



EARLY SUMMER

START SUMMER RIGHT

- Fertilizing annuals now and regularly through the season will keep those blooms coming for months.
- If you have an automatic irrigation system, it should be inspected thoroughly to ensure that everything is in good working order. Each valve should be turned on, and any clogs or poorly aimed heads that could be diminishing coverage should be corrected.
- If broadleaf weeds happen to appear in your lawn, don't be discouraged. Weed seeds will never completely go away, and broadleaf weeds can always be treated with post-emergent controls after they sprout.
- Have your mower blade sharpened if you haven't done so already, and be sure not to scalp your lawn (cut it too short). Longer grass helps to prevent weed seeds from sprouting.



Gory Grubs Are at it Again!

ACT NOW TO PROTECT YOUR LAWN FROM THESE GRUESOME PESTS

Grubs in your lawn can be real monsters. These eating machines set up camp just below ground where they feed on turf roots.

Grubs are the larval form of scarab beetles (such as Japanese beetles), which lay their eggs in the soil in early summer. You might not even know grubs are around until damage starts appearing. By then, you'll have two issues to deal with: repairing the damaged areas, and getting rid of the troublemakers themselves.

RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS

Irregular brown patches, turf that feels "spongy" when you walk across it, and sod that rolls up easily like a loose carpet are common signs of a grub infestation. If you see skunks or raccoons digging in your lawn, there's a good chance they're finding grubs to eat.

To be absolutely sure though, it's a good idea to perform a grub check. Just pull up a small section of sod from your lawn, and if you find six or more grubs per square foot, treatment is highly recommended.

TAKING BACK YOUR LAWN

Systemic insecticides do a great job of controlling grubs. They are applied to the soil and absorbed by the roots. The grubs are then killed as they feed on the roots. Systemic insecticides work best if they are applied before beetle eggs hatch.

One application now will provide grub control for the rest of the growing season. It will be especially effective in areas where grubs have been a problem in the past (these areas are likely to see repeat activity if the grubs were left untreated). Should grub damage appear before systemic insecticides can be applied, reseeding and extra watering will likely be necessary.

Now is the time to act, especially if your lawn has a history of grub activity. These pests can completely ruin your lawn if nothing is done to stop them!



Grubs are beetle larvae that feed on turf roots underground.

WINNING CHOICES FOR YOUR GARDEN

Tested by a network of independent judges and deemed superior for their performance, All-America Selections winners are standouts in any landscape. Consider these recent winners for your garden!



Gaillardia 'Arizona Apricot'

Flowers with yellow edges that deepen to a rich apricot in the center. Provides 3" to 3.5" blooms from early summer into fall. Generally maintenance-free and drought-tolerant once established. This perennial does best in full sun and looks great when planted to the front of the flower bed.



Salvia 'Summer Jewel Red'

Plenty of blossoms from spring to fall. This annual's bright-red blooms are attractive to hummingbirds, and goldfinches like its seeds...a perfect choice for bird lovers! Plant holds up well in windy and rainy conditions, and grows best in full sun. Makes a great addition to mixed beds.



Pop-up sprinkler heads spray water evenly over large areas.

Irrigation Systems Save Time, Money, Aggravation...and Plants!

Each tree, shrub, vine, flower and grass plant on your property needs adequate water to survive. When rainfall is scarce, keeping everything sufficiently watered can be a challenge. We've all been there...dragging hoses around, trying to put the right amounts of water in the right places, and just simply finding the time to do it all can mean that some plants don't get what they need.

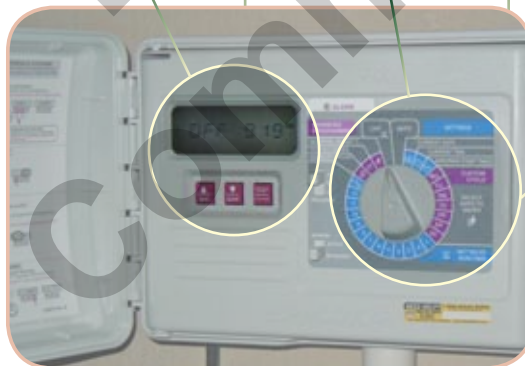
Without enough water, your plants will suffer, and so will your landscape investment. The solution for more busy homeowners these days is to install an automatic irrigation system.

Today's irrigation systems are affordable and efficient. Custom-designed for each property, these systems use underground circuits and valves to take water right where it's needed.

Sprinkler head choices vary. Drip heads deliver water slowly and precisely to the bases of plants. Pop-up heads spray larger areas evenly. Various configurations are available depending on your specific needs.

OTHER BENEFITS OF AN IRRIGATION SYSTEM INCLUDE:

- Controllers that automatically turn the various circuits on and off, even when you're not home.
- Timers that limit watering to the cooler parts of the day when less water will be lost due to evaporation or wind drift.
- Independent station programming to provide certain portions of your landscape with more or less water than others depending on each plant's specific needs.
- Rain shut-off devices and soil moisture sensors to override irrigation when it's not necessary.



An automatic irrigation system will help to keep your lawn and landscape lush and green while reducing water waste. It will mean less hassle for you, and less time spent on your watering chores!

Is Your Deck a Wreck?

They say that nothing lasts forever, and if you have a wooden deck that is getting on in years, you can probably relate. With summer right around the corner, this is a great time for redoing your deck or making improvements.



Synthetic decks are environmentally friendly.



Adding a gazebo to your deck makes it more functional.

CONSIDER A MORE DURABLE OPTION

Synthetic decks are becoming more common as property owners look for environmentally friendly alternatives to traditional wood construction materials. Made from recycled plastic, vinyl, or a combination of recycled plastic and sawdust, these decks are very sturdy and don't warp or split like wood does.

Various colors are available depending on your specific tastes, and you can count on synthetic decks to last longer than their wooden counterparts. Plus, synthetic maintenance needs are minimal when compared to wood, with no sealing or re-staining necessary. Simply hose the deck down periodically, and you'll be good to go!

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

With multiple levels, a smaller deck just for eating or one that takes advantage of a special view can be installed above the main deck. Or, a smaller deck can be installed just a few steps down from the main deck, with more steps leading to the ground. This second deck might have built-in seating for overflow crowds. Having a second deck serve as a landing is also safer than having one long flight of stairs if your main deck sits high above ground level.

THINK BEYOND TRADITIONAL DECK SPACES

Imagine how nice it would be to have a deck combined with a screened-in porch, a gazebo, or a three- or four-season room. Flexible spaces such as these let you enjoy the outdoors even when the weather is less than ideal. They're perfect for quiet reading, entertaining friends and spending quality time with your family.

Remember, upgrading and improving your deck is a great way to add to the value of your home while getting more use from your outdoor space. Why not get started planning your new deck today?

Compost: Speeding Up the Breakdown

Compost heaps work by generating intense heat and biological activity, breaking down all the materials you include into a rich, organic substance that works wonderfully as a soil amendment. The ingredients for successful composting are pretty standard: water, air, and green and brown materials that create nitrogen and carbon. These materials include coffee grounds, tea leaves, eggshells, corn cobs, hedge trimmings, lawn clippings, pine needles, straw, weeds and other plant debris.

To speed up the composting process, it's important to turn the pile often with a rake or shovel and add water whenever it gets dry. It also helps to add some garden soil every now and then, and an occasional sprinkling of lime will help to reduce acidity (which slows down or stops the bacterial composting action).

For even quicker composting, you can create a homemade "accelerant." This will increase the amount of moisture, carbon and nitrogen in your pile (the organisms that decompose organic matter need carbon for energy and nitrogen to build cell structure).

TO CREATE YOUR ACCELERANT, COMBINE THE FOLLOWING IN A 5-GALLON BUCKET:

- 1 gallon of warm water
- ½ cup of household ammonia (nitrogen-rich)
- 1 can of flat, warm beer (the yeast in the beer will encourage bacterial growth)
- 1 can of warm, regular cola (the sugar in the cola provides necessary carbon)

Stir the mixture thoroughly and pour it slowly over your compost heap. Follow this up with a few shovels full of garden soil, then turn the pile to distribute the accelerant evenly.

Once your compost turns dark and crumbly, it will be ready to use in your garden!





NOBODY'S PERFECT! Have you made any of these common gardening mistakes?

- 1.) Watering too much or too little.
- 2.) Choosing the wrong plant for your climate.
- 3.) Planting too deeply.
- 4.) Neglecting container plantings.
- 5.) Planting where there isn't enough room to grow.
- 6.) Using too much mulch.
- 7.) Using more pesticides or herbicides than needed.
- 8.) Topping (or "hat racking") trees for size control.
- 9.) Scalping lawns (cutting them too short).
- 10.) Fertilizing without determining the nutrient needs of plants.

We all make mistakes, and part of the fun of gardening is learning by trial and error. Don't be discouraged, and remember, we're here to provide help or suggestions whenever you need us!



Test Your Knowledge of the Natural World

- 1.) How many kernels does the average ear of corn hold?
- 2.) Which fruit has the most calories?
- 3.) What is the name of the technique used to grow plants in water without soil?
- 4.) At what age do oak trees start producing acorns?

Extra Credit: What is the oldest living thing on the planet?

*Answers: 1.) 800 2.) Avocado 3.) Hydroponics 4.) 50 or older
Extra Credit: A bristlecone pine in California – roughly 4,600 years old!*