

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Steuben County

County Office Building
3 East Pulteney Square
Bath, NY 14810

Tel: 607-776-9631 Ext. 2300
Fax: 607-776-9631
steuben@cornell.edu

PERENNIAL GARDEN CALENDAR

January – March

- A time to plan and think ahead to long summer days in the garden.
- Look through catalogs and order seeds and plants.
- Check your list of things to be done. (see Nov-Dec)
- Enjoy the first blooms of the small bulbs and early primroses.

April

- Gradually start to remove winter mulch, giving the plants beneath a chance to slowly acclimate to the weather.
 - Any plants that have heaved should be gently pushed back into the soil.
 - As soon as the soil is workable, clean up the border, removing old leaves and debris from the previous season.
 - When iris leaves are 4 inches tall spray with a pesticide* to control borers.
 - If leaf spot or botrytis were a problem last year dust or spray* now.
 - About midmonth fertilize your perennial bed by cultivating in 4 lbs. of 5-10-5 into the soil. Don't let it come in contact with the foliage.
 - Care must be taken during cultivation not to cut off the tops of bulbs and lilies, as well as slow starters such as anemone and platycodon.
- Delphinium and dianthus will appreciate a handful of wood ashes or lime scattered around them.
- Any needed stakes and supports should be put in place now.
 - Dig up clumps of chrysanthemums and divide as described earlier.

May

- Spray* columbines to control leaf miner.
- Continue to spray* for control of iris borers.
- Pinch back chrysanthemums and feed with liquid fertilizer.
- For large flowers remove side buds on peonies. Ignore ants.
- Cut back to ground level two-thirds of stems on mature clump of phlox.
- Watch out for, and be ready to spray* for aphids on lupins.

June

- Stake delphiniums as flower spikes begin to develop.
- Once Iberis has finished blooming shear back half way. A good severe pruning will promote healthier, more compact growth.
- Apply summer mulch to retard weeds and conserve summer moisture.
- After flowering, cut stalks of iris down to ground level, allowing leaves to remain until fall.

**For specific pesticide recommendations check with your local Cooperative Extension.*

Helping You Put Knowledge to Work

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NYS College of Human Ecology and NYS College Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension associations, county governing bodies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

- Trim growing tips of aster to encourage branching and minimize need to stake taller cultivars.
- Pinch back chrysanthemums for last time. Feed with liquid fertilizer, and keep roots well watered.

July

- Watch for spider mites on phlox, heuchera and iberis, and control by spraying*.
- As days become more humid, check phlox for powdery mildew. Spray with a fungicide at very first sign, repeat as needed.
- Dead head spent flowers for continued bloom.
- Remove spent flower spires of delphiniums and lupins. This sometimes will promote a second bloom
- Cut and remove yellowed foliage of oriental poppies and bleeding hearts.
- During dry spells give the garden a good soaking during the day. Let hose flow or use soaker hose rather than sprinkler to minimize mildew and leaf spots.

August

- If needed divide iris.
- Continue watching for mildew, especially on phlox and bee balm. Dust or spray* as needed.
- Dead head phlox to prevent seed formation.
- Dig and divide oriental poppies.
- Move budded chrysanthemums into border.

September

- Divide daylilies, phlox and peonies as needed.
- Plant spring blooming bulbs.
- After frost, cut foliage to ground level, except for daylilies.
- Tie leaves of tritoma (red hot pokers) together with twine to protect crown of plant.
- Scatter super phosphate around especially gross feeders like peonies.
- Make sure all leaves and debris are cleaned out of garden.
- Remove stakes and supports.

October

- If the season has been dry, make sure the border is watered well before ground freezes.
- Clean up garden tools and store until next year.

November-December

- After ground has frozen apply a winter mulch to newly set plants (This is unnecessary in established plants).
- Make notes on plants to be moved or divided in early spring and new varieties to try.

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