

Central Virginia Master Gardeners  
 April Garden Chores

*A flower leaps to life – the quiet clod  
 Has uttered music; noiselessly a tree  
 Flings forth green song; beauty whispers  
 to the listening heart  
 And stars are vocal with tranquility.*

Adapted from a poem by Mary Hallet

Category	Description
Ornamental Garden	<p>Gardening fever is in FULL SWING NOW!</p> <p>Get to the bottom of the compost pile and remove the oldest and most rotted parts to mix up for soil compost. This, forced through a screen makes the best dressing for covering seeds. Be careful to do your digging when the soil is fairly dry so that you won't destroy its structure.</p> <p>Weed Now if you haven't already started! This is the best time to begin weeding as it will save you a lot of work later on.</p> <p>Continue removing protective mulches from roses, clematis, azaleas and other tender shrubs.</p> <p>Fertilize spring-flowering bulbs. Bone meal is one of the best and safest all-round fertilizers. A little balanced plant food is good after the plants have attained some growth., but use it carefully.</p> <p>Fertilize other ornamental fruit and berry plants that were not fertilized in March,</p> <p>Fertilize spring-blooming shrubs <b>after flowering</b> is complete. Fertilize perennials when you see 2-3" of new growth.</p> <p>Cultivate garden beds as soon as soil is dry enough to work. Mix in a few inches of peat moss or organic material.</p> <p>April is a good time for planting roses, and perennial flowers and herbs.</p>
Trees & Shrubs:	<p>As soon as the first leaves surface on your butterfly bush and bluebeard, you can prune them back as well to spur new growth and bountiful blooms. This may have been a late March task depending upon how our early late spring is this year.</p> <p>Finish up your <b>pruning chores from March</b> if you haven't already, including summer and fall blooming shrubs and deciduous trees.</p> <p>There is still time to transplant or plant new deciduous and evergreen trees</p>

	and shrubs this month.
Lawn Care:	<p>Mid to Late March and early April brings in warmer temperatures and spring rains, so now is a good time to seed, over-seed, or sod the lawn. Be aware that newly seeded lawns may take two or more weeks to germinate in the cooler spring weather. If you have used a crabgrass pre-emergent, you will need to wait a few months before over-seeding.</p> <p>When weather conditions permit, remove excess thatch from your lawn and aerate it, if necessary. This should not be done too often, and is actually better done in the fall for cool-season grasses. If you didn't fertilize your lawn in March, do it this month. April is also a good time to put down a spring pre-emergent to control crabgrass, if you haven't already. Again, watch for air temperatures above 60° F for 4-5 consecutive days.</p> <p>Have your lawn soil tested if you haven't already, and apply lime or nutrients if needed.</p> <p>Get your mower blade sharpened. Mowing with a dull blade tears the ends of grass blades, leaving ragged ends which later turn brown, and also encourages the spread of fungus disease.</p> <p>One of the best things to do for a lawn is to top dress it several times a year. If you haven't been able to make compost, purchase some good black dirt and mix it with liberal quantities of bone meal. Scatter evenly over the surface of your lawn and water the dirt into the grass.</p>
	Continue watering trees and shrubs that you planted in the fall as soon as new leaves appear. Newly planted trees and shrubs need supplemental watering for a FULL YEAR to stay healthy.