

LAY OF THE LAND



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These landscaping tips are sure to provide you with a great head start on your spring garden.

As the month of March progresses, you will begin to notice spring's first plants and bulbs—witch hazel, snowdrops, crocus, Lenten rose, forsythia, hyacinth, early daffodils and vinca. There are few pleasures as renewing and re-energizing as enjoying the sight of those first buds sprouting up in anticipation of full and fragrant flowering. Vincas, vibrant in blues and purples, look stunning alongside bright yellow daffodils and all of the rest of the festive spring favorites that spread an expansive sea of color throughout your garden landscape.

The welcome signs of spring will also be evident at your local hardware and garden centers. Packed with early season perennials, annuals and forced bulbs, these garden lover's havens offer numerous ways to liven up your own garden with an early spring punch. For instance, to add interest to areas currently still stuck in winter mode, try arranging some of your colorful live purchases into planters carefully selected and placed in key focal areas throughout your garden.

It is never too early to start working on your garden. Many people make the common mistake of waiting



for the warmer months before beginning to tend to their yards. March is the time to spring into action. Plan now, enjoy later. Setting up your gardens, doing some corrective pruning and tipping back trees and shrubs, laying down fertilizer and splitting early perennials should all be items you take care of as soon as the opportunity arises. Use March to get ahead of the season, so when the beautiful, warm days arrive, you will be able to enjoy your yard to its fullest.

While springtime is often associated with removing the accumulated clutter in your home, it's also when you should take advantage of the end of the dormant season to clean up outside as well. Save the inside for a rainy day! Rake out the thatch from your lawn, redefine those bed edges, and clean up the broken winter damage. Early spring is the time to start pruning all of your ornamentals, shade trees and woody plants. Start assessing the winter damage and instituting a plan for what needs to be done. It is also a fantastic time to split perennials. With a little extra labor, one plant can be split into four, helping to make your landscape lusher and healthier.

Arranging all of your care programs is another priority. Setting a garden strategy allows you to plan and budget for what you would like to see in your garden for the upcoming season. Everything—from chemical care

Continued on pg. XX

To establish a winning game plan for you and your home garden this spring season, consult with a landscape professional, such as the experts at Scenic Landscaping. Located in northern New Jersey, Scenic Landscaping specializes in property care and maintenance, as well as designing and installing outdoor living spaces, and can provide all of the resources to ensure the very best for your home and garden.

LAY OF THE LAND



Continued from pg. XX

and I.P.M. (Integrated Pest Management) programs for your lawns, trees and shrubs to maintenance and garden service programs—should be planned out now. A little early and preventative planning will go a long way and show in the results of the summer months to come.

You might not see the signs of damage made by common pests over the winter on your trees and shrubs. But they're likely to be there and, even more likely, more are sure to be on their way. Preventative actions can work wonders for your garden so act now to suppress any potential issues with what was hiding throughout the winter causing damage. Establish a preventative program and spray schedule; make sure to decide upon and carry it out before beginning any gardening activity. When selecting treatment options, consider that dormant oils are safe alternatives to the harsher chemicals necessary to treat pest infestations once the problems manifests in the warmer months. The former provide an organic ap-

proach to eliminate larva and insects that have been hiding inside of your plants.

Plants and trees do not require much water at this stage. With the cool evenings and abundant ground moisture, little additional water is necessary, making it an ideal time for planting, fertilizing and over-seeding those bare patches on your lawn. Now is the time to kick start your plants. You do not want to miss the window of opportunity that early spring moisture provides to help your yard to benefit in the coming months.

Knowing that your property is taken care of early on in the season affords you more leisure time to enjoy other outdoor pursuits. Time to fire up the grill and turn on the heat to your hot tub or spa for a relaxing soak on a star-filled, crisp night. Winding down after a busy day in front of an outdoor fireplace with friends and family, and admiring the colors that are budding throughout your yard are one of the sweet perks of early springtime.