

The April HORT REPORT

LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

- Control cedar-apple rust. When the orange jelly galls are visible on Juniper (Cedar), begin treating apple and crabapple trees with fungicide.
- Fire Blight bacterial disease can be controlled at this time.
- Apply fungicide to pine trees at bud break to control Diplodia Tip Blight.
- Apply fungicides for Leaf Spot disease.
- Control Powdery Mildew disease with early detection and regular treatment.
- Most bedding plants, summer flowering bulbs, and annual flower seeds can be planted after danger of frost has passed. This happens around mid-April in most of Oklahoma.
- Let spring flowering bulbs (Daffodils, Tulips, etc.) foliage remain as long as possible before removing. Next year's energy for the bloom comes from this year's foliage die-back.
- Beginning in late April, warm-season grass lawns can be established from sprigs, plugs, or sod.
- Warm-season grasses can be fertilized 3-5 times per season using 1 pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 sq. ft. in each application. Apply 1 pound in April, May, June, August, and September for a high-quality lawn. Always water in nitrate fertilizers.
- Begin mowing warm-season lawns now. Cutting height for Bermuda and Zoysia should be 1 to 1.5 inches high. Mow buffalo at 3 inches high.
- Damage from Spring Dead disease becomes visible in Bermuda grass. Perform practices that promote grass recovery. DO NOT spray fungicides at this time for control.
- Be alert for both insects and predators. Some pests can be handpicked without using pesticides. Do not spray if predators such as lady beetles are present.
- Remove any winter-damaged branches or plants that have not begun to grow by late-April.
- Clean out water garden and prepare for season. Divide and repot water garden plants.
- Begin feeding fish when temperatures are over 50 degrees.

READY OR NOT?

The Old Farmer's Almanac says your soil is ready for planting if it crumbles in your hand when you attempt to form it into a ball. If you can make a ball, it is still too wet.

EARLY RISERS

If you want to fill your gardens with the very "FIRST" flowers that bloom in the spring, try these beauties!

FORSYTHIA (Zone: 4-8)

Cherry yellow flowers along graceful bending branches are a welcome match for spring sunshine. Bees and butterflies zero in on this early nectar source, which blooms best in full sun but can tolerate some shade.

WHY WE LOVE IT: Forsythia shrubs fit in any garden space. The dwarf varieties range from 2 feet tall and wide, and some varieties reach up to 10 feet tall and wide.



FLOWERING QUINCE (Zone: 4-8)

This thorny shrub is an excellent low-maintenance border option. Plant in full sun to ensure bountiful blossoms as winter finally gives away to warmer days. Quince flowers on OLD growth, so prune it in spring after it finishes blooming.

WHY WE LOVE IT: The red, pink, or white flowers are followed by small, hard yellow-green fruits that make delicious preserves and jellies.



LENGEN ROSE (Zone: 4-9)

This sweet, simple-care favorite is perfect for the shadier spaces in your garden. Over time, this prolific self-seeder colonizes an area with robust evergreen foliage that's a crowd pleaser all year long.

WHY WE LOVE IT: There are many striking colors to choose from!



FLOWERS TO ATTRACT THE POLLINATORS!

*TRIPLE ATTRACTION ...traits that appeal to the BIG 3: BIRDS, BUTTERFLIES AND BEES!
These powerhouse bloomers are top options for a wildlife friendly garden. From easy-to-grow annuals to hardworking perennials, there is something for every landscape.*



COSMOS (Annual)

Bees and butterflies can't resist these colorful pin-wheel shaped blossoms with feathery foliage. Grow single or double cultivars of this easy-going bloomer in full sun and you'll have flowers and seeds for the birds from summer through late fall. Plants range from 1-6 feet tall. They come in many colors and a package of seed planted in late May goes along way! These kinds of flowers, with the petals in a circle around the center nectar feeding station, are perfect for the butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees!



ZINNIA (Annual)

Zinnia is a hummingbird and butterfly garden GO-TO! This annual is bee friendly too, attracting all bees including Honeybees. They range in size from dwarf to 3 feet tall and will bloom through the hottest of summer and until the first frost. They are very drought tolerant and are available in many colors. Choose seeds or live plants, you can't go wrong with Zinnia!



VERBENA (Annual)

Expect summer long color from these attractive balloon-type blossoms. Each floret has many tubular blooms. In my world, we call these MULTI-FEEDING STATIONS. Meaning, when the hummingbirds come to eat the nectar, they will have many stations from which to feed. When they stay in place to feed, it gives you a better chance to watch the action in progress. Verbena does well in a container so use it to lure pollinators into

small spaces. There are many colors to choose from and the RED will always be my favorite. My Grandma always had these planted by the back doorsteps... PRECIOUS MEMORIES OF MY CHILDHOOD.

BLACK-EYED SUSAN (*Perennial*)

AKA: RUDEBECKIA (Zone: 3-9)

Lovely as a background planting or in a wildflower garden, Black-eyed Susan also shines when grouped with other “daisy shaped” flowers. Plants range from 1-6 feet tall offering a big visual impact in any size yard. Butterflies appreciate the landing pad blooms provide, bees flock to the bright yellow color, and birds love the late-fall seed heads.



BEE BALM (*Perennial*)

AKA: MONARDA (Zone: 3-9)

This unusual beauty grows up to 4 feet tall and starts flowering by mid-summer, inviting hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees to your flower garden. Plants come in hues of pink, red, white, and purple. This is one of my FAVORITE HUMMINGBIRD attractions! It comes in dwarf varieties, which work well in container gardening. These strong perennials are very drought tolerant, and it seems the hotter it gets, the more they love it... my kind of plant!



AGASTACHE (*Perennial*)

AKA: HUMMINGBIRD MINT (Zone: 4-11)

Bushy and studded with large cone-shaped blooms from mid-to late summer, Agastache is a favorite of HUMMINGBIRDS, butterflies, and bees. Flowers spire in pink, orange, yellow, blue, or violet, reach 2-6 feet high, and are VERY FRAGRANT! Agastache thrives in full sun and in well-draining soil. This beauty is at its best in the hottest of summer heat and was voted HERB OF THE YEAR IN 2019.



CONEFLOWER (*Perennial*)

AKA: *ECHINACEA* (*Zone: 3-9*)

Birds, bees, and butterflies, such as Fritillaries, absolutely love this perennial! You'll watch songbirds pause to nibble the seeds, and you'll see butterflies and hummers stop to sip the nectar into fall. In winter, the remaining seed heads are an interesting garden focal point. They come in many colors and require full sun to perform best. They love the heat and are very drought tolerant.



BLAZING STAR (*Perennial*)

AKA: *LIATRIS* (*Zone: 3-9*)

The nectar of this spiky plant is a BUTTERFLY FAVORITE, especially when it comes to the Silver-Spotted Skipper. After the flowers fade, birds favor the seeds, which are easy to pick out in the garden. Blazing Star reaches up to 6 feet tall, but some types like Kobold, are much shorter, measuring only about 18 inches. There are several colors to choose from. This drought tolerant, easy-care plant, is a real showstopper!



LET'S TAKE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

I RECOMMEND... **ORNAMENTAL GRASSES** for a **BIG IMPACT!**

Add height, texture, and movement to your landscape with show stopping ornamentals. Maiden grasses are easy to grow and bring your backyard to life while creating interest year-round. Ornamental grasses are a gardener's best friend. They are the unsung hero of the garden and perform their role without complaint. They withstand the harshest drought conditions and don't need much other than a trim in the spring. Thanks to a range of sizes, there's an ornamental grass for every purpose – from 8-inch-tall dwarf specimens for containers, to 12-foot-tall giants that provide privacy. Each has its own brand of beauty, based on shape, color, texture, and flower. As a

bonus, grasses provide seed and nesting material for birds, making your garden even more wild-life friendly.

WHY USE ORNAMENTAL GRASSES?

There are practical reasons for adding ornamental grasses to borders.

WARM-SEASON OR COOL-SEASON GRASSES? WARM-SEASON GRASSES: Wait until the weather starts warming up and they are ideal for filling in spaces after spring bulbs and early flowering perennials have died back. COOL-SEASON GRASSES: Take over once fall blooming has ceased and may remain evergreen throughout winter.

COLOR: Ornamental grasses add color and year-around interest to the border. Some are evergreen, some are variegated with gold or white. Some varieties offer shades of blue and silver, while others are tinged in red or purple. BLUE FESCUE is a low growing, cool-season, clump forming grass with silvery-blue foliage. Because of its small size, it is most often used as edging or planted in masses as ground cover. On the other hand, if you are looking for vibrant color in the border, JAPANESE BLOOD GRASS has upright, green foliage flushed with dark red. The vivid red color is at its best in autumn.

SEASONAL INTERESTS: Ornamental grasses also provide borders with unending interest throughout the seasons. While they generally reach their peak in fall, they can also add texture, volume, and color to the winter garden. Many late season grasses develop seed heads after their flowers have faded, and both seed head and plumes can add interest throughout winter. Their foliage turns russet to golden-brown. Berries also ripen in the fall and supply additional color and interest with shades of red, purple, and yellow.

VARIOUS TYPES & SIZES: They come in a range of sizes, from dwarf and low growing, to medium and giant sized.

CHOOSING AN ORNAMENTAL GRASS FOR YOU

When choosing ornamental grasses, you should become familiar with their growing requirements as well as their characteristics. Most adapt easily and require well drained soil. Most are well suited to full sun, but many varieties thrive in shade. Some grasses can even be integrated into bog or water gardens, while others prefer heat, thriving in drought like conditions.

HERE ARE WAYS GRASSES WORK FOR YOU:

- CREATE SCREENING & PRIVACY – Taller grasses are ideal as hedges to provide privacy or hide an unsightly view. Space them according to plant tag recommendations, then stand back and watch them take off.
- TRY – 6-foot-tall Native Switchgrass or 10-foot-tall Pampas Grass.

LET'S TALK PLANT TAGS

Plants and their needs... **ANNUAL** or **PERENNIAL**? Do you know the difference?

Let's go over the basics on reading the fine print to see if a plant will thrive in your garden. Success is in the details. A plant may look beautiful at the garden center, but make sure it is right for you before you take it home. Look at the light requirements, growing zone, bloom time and size. Many tags include tips to keep the plant healthy and let you know how much maintenance is required.

ANNUAL OR PERENNIAL? Annual will live only (1) one growing season, usually spring – fall. These need to be planted each year. Perennial will come back each year. **AFTER ESTABLISHING** its ROOT SYSTEM, which usually takes (3) three years.

When establishing a new root system remember these rules:

- 1st Year – They SLEEP... while developing their root system.
- 2nd Year – They CREEP... usually doubling in size and blooming.
- 3rd Year – They LEAP... will grow to full mature size and establish blooming patterns.

WHAT DOES ZONE MEAN? Double check that the plant is hardy in your zone. Perennials within your zone are more likely to survive winter outside. Canadian County is ZONE 7. Always choose plants for zones 4,5,6, & 7 to be considered perennial for Canadian County.

***NOTE: If the tag says ZONE 9, IT WOULD BE COLD HARDY TO ONLY 20–30 DEGREES.** This plant would need to be potted and brought into shelter to over-winter then placed back out in late spring when temperatures do not drop below 60 degrees at night.

GROWING HEIGHT REQUIREMENTS: Pay attention to the size of the mature plant and look at the placement recommendation to make sure it has room to grow.

LIGHT REQUIREMENTS: Does it need SUN OR SHADE?

- FULL SUN – Plant needs 6+ hours of full direct sun for plant to grow to full potential colors and blooms. Less sun will give less blooms. Plant will grow but will not bloom correctly and colors will be less vibrant.
- PARTIAL SUN – Plant needs 3–6 hours of sun per day. More sun will give vibrant colors to foliage.
- SHADE – Partial sun to no full sun is required. Some plants will bloom in the shade!

WATERING REQUIREMENTS: Pay attention to specifics on tag and remember to plant groups with like requirements.

***NOTE: Every tag is a little different. If you have questions, use the botanical name to find more info online.**