Presentation on Tunnel Gardens at Lake Area Master Gardeners March Meeting!

Tricia Barrett was our main speaker with Sheila Morse from Share the Harvest as a guest discussing tunnel gardens.
March Gardening Tips

Ornamentals

- **Weeks 1-4:** Trees, shrubs and perennials may be planted as soon as they become available at local nurseries.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Fertilize bulbs with a "bulb booster" formulation broadcast over the planting beds. Hose off any granules that stick to the foliage.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Dormant mail order plants should be unwrapped immediately. Keep the roots from drying out, store in a cool protected spot, and plant as soon as conditions allow.
- **Weeks 1-4:** Loosen winter mulches from perennials cautiously. Re-cover plants at night if frost returns. Clean up beds by removing all weeds and dead foliage at this time.
- **Weeks 1-2:** Heavy pruning of trees should be complete before growth occurs. Trees should not be pruned while the new leaves are growing.
- **Weeks 2-4:** Summer and fall blooming perennials should be divided in spring.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Ornamental grasses should be cut to the ground just as the new growth begins.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Spring bedding plants, such as pansies and toadflax (*Linaria* sp.), may be planted outdoors now.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Apply a balanced fertilizer such as 6-12-12 to perennial beds when new growth appears.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Apply sulfur to the soils around acid-loving plants such as azaleas, rhododendrons, hollies and dogwoods. Use a granular formulation at the rate of 1/2 pound per 100 square feet.
- **Week 4:** Gradually start to pull back mulch from rose bushes.

Lawns

- **Weeks 1-4:** Mow lawns low to remove old growth before new growth begins.
- **Weeks 2-4:** Apply broadleaf herbicides now for control of cool-season perennial and annual weeds. These must not be applied to areas that will be seeded soon.

Vegetables

- **Weeks 1-4:** Fertilize the garden as the soil is being prepared for planting. Unless directed otherwise by a soil test, 1 to 2 pounds of 12-12-12 or an equivalent fertilizer per 100 square feet is usually sufficient.
- **Weeks 2-4:** Plant peas, lettuce, radishes, kohlrabi, mustard greens, collards, turnips, Irish potatoes, spinach and onions (seeds and sets) outdoors.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Set out broccoli, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, Chinese cabbage and cauliflower transplants into the garden.
- **Week 4:** Start seeds of tomatoes, peppers and eggplants indoors.

Fruits

- **Weeks 1-4:** Gradually remove mulch from strawberries as the weather begins to warm.
- **Weeks 1-3:** Continue pruning apple trees. Burn or destroy all prunings to minimize insect or disease occurrence.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Aphids begin to hatch on fruit trees as the buds begin to open.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Apply dormant oil sprays now. Choose a dry day when freezing temperatures are not expected.
- **Weeks 3-4:** Spray peach trees with a fungicide for the control of peach leaf curl disease.

Miscellaneous

- **Week 1:** Red maples begin to bloom.
- **Week 1:** Set up nesting boxes for bluebirds.
- **Weeks 2-4:** Spicebush is blooming in moist woodlands.
- **Weeks 2:** Raise purple martin houses this week.
- **Weeks 4:** The white flowers of serviceberry (*Amelanchier* sp.) and wild plum (*Prunus americana*) are showy in wooded areas.

*Gardening Calendar supplied by the staff of the William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening located at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri. ([www.GardeningHelp.org](http://www.GardeningHelp.org))
Soil Testing for Lawns  Manjula Nathan and Brad Fresenburg, Departments of Agronomy and Horticulture

Soil testing provides an estimate of the plant-available nutrients in the soil and is an essential tool for a sound fertilization program. Periodic soil testing will help to correct nutrient deficiencies, avoid excess fertilizer applications and maintain a healthy lawn.

A routine soil fertility test (pH, neutralizable acidity, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, organic matter is recommended under the following circumstances:

- Before establishing a new lawn, whether from seed, sod, or sprigs.
- Every three years on established lawns (late summer).
- Annually when attempting to correct a nutrient deficiency or change the soil pH.
- When fertilizers containing phosphate or potash have been used on a regular basis for a number of years.

Taking a Soil Sample

Your local MU Extension center has soil sample boxes available for use at no charge.
- One box (1.5 to 2 cups) is all the University lab needs for analyses.
- Using a small shovel or soil probe, sample to a 4-inch depth on established lawns or, before seeding, to a 6-inch depth.
- Take 12 or more random cores from each area of the lawn to be tested and remove the thatch and live plant material before breaking up the cores and mixing thoroughly in a dry plastic bucket. (Metal buckets contaminate the sample with micronutrients.)
- Take random samples from the lawn as a whole unless there is a need to sample problem areas separately
- Air dry the sample overnight before sending.
- Obtain a MP555, Soil Sample Information Form (PDF) from your local MU Extension center or on the Web. Send the sample to the Soil and Plant Testing Laboratory, http://soilplantlab.missouri.edu/soil/, at either of the following addresses: 23 Mumford Hall, Columbia, Mo. 65211 or Delta Research Center, P.O. Box 160 Portageville, MO 63873.

Mark Your Calendar May 14 & 15, 2016
10:00 AM—4:00 PM Both Days
STE. GENEVIEVE GARDEN WALK 2016, STE. GENEVIEVE, MO
- Tour private and public gardens
- Plant Sale (Sat. 9am; Sun. 10am)
- Farmers Market (Sat. only-- 7am-12N)

For information, contact Ste. Genevieve Welcome Center—573-883-7097 or 1-800-373-7007
Sponsored by Ste. Genevieve Master Gardeners and University of Missouri Extension
$7 Individual; $6/Individual-groups of five or more; Children 12 and under Free
Cool-Season Grasses: Lawn Maintenance Calendar

Established lawns may be maintained at different levels of perfection according to individual situations and desires, but good lawns seldom “just happen.” This summary outlines major steps required to maintain a high-quality lawn year round.

Steps in boldface type indicate a minimum program where time, money or interest dictates a usable lawn with least effort. Other selected steps of the schedule may be adopted occasionally or in alternate years to upgrade the program.

Timing is approximate for central Missouri. It may vary two weeks or more from one area to another in the state or from year to year.

Note: This publication refers primarily to cool-season grasses such as Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, tall fescue and fine fescue. For zoysia and Bermuda grass lawns, see MU Extension publication G6706, Establishment and Care of Zoysiagrass Lawns. Brad S. Fresenburg, Turfgrass State Specialist, Division of Plant Sciences and Lee Miller, Extension Turfgrass Pathologist, Division of Plant Sciences.

March

• Use broadleaf herbicides for perennial and winter annual weeds not controlled in the fall.
• Overseed thin spots early if missed last fall.
• Before growth starts, power rake or mow to remove excess old growth. This also speeds soil warming and lawn green-up. Watch for moles: Traps and baits are excellent means of control. Repellents containing castor bean oil are also effective.
• Have the soil tested if you have not done so recently.

April

• Remove excessive and heavily diseased clippings. Watch for leaf spot and mildew diseases.
• Aerate if thatch is heavy or soil is compacted.
• Use crabgrass preventers by April 15. Start top-dressing low spots as grass grows.

May

• Do not apply nitrogen fertilizer, particularly quickly available soluble forms, past May 1 as it will encourage development of foliar diseases.
• Apply postemergence broadleaf herbicides for summer weeds. If needed, start postemergence control of crabgrass, goosegrass or nutsedge near the end of the month. (See MU Extension publication IPM1009, Turfgrass and Weeds.)
• Watch for first brood of sod webworm. Apply insecticides about 10 days after major moth flight.

June

• Start watering as needed. Water infrequently to a depth of 6 inches. Don’t overwater, as that can promote fungal growth, but water frequently enough to prevent drought stress. All grasses under stress are susceptible to disease. Avoid puddles and runoff.
• Increase mowing height by 1/2 to 1 inch if grass stand is thin.
• Rapidly growing lawns need frequent mowing. Taller mowing heights of about 2 1/2 to 3 inches reduce the chance for turf scalping. Be alert for sod webworm.
• Scout for webworm damage and treat if found.
• Let clippings remain unless they are excessive.

July

• Continue frequent mowing, avoiding stressful times of the day during heat and drought. Irrigate only enough to prevent turf wilting (about 1 inch of rain or irrigation per week). When irrigation is needed and conditions are hot and humid, water between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m. to reduce disease occurrence.
• Irrigate two to three times a week as soil absorption allows. Avoid frequent, daily irrigation.
• Search for white grubs in brown areas. Dead turf in those areas easily can be peeled from the surface. If five to 10 grubs appear in 1 square foot, treat with an appropriate grub insecticide near the end of the month. Thoroughly irrigate to move the insecticide into the zone where grubs are active.
August

- Fall seeding and sodding is best. Prepare seedbed now.
- Continue watering and insect control. Make plans for fall lawn renovation. Select and purchase grass seed and fertilizer. If lawns are to be totally renovated, kill all vegetation with a glyphosate (Roundup) application near midmonth. If trying to kill Bermuda grass, apply glyphosate on Aug. 1 and again one month later.
- Have soil tested if you are unsure of basic fertility level.
- Soak dormant lawns in last week to start fall growth.

September

- This is the most important time to fertilize. Use well-balanced lawn fertilizer to apply 1 to 1.5 pounds of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.
- Plant or sod new lawns early. Keep soil moist.
- Aerate where needed.
- Late September is the best time for broadleaf herbicides, especially for perennial broadleaf weeds.

October and November

- Mow at regular heights until growth stops.
- Apply lime if soil test indicates need.
- Fertilize moderately after cool days slow leaf growth. Nutrients at this time will encourage root growth and thickening of turf. Soluble nitrogen fertilizers are used more efficiently by turf in late fall.
- Keep leaves from packing and smothering grass.
- Be sure turf goes into winter with moist — not wet — soil.
- Recondition lawn mower. Store mower with clean oil and empty fuel tank.
- Use soluble fertilizer or calcium chloride instead of salt for melting winter ice.

Maintenance  The key to good maintenance is doing those things that best counterbalance unfavorable conditions in the lawn environment. To attain equal success, lawns on soils of inferior physical quality or low fertility require more attention than those on deep, friable loam-type soils. Followed properly, the steps below should provide satisfactory lawns.

Fertilization

- Variation in soils, lawn standards and grasses require different approaches to lawn fertilization. The ideal program provides for uniform moderate growth throughout the season. Such growth can be provided through fertilization programs that use organic forms of nitrogen.
- Problems arise when rates and forms of fertilizer cause irregular “spurts of growth,” especially in spring and summer. Turf that is not fertilized enough has little competitive ability against weeds or disease.
- Nitrogen recommendations and materials tend to overemphasize the dark green color and fast growth response. In too many cases, this has been detrimental to balanced plant growth and health. For example, much emphasis has been given to early spring as the best time to fertilize bluegrass. If a lawn is stunted and has a pale to yellowish-green appearance, a very moderate feeding at this time would be advisable.
- On the other hand, fertilizing a lawn that already had moderate vigor at the time most of us get “spring gardening fever” will stimulate excessive succulent growth. The grass becomes more susceptible to fungi, which will take their toll a few weeks later during summer stress. In addition, excessive leaf growth usually occurs at the expense of new root growth, placing the plant at a further disadvantage during summer.

When to fertilize  All lawns should be fertilized at least once a year. Additional fertilization will depend on the desired level of turf appearance, turfgrass species, soil type and fertilizer carrier. If only one fertilization per year is desired, September is an excellent time for it.
- When a second application is desired, mid-October is a good time for it. Moderate rates in October or November, after days are cool enough to discourage vigorous leaf growth (50 degrees F), will help prolong green color into the winter and at the same time encourage development of a stronger root system for next spring’s growth.
- If a spring fertilization is desired, it should be done in early to mid-April. Two or three fertilizer applications in the fall may eliminate the need for a spring application.
Lake Area Master Gardener
March Meeting
Tuesday the 8th at 6:00 PM at Willmore Lodge

March Birthdays
March 11th  Jan Mitzel
March 11th  Mildred Webster
March 11th  Winnie McKinley

Best Wishes!
March 14th  Sally Burke
March 27th  Shirley wicker
March 31st  Tricia Barrett

To help new and returning members remember LAMG Club Member Names—Starting 2015—a twenty-five cent fee will be charge to an member failing to wear his/her LAMG/Maser Gardener name badge at the monthly meetings. “Fines” are to be collected by the Ways and Means Chair, Mildred Webster, and funds added to the club’s income.

Items for the monthly newsletter are due to the Newsletter Chair, Charli Allee, by the 26th of each month—Send to charlia@fnb-lakeozarks.com

Our Mission: “Helping Others Learn to Grow” and TO Have Fun Along the Way!

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Lake Area Master Gardener Club
Lake Area Master Gardener
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