

Here's an April garden checklist

I want to mention things gardeners need to be considering for April. The following is a garden checklist:

- ✓ To assist with the water demand on the city of Mountain Home, water lawns early in the morning (4-6 a.m.) when you start watering. Apply up to 1 1/2 inches per watering.
- ✓ The last average frost is April 10 for northern Baxter County and April 20 for southern Baxter County. You can get away with planting frost-sensitive plants earlier if you are prepared to do some frost protecting when that last frost is predicted.
- ✓ Continue to plant cool-season vegetables early this month.
- ✓ Early treatment can prevent damage by cabbage worms on cole crops such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower. Cabbage looper, diamondback moth caterpillar and the imported cabbage worm can cause serious damage pretty quickly. Check weekly for eggs and larvae under the leaves. Use *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT) spray as soon as they are first noticed.
- ✓ Plant warm-season vegetables from mid April on. Don't be in a hurry, or you may have to replant.
- ✓ Hold back on planting okra and peppers until late April. Warm soil temperatures are critical for these warm-season vegetables.
- ✓ Spray hybrid tea roses to prevent black spot. Spray according to label directions.
- ✓ Fertilize Bermuda or Zoysiagrass lawn after it fully has greened up.
- ✓ Prune and fertilize spring blooming trees and shrubs immediately after bloom.
- ✓ As pansies play out, replace them with summer annuals.
- ✓ Continue to divide summer- and fall-blooming perennials.
- ✓ As flowering bulbs fade, allow six to eight weeks of green growing time for bulbs to replenish nutrients. Crocus and daffodils do not have flower heads removed, but it is beneficial with hyacinths and tulips. Fertilize with complete fertilizer. You can transplant and divide spring flowering bulbs after foliage begins to die down.
- ✓ Use bird netting to keep birds away from strawberries. Watch for slugs.
- ✓ Watch for spider mites and bagworms.
- ✓ During the next few weeks, many will begin to notice strange-looking, often colorful growth on leaves and new twigs of hardwood trees and shrubs.

These growths are galls caused by either mites, aphids, midges, small wasps or psyllids (jumping plant lice). Galls differ in size and shape depending on the type of insect responsible for them. However, the same gall insect will produce a similar gall on different species of plants. Gall insects seldom cause serious damage and therefore control measures are not necessary.

- ✓ Aphids can occur in large numbers in the spring. Aphids dine on the sap of an endless number of garden plants. Their feeding weakens plants and in some cases, a total destruction of plants. They are a very prolific insect, bearing live young. Fortunately, they are easily controlled by a spraying of malathion or insecticidal soap but beware, reinfestation can occur in days.
- ✓ Gardening in containers adds another level of gardening to the landscape which adds interest and enhances the enjoyment of gardening.

Things to remember with container gardening is to use a container with drain holes, use a good potting mix (no real soil), fertilize and water often. Select sun-tolerant plants for bright locations and shade-tolerant plants for dark corners.

For information on any of the above points, call University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service at 425-2335.

Mark Keaton is staff chair for Baxter County at UA Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service