



## Gardening Jobs in April

- Warmer, longer days and April showers means that your garden will be changing all the time. Make sure that you take time to have a walk around every day or two so that you can enjoy the garden as it bursts into life and also keep on top of any problem areas before things get too far advanced.
- Now is the time to plant new shrubs, perennials, alpines and evergreen hedging. Make sure that you prepare the planting hole well with good compost and slow release plant food as appropriate. Water well after planting and continue watering if we have a dry spell. This is especially important for evergreens as they won't show signs of die-back until it's too late to prevent damage.
- Prune shrubs that have finished flowering such as forsythia, winter flowering jasmine etc. Give them a feed after pruning – use a slow release food such as fish, blood & bone, Growmore or pelleted poultry manure.
- The daffodils can be battered by heavy winds and rain but healthy ones will bounce back better. Dead head them regularly but let the leaves die back naturally (don't tie them in knots) for around 8 weeks before cutting back. You can apply a liquid plant food such as Phostrogen or Miracle Gro as the leaves die back to improve flowering next year.
- Climbers such as clematis will be putting on new growth now so start tying them in to support wire / trellis etc. Be careful as the new shoots will be brittle but by training them now you will get a better display. Give them a general feed too.
- Potatoes – earth up first earlies as the growth comes through. Second earlies should be planted now with main crop in by the end of the month.
- Seed sowing: continue to sow lettuce, salad leaves, radish, turnips, beetroot, salad onions and broad beans. Start your peas and carrots off now too. To avoid attacks by the dreaded carrot root fly sow carrots sparingly so you won't have to thin them too much. It's also a good idea to cover them with fleece or mesh to protect the young plants. Try planting garlic or onions along side as the carrot root fly is attracted by the smell carrots and the companion plants can mask it.
- Sow your winter brassicas such as Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli. These can be sown as seed in a prepared bed or planted as young plants. Use cabbage collars around young plants to protect from cabbage root fly.
- Feed blackcurrants, blackberries and other berries with Growmore or similar plant food. Apply mulch around the base of the plants to preserve moisture.
- If you have a greenhouse or polytunnel then continue to sow tomatoes, aubergines, peppers and chillies. Towards the end of the month sow courgettes, squashes, melons and cucumbers in individual pots. If you start them off too soon they risk getting leggy.
- Keep on top of the weeding – little and often is a good technique rather than leaving an area to become overtaken by weeds.
- The grass has just started to grow so why not give your lawn a treat with an application of lawn food. If you have weeds and mosses growing in the lawn then use a combined weed, feed and moss-killer at the application rates advised on the product.
- Garden pests will be making an appearance now – keep an eye on new growth on roses which is particularly attractive to greenfly. Slugs and snails should be dealt with using slug pellets, traps or the good old fashioned fingers by torchlight technique.

- Pots, containers and baskets: Re-pot any permanent container plants that are pot-bound, using fresh compost appropriate to the type of plant. If they are too big to move then remove the top 2 to 3 inches of compost top dress with fresh compost accompanied by the appropriate feed. Summer bedding plants have started to arrive in the garden centre now so baskets and containers can be re-planted ready for a fine display in summer. However, bedding plants are tender so keep them frost free until the end of May.

*This information is intended for guidance purposes only. We are happy to give help and advice on most gardening topics at the garden centre.*

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