a blueberry and is loaded with antioxidants. Within two growing seasons the plants start fruiting and average 3 to 4 pounds of yield and the fruit is in clusters of about ten to twenty which makes them easy to harvest. The berries have a strong sour flavor and several products are made from the fruit including juice, jams, syrups and teas. Aronia is often mixed with other juices or is used as food coloring. By the time the plant is at maturity, which is about 7 to 8 years, it can yield over 15 pounds of fruit. Given that so many of us are plagued by problems with deer enjoying our harvest before we do, it must be noted that both deer and birds enjoy the fruit of the Aronia shrub.

This relatively unknown and underused plant is a win-win in my opinion. It certainly seems to be gaining the attention of growers and consumers alike, and for good reason. Any time a plant can span its' usefulness into more than one season it is a must try for me in my home landscaping, providing I have the right growing conditions for the plant. If you give Aronia a try, let me know how you make out with the plant.

Resources

Washington State University: <http://extension.wsu.edu/maritimefruit/reports/pages/aronia01.aspx>

University of Maryland: <http://extension.umd.edu/aronia>

University of Maryland: <http://extension.umd.edu/learn/aronia-handbook>

Arnoldia Arboretum, Harvard University: <http://arnoldia.arboretum.harvard.edu/pdf/articles/1938.pdf>

University of Kentucky: <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/CCD/introsheets/jujube.pdf>

Cornell University: <http://www.fruit.cornell.edu/berry/production/pdfs/aroniaeldeberry.pdf>



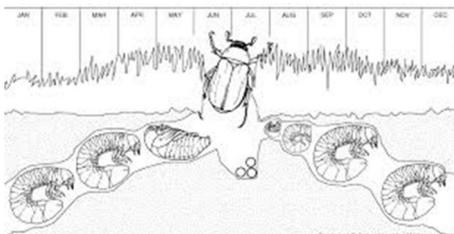
White Grubs

This is the time of year when we're prepping our lawns for gardens, and in doing so, we happen to discover white grubs. You know what I mean ... it's those C-shaped creepy looking critters with a shiny smooth creamy white body and usually have a brown head. These are the larvae of the scarab beetles, including May or June beetles, European chafer beetles, Japanese beetles and the oriental beetle. There is a Rutgers Fact Sheet (FS293) which includes detailed information on White Grubs.

In the larvae stage the grubs are root feeders of many vegetable plants and root crops. The grubs will prune the roots of the vegetable plants completely and the plant will turn yellow, wilt and die. With root crops, the damage will not be noticeable until harvest. Either way, it's disappointing and frustrating. Grubs have been known to enjoy a feast of corn, bean, beets, potatoes, spinach and turnips.

Rutgers Fact Sheet FS293 details the life cycle of the white grub which is always critical in determining an IPM approach to management. A 3-year life cycle of May or June beetles is the most common in New Jersey where the adults overwinter in the soil and emerge in the spring from the ground at dusk to feed and mate. The eggs are laid and hatch in several weeks and the grubs will feed until cooler weather. In the spring of the second season they will feed in early spring through fall to again overwinter in the soil. It's during the third season where the mature grubs feed until June and then pupate. The beetle emerges from the pupal case but remains in the soil overwinter to emerge in the spring of the fourth year.

Rutgers Fact Sheets FS293 offers suggestions for the Management of Grubs and suggests that late summer or early fall plowing will either kill grubs or expose them to predators. It suggests that keeping a clean, weed free garden with good drainage is important as the grubs prefer to lay their eggs in soil that is moist and well covered with vegetation. From a planning perspective locate the vegetable gardens away from specific host plants that the grubs prefer. It is suggested that the best method of control is hand collection of the grubs when the soil is prepped for your garden. Destroy the grubs, as they are likely to crawl their way back into the soil if you don't!



Helleborus

Helleborus make a fabulous addition to your shade garden and happily blooms in early spring. New growth appears in late January and February followed by 3-4 inch flowers that are now available in a variety of colors. The bloom is likely to last for up to three months.

Helleborus are hardy to zones 4-9 and are easy to grow, for even the most novice of gardeners, providing you give them the conditions that they require in which to thrive. I already mentioned that they are shade lovers, and they do need to be protected from afternoon sun. They also prefer rich, well-drained soil and it helps to incorporate leaf or organic materials at time of plantings. Mulch accordingly in the fall and Helleborus will reward you with being long-lived plants that rarely need dividing and require little maintenance. To enhance plant growth, they can be fertilized with a slow-release fertilizer when new foliage begins to appear in late winter. You can cut back the tattered and rough looking foliage as new leaves emerge, but that is not a requirement. Additionally, in my research I read time and again that Helleborus are naturally resistant to deer and rabbits. Having said that, I must also warn you that all parts of the Helleborus are poisonous.

This evergreen perennial has wonderful dark green coarse-textured foliage which provides winter interest when other perennials are dormant. Helleborus combines very well in the landscape with a variety of other shade loving plants. A companion planting of Helleborus and ferns helps accentuate the differences in foliage textures and colors, while the Helleborus can also provide a beautiful backdrop to spring bloomers such as epimediums. It also combines well with other shade lovers such as impatiens, hostas, azaleas, pieris and skimmia.

One last thought about Helleborus. The flowers can hang just below the foliage, so if your gardening challenge is a shady hillside or slope consider planting Helleborus, so you can enjoy the view from another angle.

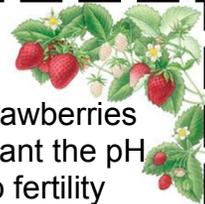
Resources:

Clemson University: <http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic/plants/landscape/flowers/hgic1185.html>

Cobb County Ext. Service: <http://www.caes.uga.edu/extension/cobb/anr/Documents/lentonrose.pdf>

University of Tennessee: http://utgardens.tennessee.edu/pom/lenten_rose.html

Strawberries



Choose your site selection for strawberries based on the conditions in which strawberries grows best. It is recommended to get your soil tested before planting. Strawberries want the pH to be 6.0 to 6.5. The soil test results will provide recommendations for amendments to fertility and pH. Strawberries want as much sunlight as possible, so when selecting a site, chose the sunniest part of your garden. Some late afternoon shade is tolerated but only in mid summer. Strawberries require well-drained soil. If there is standing water in the root zone the plant does not obtain adequate root aeration and it is more susceptible to diseases. Typically soils with a high clay content have poor drainage in comparison to sandy soils which drain very well. If you have heavy soil plant the strawberries on hills or in raised beds to help improve the drainage.

In harvesting an existing stand of strawberries remember strawberries are ready to pick around 30 days after they bloom. Allow them to ripen on the plant and pick them in the morning when they are cool. They will usually need to be harvested at least every other day. Leave the cap attached to the fruit for storability, and be certain to remove and dispose of any diseased, overripe or damaged fruit to help mitigate the spread of disease.

There are 2 Rutgers Fact Sheets on strawberries: FS 097; FS 098.



Magnolia stellata, Star Magnolia

Star Magnolia is the hardiest of the Magnolias and it blooms early in Spring before the tree has leafed out, making for a spectacular display and a welcome sign of spring. The flowers are large at 3-5 inches and are white or pink with a lovely scent that you will enjoy while spring cleaning in your garden. The flowers don't open all at once, making the show time last for up to 3 weeks.

The flowers are not the only attraction to this bush. The Star Magnolia has stunning 4" by 2" oblong glossy dark green leaves which provide a nice contrast to the smooth, light gray bark.

Star Magnolia are slow growers and at maturity will reach about 20 feet high and 15 feet wide. They prefer full sun to part shade in a rich, porous and slightly acid soil. Star Magnolias are often grown as multi-stemmed specimens, but can be pruned to create more of a tree form.

This is a versatile bush that allows you to use your imagination in site planning. Star Magnolia is appropriate for a small lot, which is not always the case with such a showy plant. Because it blooms before leaves appear, it makes a beautiful winter silhouette shadowed on a wall by a spotlight at night. The branching pattern and light grey trunk will show off especially well against a dark background.

The roots are rope like splaying out from the center, so you can actually plant it fairly close to your home without interfering with the home's structure. It can soften a corner's hard edge and there are added advantages to placing it close to your home such as enjoying the scent of the flowers. It also looks wonderful as a single specimen or as a visual anchor for a bed.

Resources:

Penn State Extension: <http://extension.psu.edu/franklin/news/2012/the-star-of-spring...magnolia-stellata-star-magnolia>

Washington State University: <http://www.pnwplants.wsu.edu/PlantDisplay.aspx?PlantID=149>

University of Florida: <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/st382>

Pruning Lilacs

Old-fashioned lilacs were one of my Grammy's favs; and there is a Rutgers Fact Sheet #1147 regarding Lilacs.

Lilacs bloom on previous season's wood, so ideally, lilacs bushes should be pruned just after the blooms wilt and drop, since lilacs form next spring's buds soon after this spring blooms are gone. This avoids the loss of bloom before the end of June to help avoid borer invasion. Lilacs need a mix of young and old shoots that range from pencil thickness whips to branches that are 1 to 2 inches in diameter. The new stems won't bloom for several years, but are essential to keep the lilac bush in bloom.

Concentrate first on removal of any damaged, diseased or rubbing stems as well as small branches that don't conform to the overall natural shape of the bush. Remove branches that are more than 2 inches in diameter taking care not to remove more than one-third of the branches in a given year. The methods of heading back and thinning can both be used on lilac bushes. As you prune the lilac, shape the bush and take care to maintain your lilac bushes at a height no greater than eight feet tall with a mix of stem diameters and with foliage and blooms dispersed throughout the bush.

Rutgers Fact Sheet FS1147 on Lilacs also answers those questions about the care of Lilacs, why doesn't my lilac bloom and gives details about lilac diseases. Gram didn't necessarily prune her lilacs in the proper way as described but whatever she did, she did it with love, fun and laughter and fostered in me my love of the outdoors and my spirit of adventure. My thoughts and memories will remain with my Gram as I see lilacs in bloom this year.

Resources: Ohio State University: <http://butler.osu.edu/topics/horticulture/news/why-and-how-should-i-prune-my-lilac-bush>

University of Nebraska-Lincoln: <http://byf.unl.edu/Lilac>



May Day

May Day was originally celebrated as far back as 2000 years ago and was a good natured event that marked the start of the Celtic summer. The great festival of Beltaine saw those both young and old weave garlands of flowers in the spirit of open air and love. Beltaine was a firey festival in which you were to better your luck and gather May dew for health. It's said that the fairies travelled around the villages looking for some mischief and frivolity in their hope to see winter be gone.

In the fourteenth century the folks in southern England included dancing in the village square around a pole or tree decorated with flowers and ribbons on the tallest tree in the village which eventually evolved into the children's activity of the may pole dance.

It is interesting to note that the May Day and maypole celebrations were serious business at colleges especially around the 50's and 60's. Colleges had all day events with a May Day Queen and her court, complete with maypole dances done by the women of the college who were dressed in white and performed intricate moves with the ribbons of May Day.

Dorms were decorated, floats were paraded, gifts were exchanged and it was one of the biggest days on the college calendars. May Day met its' natural decline in popularity during the changing social climate of the turbulent 60's and 70's when students turned their energies towards protests and rebelling the strict social regulations of colleges.

While our familial celebration is not as firey as the Druids or as formal as the college celebrations we continue the tradition in our family on May first, when a small clutch of flowers is mysteriously hung on the door handle of a person we love so they can wonder throughout the day who blessed them with a sign of spring.

Resources:

Mount Holyoke: https://www.mtholyoke.edu/offices/comm/news/may_pageant.shtml

Brynmarw College: <http://www.brynmarw.edu/activities/honorcode.shtml>

Albright College: <http://www.albright.edu/150/mayday.html>

Grand Valley State University: <http://merganser.math.gvsu.edu/myth/beltaine-feb99.html>

James Madison University: <http://www.jmu.edu/centennialcelebration/mayday.shtml>

Canisius College: <http://www-cs.canisius.edu/~salley/SCA/Games/maypole.html>



Master Gardener Classes for March, April May 2015

All classes are held at the Extension Education Center on Tuesdays, from 9-12 unless otherwise noted. The cost is \$20 per class. Pesticide recertification credits are noted. To register, please call Tammy at 856-451-2800 Ext 1.

- March 3: Landscaping, Susan McKenna, Instructor
- March 10: Turf Culture, Steve Rettke, Instructor
- March 17: Turf Pest Management, Steve Rettke, Instructor
6 credits each: Cats 13, 3B & PP2
- March 24 Plant Diseases, Andy Wyenandt, Instructor
6 credits each: Cats 13, 3A & PP2
- April 14: Structural & Household Pests, Heather Lomberg, Instructor
6 credits: Cat 7A
- April 28: Plant Growing, Wes Kline & Jim Johnson, Instructors
- May 5: Status of Beekeeping in New Jersey, Ned & Doris Morgan, Instructors
- May 7: Tree Fruit & Grapes, Dan Ward, Instructor
*Thursday to be held at Rutgers Agricultural Research & Extension Center;
Meet here at 8:30 am; requires pre-registration*
2 credits each: cat 13 and 6 credits each: 1A & PP2
- May 12: Pesticides, Pat Hastings, Instructor
2 credits each: Cats 10, 1A & PP2 and 6 credits: CORE
- May 12: Pruning Part 1; instructed by Dutch Neck Landscaping
6 pm – 7:30 pm
- May 19: Animals: Friend or Foe, Brooke Maslow, Instructor
- May 19: Pruning Part II, instructed by Dutch Neck Landscaping
6 pm – 7:30 pm

Upcoming events

March 21st 2015: Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Office of Continuing Professional Education presents the 39th Annual Home Gardeners School. For additional information, email ocpe@njaes.rutgers.edu or visit www.cpe.rutgers.edu

Three offerings for Bee-ginners Beekeeping by Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. To register or for more information please visit: www.cpe.rutgers.edu/BEES

May 2, 2015: Eco Fair Plant Sale at Wheaton Arts, Millville, NJ: <http://www.wheatonarts.org/>

April 1, 2015: 2015 New Jersey Invasive Species Conference: <http://njsst.org/2015Conference.htm>

Somerset County Park Commission Horticulture Department Presents a series of spring workshops ; For more information, Call 732-873-2459 Ext 21 or visit: www.somersetcountyparks.org

Robins



We were asked at the Extension Center about robins and why they come into our yards in such large numbers. The reason is a combination of both habitat and food.

The habitats that robins prefer happen to be many of the same areas that humans enjoy as well. Those being woodlands, gardens, orchards, lawns, and fields. They will forage on areas where there is open ground or short grass that have nearby scattered trees and shrubs to nest and roost in. Sounds a bit like your back yard? Suburban and agricultural areas offer these options to both robins and humans. In short, the American Robin is extremely adaptive and we as humans reap the rewards of their proximity.

Like humans, they are active mostly during the day, so we see them and they are social birds, so we see them in numbers. They may feed in loose flocks, making certain that they are vigilant and will watch each other for reactions to predators.

American robins may be seen cocking their heads from side to side as if listening for their earthworm prey. However several sources indicated that the birds are not utilizing their sense of hearing to find the worms but instead they are using their excellent sense of vision. The robin has side-fixed eyes which help to provide them with a very wide visual range. However, they need to bob their head to fix either eye on the ground in front of their beaks. The diet of robins includes fruits, berries, earthworms, grubs, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and spiders, many of which are available and accessible to the robin in your yard. The American Robin also feeds heavily on Eastern Red Cedar.

The excellent vision and head bobbing comes in handy when they are looking for predators, as well. The predators of young versus adult robins differ. The eggs and nestlings are preyed upon by squirrels, snakes, and birds such as blue jays, common grackles, American crows, common ravens, raccoons and snakes. Adult American robins are preyed upon by hawks, housecats, owls and larger snakes. Although it may seem like they have many predators, the robins are prolific so a balance in nature remains intact.

The American robin is one of my favorite birds because they make me think of several of my loved ones and because the robin is also a symbol of the seasonal renewal of spring. They are very cheery and happy looking and have a song of energy, as well.

Resources:

University of Michigan: http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Turdus_migratorius/

Penn State: <http://www.psu.edu/dept/nkbiology/naturetrail/speciespages/robin.htm>

National Audubon Society, *The Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior*, Published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 2001, Edited by Chris Elphick, John B. Dunning, Jr. and David Allen Sibley



Garden Tips for March

- Till or turn the vegetable garden soil when it's at the proper moisture level. FS129
- Add lime to lawns and gardens only when a soil test recommends it. FS797
- Sow seeds of dahlia, snapdragon, verbena, leaf lettuce, cabbage and broccoli indoors.
- Use dormant oils to combat scale insects and mites when the temperature is above 40° and when freezing temperatures are not predicted for a few days and before the buds begin to open. FS866
- For a full-sun border, try mixing colors of perennial coneflower and Shasta daisy with annual globe amaranth. Place the taller coneflower toward the rear of the bed and Shasta daisy toward the front, with the globe amaranth mixed in between.
- Rake and remove debris from the lawn when it's dry.
- Have the lawn mower serviced and the blade sharpened.
- Fertilize your lawn. FS633
- Remove dead asparagus shoots from last year's growth. NE221
- If you want to raise fruit in your garden, try grapes, raspberries, or strawberries. It is much less difficult to succeed with them than with tree fruits, and you'll get much faster results. FS354, 214, 97 & 98
- Submit a soil sample for testing to determine how much lime and fertilizer your lawn and garden areas need. Soil sampling packets with instructions are available at Extension. Cost is \$20.00.
- Prune grapes, raspberries, blueberries, fruit trees and summer-flowering shrubs early in the month when the temperature is above freezing.
- Remove black knot fungus 18" below the growth on cherry, peach and plum trees.
- Grapevine prunings can be made into attractive wreaths.
- If the soil dries out against a house under the eaves where rain rarely reaches, water well during a thaw to prevent loss of plants.
- Sow grass seed as soon as possible. FS584
- Pinch off early buds from developing pansies to encourage plants to branch and form more buds.
- Watch for sale prices on fertilizers and pre-emergent crabgrass killer.
- Cut back the dried foliage of ornamental grasses.
- Particularly good choices for your cutting garden are phlox, daisy, dahlia, cosmos, aster, gladiolus and lily.
- Have your garden and lawn soils tested to determine nutrient and pH levels. Sampling is available at the Extension office for \$3.00.
- Start broccoli, cabbage and other cabbage family crops indoors by the middle of the month. They should be planted outdoors between the middle and end of April.
- Check stored bulbs, tubers and corms. Discard any that are soft or diseased.
- Check any vegetables you have in storage. Use or dispose of any that show signs of shriveling or rotting.
- Plant pea and spinach seeds and onion, shallot and garlic sets on St. Patrick's day, weather permitting.
- Branches of forsythia, pussy willow, spirea and dogwood can be forced for indoor bloom. Make long slanted cuts when collecting the branches and place the stems in a vase of water. Change the water every four days. They should bloom in about three weeks.
- Mulch heaved perennials; replant them when the weather is more settled.
- Late winter is the time to prune many deciduous trees. Look over your plants now and remove dead, dying, unsightly parts of the tree, sprouts growing at or near the base of the tree trunk, crossed branches, and v-shaped crotches.
- Repot and begin fertilizing houseplants.
- Avoid walking on grass or ground covers while they are frozen.
- Fertilize woody plants and fruit trees.
- Purchase new 40 watt, cool-white fluorescent bulbs for starting your seedlings.
- Keep the bird feeder filled.
- Longer and brighter days means new growth on indoor houseplants. Apply fertilizer per label instructions which may differ for foliage plants and blooming plants. Remove dead leaves and flowers for more blooms and a nicer appearance.
- Prepare garden soil for planting. Do not work the soil while it is wet.
- Watch for blooms of early spring bulbs such as daffodils, squill, crocus, dwarf iris & snowdrops.
- Mulch should be removed from strawberry beds when the plant resumes growth in the spring (typically late March). The straw is removed from on top of the bed to the side of the row where it will then serve as a mulch against weeds. FS 098
- Enjoy the spring season!

Gardening Tips for April

- Seed bare spots in the lawn early in the month. FS584 & 108
- Prune ornamental grasses.
- Prune your roses, except the climbing varieties. FS944
- Remove the winter mulch from roses after the middle of the month.
- Follow Extension's fruit spray schedules. FS112, 101, 115, 113, 114 and 116
- Divide summer and fall blooming perennials.
- Rake winter debris from your lawn before mowing.
- Apply dormant oil sprays for insect control when the temperature will be above freezing for at least 24 hours. FS866
- Start celosia, cosmos, marigold, annual phlox and zinnia seeds indoors at mid month.
- Prune, repot and clean your houseplants; begin fertilizing them.
- Are those swarming insects termites or ants? Can you tell the difference? FS338
- Apply pre-emergent crabgrass killer when forsythia is in full bloom.
- Fertilize established trees and shrubs. FS31
- Harden-off or condition transplants prior to moving them to the garden. Plant bedding plants of cabbage, broccoli and collards the third week.
- Direct seed beets, carrots, leaf lettuce, mustard greens, bok choy and radishes around the middle of the month.
- Plant strawberries, rhubarb, asparagus, and small fruit plants as early in the month as possible.
- Plant gladiolus corms.
- Plant daylilies, delphiniums, painted daisies and phlox.
- Remove spent flowers from spring flowering bulbs. Fertilize with 5-10-10 at 2 pounds per 100 square feet.
- Sharpen the lawn mower blade. Mow the lawn no shorter than 2½ ". FS119
- Sow hardy annual flowers like calendula, clarkia, larkspur and sweet pea.
- Turn the compost pile and keep it moist. FS74 & 117
- Protect well-developed strawberry buds from frost injury by applying straw mulch or row cover when freezing temperatures are forecast.
- Start eggplant, pepper and tomato seeds indoors at the middle of the month. FS787
- Do not fertilizer newly planted trees or shrubs.
- Have a soil sample analyzed. Contact Extension for sampling packets. FS797
- Prune early flowering shrubs immediately after flowering and before new growth begins.
- For earlier bloom of dahlias start tubers in 8" to 10" pots in April using commercial potting soil. FS1153
- For control of crabgrass, application of preemergence herbicides are generally more effective and easier to apply than postemergence herbicides. Preemergence herbicides must be applied prior to crabgrass germination (April 10 in Southern New Jersey and April 20 in Central and Northern New Jersey) to be effective. E233
- Plant a tree for Arbor Day!
- Plant sections of certified, disease-free potato seed tubers
- *Have a great April!*

Gardening Tips for May

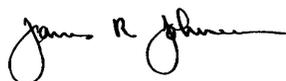
- Mow the lawn at a height of 2½-3" while never removing more than 1/3 of the leaf blade. Leave the clippings on the ground.
- Water the lawn deeply, applying a half to one inch of water at a time. Your lawn needs one inch per week during dry periods. FS829
- Apply broad-leaf herbicides to control weeds in the lawn. FS119
- Check your lawn for turfgrass insect pests and apply the correct control according to label directions. FS814
- Remove flowers from newly established strawberry plantings. Let them become established this year and form fruit next year.
- Remove seed stalks from rhubarb as soon as you see them. Harvest rhubarb through early June.
- Harvest mature asparagus beds for 6 to 8 weeks only.
- Lift and divide old chrysanthemum plants or set out new plants purchased or grown from cuttings. Pinch back mums when they are about 6" tall for bushier plants; Continue to pinch back the mums until mid-July.

- Plant gladiolus corms every two weeks for continuous bloom.
- Remove daffodil and tulip flowers as they fade. Leave the foliage in place until it turns brown and dies. Dig bulbs for storage after the leaves die.
- Plant dahlia and canna tubers mid to late May.
- Control euonymus scale now before their hard shells forms.
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs after the flowers fade.
- It is not too late to sow directly into the soil seeds of sunflower, zinnia, morning glory, portulaca, marigold, cosmos, periwinkles and gourds. Achimenes and other summer-flowering bulbs can also be planted in May.
- Pinch back the terminal growth on newly planted annual and perennial plants. This will result in shorter, more compact, well branched plants with more flowers.
- Time to plant caladium tubers, impatiens, coleus, begonias and pentas in shady areas.
- Replace and replenish mulch materials in flower beds and shrub borders to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth.
- Prune climbing roses as they complete their spring bloom season. Remove dead or weak wood as needed.
- Take a critical look at your landscape while at the height of summer development. Make notes of how you think it can be better arranged, plants that need replacement, overgrown plants that need to be removed and possible activity areas that can be enjoyed by family members.
- Check for insects and diseases. Destroy badly infested plants. Spider mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Select a chemical or organic control, or use insecticidal soap.
- Start with your tools. Use the right tool for the job and make sure each is in top working condition. A sharp edger makes short work of edging walkways and borders, whereas a dull one can double your time and make it look like a boy with a bad haircut.
- Stake your flowers now. They will be much easier to train.
- Weed now to eliminate an abundant crop of weeds later. Use a solution of scalding water and vinegar to kill many down to the roots.
- Transplant on cloudy days and make sure you keep the delicate exposed roots of your seedlings and plants protected from drying out.
- Harvest some of your well rotted compost to make high grade soil for your transplants. Make compost teas and give a good bit to your young plants after transplanting. Use it immediately. It doesn't keep.
- If you see pests on shrubs or plants, eliminate them now. If you aren't familiar with the bug you see, take it to the local Extension Center for identification.
- Geraniums that weathered the winter indoors need to be cut back and repotted with new soil or have some good compost worked in.
- Put markers out for your plants. Often, late maturing plants are forgotten and dug up inadvertently which can sometimes destroy them. After you've planted a few dozen varieties, it's helpful to have the names right there, and gratifying when your visitors ask.
- Tender annuals can be direct sown now, but don't delay. Try your hand this year at impatiens or gaillardia from seed. Definitely sow abundant amounts of zinnia seed of several varieties for bright color in the late summer. Asters are wonderful too and make great, long lasting cut flowers.
- Plant some viney things. Scarlet runner beans are always pretty and gourds, if trained, are lots of fun and create interesting fruits.
- Move houseplants to a shady location outdoors when danger of frost has past, usually mid-May. The soil in the pots will dry out faster outdoors, so check it frequently; Use houseplant cuttings to share with your friends.
- Remove and destroy bagworms from trees and shrubs.
- Stay on top of the weeds by pulling them as soon as you see them, once a week, after a rain or whatever works on your schedule.
- Once there is no threat of frost, usually by mid-May, plant tender plants such as tomatoes, corn, peppers, eggplant and vine crops.
- Make successive plantings of beans and sweet corn to extend the harvest.
- Thin seedlings of early planted crops to spacing specified on seed packet or plant tag.
- Harvest early plantings of radishes, spinach and lettuce.
- Remove unwanted suckers in raspberries when new shoots are about a foot tall.
- Thin fruit on apple trees to 8" apart about three weeks after their flower petals fall.
- Research rain barrels to help save on water bills and protect plants during periods of drought.
- Scope out a spot in the yard to start a compost pile.
- Plan a rain garden for a low spot in your yard that will allow stormwater to infiltrate slowly into the ground rather than running off into the nearest storm drain.

Rutgers Cooperative Extensions Fact Sheets

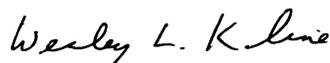
FS #	Fact Sheet Name
Fact Sheet 2	Brown Marmorated stink bug– a non-native insect in New Jersey
Fact Sheet 20	Weed control around the home grounds
Fact Sheet 31	How to fertilize shade trees
Fact Sheet 58	Mulches for vegetable garden
Fact Sheet 74	Backyard leaf composting
Fact Sheet 97	Strawberries in the Home Garden
Fact Sheet 98	Strawberries in the Home Garden II
Fact Sheet 101	Bramble Pest Control Schedule for Home Gardens
Fact Sheet 102	Your lawn and its care
Fact Sheet 112	Apple Pest Control Schedule for New Jersey Home Orchards
Fact Sheet 113	Peach and Nectarine Pest Control Schedule for New Jersey Home Orchards
Fact Sheet 114	Pear Pest Control Schedule for New Jersey Home Orchards
Fact Sheet 115	Cherry Pest Control Schedule for New Jersey Home Orchards
Fact Sheet 116	Plum Pest Control Schedule for New Jersey Home Orchards
Fact Sheet 117	Using leaf compost
Fact Sheet 119	Weed control in home lawns
Fact Sheet 129	Planning a vegetable garden
Fact Sheet 137	House ants and their control
Fact Sheet 214	Raspberries in the home Garden
Fact Sheet NE221	Asparagus tips for the home gardener
Fact Sheet 523	Grow your own vegetable and flower seedlings
Fact Sheet 562	Growing beets and carrots in the home garden
Fact Sheet 626	Fertilizing the home vegetable garden
Fact Sheet 633	Fertilizing the home lawn
Fact Sheet 681	Varieties for NJ home vegetable gardens
Fact Sheet 684	Turfgrass seed selection for NJ homes
Fact Sheet 786	Six ways to keep your newly planted tree alive and healthy
Fact Sheet 787	Starting Vegetable Seeds indoors
Fact Sheet 797	Soil testing for home lawns and gardens
Fact Sheet 814	Managing diseases of landscape turf
Fact Sheet 829	How to protect water quality and have a beautiful lawn
Fact Sheet 849	Cover crops and green manure crops; benefits, selection, and use
Fact Sheet 921	Conserving water on home landscapes in NJ
Fact Sheet 944	Roses and their care
Fact Sheet 988	Picking vegetables in the home garden
Fact Sheet 1123	Vegetable insect control for home gardens
Fact Sheet 1124	Vegetable disease recommendations for home gardens
Fact Sheet 1140	Incorporating native plants in your residential landscape
Fact Sheet 1163	Mail order vegetable seed sources for the NJ gardener

What's Growing On is prepared by Pam Burton, Horticultural Assistant, Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Cumberland County.



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For important announcements concerning the Cumberland County Extension Center visit:
<http://Cumberland.njaes.rutgers.edu>

Visit the newly activated website to see what activities are happening in the
Home Horticulture and Agriculture Departments.

If you have any questions concerning the website, please call our office at
856-451-2800 x1 for agriculture and
856-451-2800 x4 for Home Horticulture and Master Gardeners

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