



APRIL GARDENING GUIDE

Now that the clocks have changed there is much more daylight to allow us to enjoy the outdoors. Spring gardens are looking at their best as the trees begin to turn green and a succession of colourful flowers including daffodils, crocus, tulips, camelias and many more burst into bloom.

Deadhead and Feed Spring Bulbs

Why? As the flowers die back spring bulbs are busily making flower buds for next year's display.

How? Help channel the bulbs' energy by removing faded flowerheads before they can make seeds. Give them granular or liquid feed. The leaves do all the work so never tie them up - wait until they turn yellow before cutting them back.

Weed, feed and mulch

Why? Borders will really benefit from a bit of TLC at the start of the season

How? Dig out weeds while they are still tiny - the important thing is to catch them before they set seed and root out perennial weeds such as dandelions and buttercups. Tidy up debris from last year. You can then spread mulch over the border to feed the plants, retain moisture and suppress weeds.

Sow hardy annuals

Why? These flowers are easy to sow. Good ones to try are nigellas, calendulas, eschscholzias and sunflowers

How? Sow large seeds a few millimetres deep and fine seeds on the surface of the compost. Use vermiculite to cover the seeds rather than compost, it retains moisture well and is easier for the shoots to grow through. Sow into seed trays and if the seeds need heat to germinate put on a warm windowsill above a radiator or use a heated propagator. Cover the trays with a lid or plastic bag to retain moisture, but remove when the seeds germinate. Grow the plants on in a cool frost free place and acclimatise them gradually to outside temperatures over a couple of weeks before planting outside.

It's good to make the most of our gardens - for the enjoyment of others, not just ourselves.

Marjorie

