

# March Gardening Checklist



It's not too early to think about the gardening season! Consider these tips to help you prepare. Included are links from the Utah State University Extension Gardener's Almanac.

- Plant cool-season vegetable seeds, such as peas, lettuce, and radishes, as soon as garden soil is workable. Consider planting peas in the garden every 2-3 weeks (until early May) to extend the harvest.
- If you didn't get to it in the fall, add organic matter to the vegetable garden to help build and amend the soil.
- Avoid compacted soil by not tilling wet or saturated garden soil.
- Once snow is melted, consider taking soil samples to determine fertilizer needs.
- Consider backyard composting or vermiculture (composting with worms).
- If storing bulbs, check to make sure they are firm, and remove any that are soft or rotten.

- If they are locally available, plan to plant bare root trees and shrubs, keeping the exposed roots moist until planted.
- Remove protective trunk wrap and burlap from trees after the snow has melted.
- Fertilize spring flowering bulbs such as tulips, daffodils, fritillaria, and crocus.
- Plant cold-hardy pansies and primrose to add a pop of color.
- Subscribe to the Utah Pests IPM Advisories for timely tips on controlling pests in your yard and garden.
- Prune fruit trees such as apples, pears, peaches, cherries, plums, and apricots.
- Attend a USU Extension-sponsored pruning demonstration near you.
- Apply horticulture oils at bud break (delayed dormant) in fruit trees to control overwintering insect pests.
- Apply pre-emergent herbicides in late March to mid April to control annual weeds such as crabgrass and spurge in your lawn.
- Sharpen mower blades and prepare for the season. Set mower height to mow 2 1/2 to 3 inches tall, and mow at this height during the summer.
- Consider planting a native fruiting species in the landscape, such as chokecherry, elderberry, serviceberry or currant.

## **Pests and Problems:**

- Download the Utah Home Orchard Pest Management Guide for tips and information.
- Be aware that aspen leaf spot may be prevalent during cool, wet springs. Control measures should be taken at bud break.
- Control rust mites in apple and pear trees after leaves have emerged and expanded by 1/2 inch.

- Learn about damping-off, a fungal disease that affects new seedlings.
  - Be aware that anthracnose may be prevalent during cool, wet springs. Control measures should be taken at bud break.
  - Apply dormant oil for pears when leaf buds swell, which smothers pear psylla eggs that are laid on buds by overwintering adults.
  - For more tips, visit [garden.usu.edu](http://garden.usu.edu). Here you will find information on gardening courses, growing and maintaining the yard and garden, drought resources, and the Extension Gardener's Almanac with tips for each month.
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## Winter Garden Planning Tips



If the spike in gardening interest the last few years is any

indication of what 2023 will be like, now is the perfect time to start planning! Consider these tips and links from the Utah State University Extension Gardeners Almanac.

- Peruse garden/seed catalogues to help determine new vegetable varieties to try in the garden.
- Plan out and design the vegetable garden. Try to implement crop rotation of vegetable families to reduce disease buildup.
- Consider growing herbs and/or microgreens indoors to add fresh greens to your diet.
- Use deicing compounds sparingly to avoid salt damage to landscape plants.
- If storing bulbs, check their condition to ensure they are firm. Remove any that are soft or rotten.
- Perform routine maintenance on lawn mowers and other small engine garden equipment.
- Sign up to become a member of the USU Botanical Gardens and receive discounts on classes and workshops along with other special benefits.
- Look for specific gardening information at [garden.usu.edu](https://garden.usu.edu). Here you will find information on fruit, vegetable, and herb growing guides as well as tips on soil, lawn, yard, tree, shrub, and flower care. Also included are monthly tips, the basics of gardening, information on drought, events, classes, and more.

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## October Yard and Garden Tips





Autumn is officially here, and there is much to look forward to – pumpkins on the porch, apple cider, cooler temperatures, and walks through crunchy leaves. But before you get too comfortable, don't forget there are yard and garden end-of-season tasks to complete. Here are tips from the Utah State University Extension Gardeners Almanac to help. Included are links to fact sheets and videos for further information.

- Learn about average first and last frost dates around the state.
- Consider adding a smaller structure such as a low tunnel or a larger high tunnel to extend your growing season. Take note of varying construction and modification information.
- Learn how and when to harvest winter squash and store in a cool (50-55°F), dry location.
- Plant garlic cloves from mid-October through early November.
- Refer to this list of fall cleanup chores and good landscape practices to get your yard ready for winter.
- Remove vegetable plants from the garden once harvest is complete to reduce overwintering sites for insect pests.
- Protect tomatoes from early frost by covering the plants

with a blanket or tarp.

- Place mulch over carrots, beets and parsnips to prevent the ground around them from freezing.
- Rototill leaves, compost, or manure into the vegetable garden to enhance soil microbe activity.
- Prune roses by heading back excessively long canes to prevent damage from heavy snow loads.
- Cut back ornamental grasses in snow-prone areas once the foliage has died down. Otherwise leave them until spring and enjoy the vertical accent during the winter.
- Plant spring-blooming bulbs through early November.
- Plant trees and shrubs in the fall to enhance root establishment.
- Dig tender perennials such as gladiolas, dahlias, begonias, and canna lilies after the foliage has died down, and store them in a cool (45-50 °F), dry place.
- Protect trunks of young trees from winter cracking by wrapping them with a white reflective tree wrap.
- Dig and remove annual flowers.
- Plant cold-hardy annuals, including pansies, primrose, kale, and ornamental cabbage.
- Prune raspberry canes to the ground after they have fruited.
- Control tough perennial weeds such as field bindweed (a.k.a. morning glory). Refer to this list of weed control options.
- Mow grass to a height of 1-to-1½ inches at the end of the season to minimize disease problems.
- Apply a quick-release nitrogen fertilizer after the last mowing (late October to early November) for early greening next spring.

## **Pests and Problems:**

- Send diseased vegetable plants and leaves to the local landfill.
- Use burlap or other soft materials to wrap evergreens to



prevent snow breakage.

- Treat stone fruits (cherries, peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums) for coryneum blight at 50% leaf drop.
- Clean up and discard all fallen fruit to reduce overwintering sites for disease and insect pests.
- For more tips, visit [garden.usu.edu](http://garden.usu.edu). Here you will find information on gardening courses, growing and maintaining the yard and garden, drought resources, and the Extension Gardener's Almanac with tips for each month.

By: Utah State University Extension horticulturists

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# August Yard and Garden Checklist



The heat is on, and yards and gardens are trying to survive

the high temperatures and drought conditions. Consider these tips from the USU Extension Gardeners Almanac to help your garden succeed. Also included are links for further information.

- Plant cover crops to provide “green manure” to the garden.
- Collect and store seeds from your garden.
- Learn about how and when to harvest watermelon and cantaloupe.
- Harvest potatoes as soon as tubers begin forming.
- Harvest garlic and onions once the tops have dried down. Allow them to cure (dry) for 2-3 weeks before storing.
- Store potatoes, garlic and onions in a cool/dry location (32-40°F) away from apples.
- Plant trees and shrubs as the weather becomes cooler.
- Go hiking in the hills to enjoy autumn colors.
- Divide crowded, spring-blooming perennials.
- Consider composting fall leaves.
- Check pears for ripeness once the fruit twists off the tree easily and seeds are dark colored, and allow them to finish ripening off the tree.
- Apply a slow-release lawn fertilizer early in September to provide long-lasting results throughout the fall months.
- Remember that as temperatures cool, turfgrass requires minimal irrigation each week. See irrigation needs in your area.
- Plant new lawns or repair insect/diseased areas with grass seed, allowing 4-6 weeks for establishment before heavy frosts.
- Aerate compacted sites with a hollow core aerator when turfgrass is actively growing (September-October).

### **Pests and Problems:**

- Control raspberry crown borer using a root drench in the late summer or early fall.



- Learn about what causes bitter pit and other problems in apples.
- Control rust mites in apple and pear trees after harvesting fruit and before leaf drop.
- Watch for boxelder bugs congregating on sunny surfaces during the fall months.
- Monitor for damaging turfgrass insects.
- [Click here](#) to subscribe to the Utah Pests IPM Advisories for timely tips on controlling pests in your yard and garden.

Consider taking an online gardening course. Courses cover topics such as container vegetable gardening, creating the perfect soil, planting trees, and controlling pests. Courses are geared to both beginning and professional gardeners. Use the code **“GARDEN5”** at checkout to get \$5 off.

Explore more gardening tips on Extension’s yard and garden website. For drought information and tips, [click here](#).

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## Three Tips for Preventing Injury in the Yard and Garden



Whether you're a weekend gardener or spend time in the dirt daily, you have probably experienced working too hard and feeling sore. Soreness can stem from exerting a new or weak muscle, and it subsides after a few days. But pain that lingers can occur from overworking or doing something incorrectly. These types of injuries can be serious, such as a rotator cuff injury, or they can be a repetitive strain injury (RSI), which occurs in muscles, tendons, and nerves in hands, wrists, shoulders, elbows, knees, and lower back. These injuries are caused by doing the same movement for an extended period and can lead to pain or weakness.

Consider these tips to prevent injuries and minimize pain while gardening.

1. Adapt the garden. Create a garden that promotes healthy posture, movement, and maintenance. Incorporate raised beds and vertical gardens to avoid hunching over and kneeling. Carefully place stepping stones, pottery, and other gardening hardscapes so you can work around them without twisting, over-reaching, or pulling.
2. Adapt the tools. Use tools that are appropriate for the job

and that fit your abilities. Tools with ergonomic handles and attachments provide a comfortable grip and help keep the wrist straight. Rakes and shovels with height-appropriate handles help you maintain a straight back and avoid hunching over.

### 3. Adapt yourself. Be prepared, and use safe movements.

- Wear comfortable, breathable clothing and closed-toed shoes with ankle support. Even if it's cloudy outside, wear sunscreen, a hat, and sunglasses if needed.
- Drink water before, during, and after gardening. Start out hydrated, drink every 15-20 minutes while gardening, then drink after to replace what you may have lost through sweat.
- Keep your tools and other essentials (trash bags, water bottle, cell phone, snacks, etc.) in a bucket or cart nearby while you work.
- Work during cooler times of the day, and break tasks into shorter activities. If possible, avoid gardening for more than 1.5 hours at a time.
- Change tasks every 20 minutes to use alternate muscles and intensities (e.g., change from standing to kneeling). Remember to take breaks to stretch your muscles and hydrate.
- Engage your leg muscles rather than your arms and back when lifting, carrying, setting items down, changing directions, and moving back and forth (e.g., raking and shoveling).
- When working low to the ground, kneel rather than crouching or squatting, and use a foam mat or knee pads. Kneel on one knee while keeping the other foot on the ground for support. This helps avoid hunching while keeping your back straight. Alternate legs every few minutes.
- Stretch before, during, and after gardening. Gardening is a physical activity, so treat it like any other exercise. Warm up your muscles first, then as you take



breaks, stretch the used muscles. At the end, do whole-body stretches.

The more you practice safety in the garden, the more it becomes part of your routine and the less likely you will be to experience soreness and pain.

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## How Does Your Garden Grow? Tips for July



It can be a challenge to keep gardens growing as summer heats up, so Utah State University Extension provides a Gardener's Almanac to help. The Almanac also includes links for tips and additional information.

### July Checklist

- Start enjoying the tomato harvest.

- Fertilize potatoes in the garden with nitrogen in early July.
- Harvest summer squash and zucchini when they are still small and tender.
- Deep water established trees and shrubs about once per month during the heat of summer.
- Deadhead (cut off) spent blossoms of perennial and annual flowers.
- Divide crowded iris or daylilies once they have finished blooming.
- Remove water sprouts (vertical shoots in the canopy) of fruit trees to discourage regrowth and reduce shading.
- Renovate perennial strawberry beds by tearing out old crowns (mother plants) and applying fertilizer to stimulate new runners.
- Remember that turfgrass only needs 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 2 inches of water per week. See irrigation needs in your area.

## **Pests and Problems**

- Check under leaves of pumpkins, melons, and squash plants for squash bugs.
- Watch for Mosaic virus in vine crops such as cucumbers and watermelons, and remove infected plants to reduce spreading.
- Watch for holes in the leaves of petunias, nicotiana, geraniums and other annual flowers from Tobacco budworm feeding.
- Protect black locust trees (not honey locust) with a registered chemical to prevent locust borer damage.

- Control codling moth in apples and pears to reduce wormy fruit.
- Plan for next month, as control for walnut husk fly in walnuts, peaches and apricots usually takes place August 1 and 15.
- Learn how to identify a hobo spider.
- Control European paper wasp with traps.
- Monitor for damaging turfgrass insects.
- Click here to subscribe to the Utah Pests IPM Advisories for timely tips on controlling pests in your yard and garden.
- Consider taking an online gardening course. Courses cover topics such as container vegetable gardening, creating the perfect soil, planting trees, and controlling pests. Courses are geared to both beginning and professional gardeners. Use the code **"GARDEN5"** at checkout to get \$5 off.
- Explore more gardening tips on Extension's yard and garden website. For drought information and tips, click here.
- To see a video of the July Gardener's Almanac tips, click here.

By: JayDee Gunnell, Utah State University Extension horticulturist, [Jaydee.gunnell@usu.edu](mailto:Jaydee.gunnell@usu.edu)

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## Seven Principles for Water-



# Wise Landscaping



Our landscapes provide us with beautiful surroundings, natural cooling, and the cleansing of our environment. Nearly 65% of the annual culinary water consumption in Utah is applied to landscapes. Unfortunately, many landscapes are over-irrigated, wasting precious water.

Keeping water-wise landscaping principles in mind as we design, install, and manage our landscapes can help conserve a great deal of water. Though the heat of the summer is not the best time to install and irrigate new landscape plants, it is a good time to make plans for the fall when temperatures cool and less water is needed for irrigation. Consider these principles from the USU Extension Center for Water-Efficient Landscaping.

**1. Planning and design.** Develop a landscape plan, paying attention to sun, shade, soil conditions, slope, etc., then determine where plants should be placed for both function and aesthetics. For example, deciduous trees can be planted to increase summer shade as well as winter sun.

**2. Soil preparation.** Proper soil preparation improves plant water use efficiency in the future. Consider soil texture, structure, organic matter content, nutrient status, and pH when choosing plants. Soil can be tested at the Utah State University Soil Testing Laboratory.

**3. Plant selection.** Choose plants for the size and function of the area. Consider irrigation requirements, adaptability, bloom-time offsetting, mature plant size, and climate hardiness zones.

**4. Practical turf areas.** Plant grasses where they are functional. Choose species and varieties with lower water requirements and mow to a height of 2 ½ or 3 inches for deeper rooting. Properly fertilize to improve drought tolerance and recovery, and don't gather grass clippings when mowing.

**5. Mulch.** Cover bare soil with mulch to prevent crusting, compaction, and evaporation of moisture. Organic mulches include wood or bark chips, nut shells, pine needles, etc. Inorganic options include gravel or crushed stone, lava rock, and cobblestones.

**6. Efficient irrigation.** Hydrozone or group plants with similar water requirements in the same irrigation zone(s). Use drip irrigation systems to apply water directly to plant roots. Water trees and shrubs less frequently than grass areas, but for longer periods of time.

**7. Landscape maintenance.** Control weeds, fertilize regularly, and control plant growth through pruning. Also monitor for and control damaging diseases and pests. Visit Utah Pests for tips.

For further landscaping tips, visit [seven principles for water-wise landscaping](#).

By: Kelly Kopp, Utah State University Extension turfgrass specialist, [Kelly.Kopp@usu.edu](mailto:Kelly.Kopp@usu.edu)

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# June Gardening Checklist



June is here, the sun is shining, and gardening is in full swing! Consider these tips from the Utah State University Extension Gardener's Almanac to help make your yard and garden the best they can be. Also included are links for tips and additional information.

- Consider drip irrigation in the garden to conserve water.
- During a drought, it's especially important to remember that turfgrass only needs 1-1 ½ inches of irrigation per week. [Click here for irrigation needs in your area.](#)
- Discontinue harvesting asparagus spears in early June to allow the fronds to form for the rest of the growing season.
- Prune tomatoes to open the canopy of the plant.
- Consider planting sweet corn in the garden every other week (until early July) to extend the harvest.



- Prune spring flowering shrubs (those that bloom before June) after they have bloomed to encourage new flower buds for next season.
- Deadhead (cut off) spent blossoms of perennial and annual flowers.
- Thin the fruit of apples, peaches and apricots to approximately one fruit every 5-6 inches.
- Apply a second application of pre-emergent herbicides in late May to early June to control annual weeds in the lawn, such as crabgrass and spurge.

## **Yard and Garden Pests**

- Monitor vegetables and herbs for earwig damage.
- Protect ash trees with a registered chemical to prevent lilac/ash borer damage.
- Control codling moth in apples and pears to reduce wormy fruit.
- Treat apples for powdery mildew when leaves are emerging (at 1/2 inch green) until early June.
- Watch for insect pests in raspberries from mid-May through early June. For specific timing, visit Utah Pests Advisories.
- Control the Western cherry fruit fly when fruit changes from straw color to pink to avoid maggots in cherries.
- Control the peach twig borer in peaches, nectarines and apricot trees. For specific timing, see our Utah Pests Advisories.
- Monitor for damaging turfgrass insects. In areas previously damaged, consider a preventative (systemic) insecticide.
- [Click here](#) to subscribe to the Utah Pests IPM Advisories for timely tips on controlling pests in your yard and garden.
- Consider taking an online gardening course. Courses cover everything from container vegetable gardening and creating the perfect soil, to planting trees and

controlling pests. Courses are geared to both beginning and professional gardeners. Use the code **"GARDEN5"** at checkout to get \$5 off.

- Explore more gardening tips on Extension's newly designed yard and garden website. For drought information and tips, [click here](#).

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## May Gardening Checklist



April showers bring May flowers – as well as a multitude of gardening tasks. The Utah State University Extension Gardener's Almanac provides a checklist for each month as well as links for tips and further information. The May checklist follows.

\* Plant warm-season vegetables and annual flowers once the threat of the last frost has passed. [Click here](#) for a listing of the average last and first frost dates.

\* By planting tomatoes deeper, they are able to form more roots along the stem, creating a more vigorous plant.

\* Consider planting sweet corn in the garden every other week (until early July) to extend the harvest.

\* Consider the various types of fertilizers. [Click here](#) for information on traditional fertilizer options. [Click here](#) for information on organic fertilizers.

\* Thin overcrowded seedlings using a pair of scissors, and try not to disturb the young roots.

\* Protect fruit blossoms and tender garden plants from late freezing temperatures. [Click here](#) for information on critical temperatures for fruit.

\* Plant summer-blooming bulbs including gladiola, begonia, dahlia and canna.

\* Divide warm-season ornamental grasses when new growth begins to emerge.

\* It's already time to take notice of weeds. [Click here](#) for information.

\* Allow the foliage of spring blooming bulbs (tulips, daffodils and crocus) to die down before cutting the leaves off.

\* [Click here](#) for information on planting a lawn.

\* In compacted sites, aerate with a hollow core aerator when turfgrass is actively growing (April – June).

\* Control broadleaf weeds in the lawn when temperatures are between 60 and 80 F. Follow the label and stop the use of broadleaf herbicides once the temperature is



above 85 F.

- \* Apply a slow-release lawn fertilizer to provide a long-lasting effect throughout the summer months.

### **Pests and Problems:**

- \* Monitor newly planted vegetables for cutworm and flea beetle damage.

- \* Monitor for cankerworm damage on scrub oak and Box Elder trees along the foothills.

- \* Monitor for aphids on new spring growth on a variety of plants. Treat for aphids by using “softer” solutions such as spraying them with a hard stream of water or using an insecticidal soap.

- \* Monitor for slugs and snails. These pests thrive in moist, cool areas of the garden and landscape, feeding on a variety of plant hosts.

- \* Protect ash trees from the lilac-ash borer around the first of May.

- \* Control codling moth in apples and pears to reduce wormy fruit. For specific timing, see the Utah Pests Advisories.

- \* Treat for powdery mildew on apples when leaves are emerging (at  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch green) until June.

- \* Watch for insect pests in raspberries from mid-May through early June.

- \* Monitor for damaging turfgrass insects. In areas previously damaged, consider a preventative (systemic) insecticide.

- \* [Click here](#) to subscribe to the Utah Pests IPM Advisories for timely tips on controlling pests in your yard

and garden.

- \* Consider taking an online gardening course. Courses cover everything from container vegetable gardening and creating the perfect soil, to planting trees and controlling pests. Courses are geared to both beginning and professional gardeners.

- \* Explore more gardening tips on Extension's newly designed yard and garden website. For drought information and tips, [click here](#).

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## Spring Pruning Pointers



Temperatures are warming, and it is time to get out in the yard again. One of the first orders of business is pruning shrubs, roses, fruit trees, and raspberries.

Many gardeners are intimidated by pruning because they don't

know exactly what to do, so they attempt to do something they hope will look good. This often includes giving plants and shrubs a buzz cut, which is not recommended. Over time, this removes too much of the shrub's leaf-producing wood, which impacts plant health and makes it look thin.

A technique called "renewal pruning" can keep a shrub's size down and help maintain its health. It involves focusing on older branches and removing 20 – 25% of the branches from the base of the shrub. This will reduce the shrub's size by 30 – 50% and still leave enough branches to grow leaves and keep the bush's energy levels high. Shrubs that bloom in the spring such as lilac, forsythia, and snowball bush should be pruned as soon as they are done blooming.

Prune all other shrubs in late March to early April. Consider these pruning tips, and be sure to wear protective clothing and gloves to safeguard your skin.

\* There are many rose varieties, and they often require slightly different pruning techniques. Prune bush/shrub roses using renewal pruning. For hybrid tea and grandiflora roses, prune them down to between knee and waist high, depending on their age and vigor. Remove all but three or four of the healthiest canes, and prune them near the base of the rose. Hybrid tea and grandiflora roses bloom repeatedly throughout the growing season. Pruning them back keeps their size under control, increases the number of flowers, and can aid in controlling certain pests and diseases.

\* When pruning fruit trees, start by pruning out dead and diseased wood, then remove crossing branches that grow up through the main canopy, and those growing downward. With the exception of peaches and nectarines, only remove 20 – 25% of the total canopy. This percentage does not include the dead or diseased wood that needs to be removed. Peaches and nectarines can have up to 40% of their wood removed since fruit is only produced on one-year old wood. [Click here to see a link on](#)

pruning peach trees. Click here to see a link for pruning apples.

\* When pruning raspberries, first determine if you have the summer-bearing or ever-bearing variety. Ever-bearing types produce from summer into fall, while summer types provide a heavy crop in the summer only. One way to prune ever-bearing plants is to cut all canes a few inches above the ground. This allows for a large fall crop but no summer crop. Otherwise, the correct method for both types is to remove all dead canes from the patch at ground level. They are usually darker colored and have bark that is starting to sluff or peel. Of the remaining living canes, thin them so they are spaced 6 inches apart, leaving the thicker canes. After doing this, cut the canes at chest height. Click here to see a video on pruning raspberries.

For further yard and garden tips, visit [garden.usu.edu](http://garden.usu.edu).

Answer by: Taun Beddes, Utah State University Extension horticulturist, [taun.beddes@usu.edu](mailto:taun.beddes@usu.edu)