

Garden Club Horticultural Hints

May 2022
Everything's blooming at once!



Photo credit: Garden Betty

If you can't fence your property, deter deer and rabbits using products that make your plants unpalatable.

After spring bulbs pass their bloom, deadhead spent flowers and then **allow foliage to yellow** and 'ripen' before being removed. It's important because the foliage is responsible for passing the nutrients down into the bulb that will allow it to produce a new flower next year. Hide the foliage by growing perennials and annuals around it. When the foliage turns brown, cut it at ground level, secure in the knowledge that your favorite spring bulbs will return in 2023.

Protect your tender plants against deer. Those hostas and other perennials that are just emerging for their new season are taste treats for deer, rabbits, and other herbivores. Your best bet to protect your investment in those plants is to make them taste terrible. There are several commercially available preparations (Bobbex and Liquid Fence are two examples) that consist of putrefied eggs, mint oil, garlic, and other ingredients that deer and rabbits find noxious. These preparations are applied using a home sprayer. A spraying of all new foliage is best when no rain is in the immediate forecast. For an hour or two, your yard will smell terrible. Once the sprays dry, humans no longer detect them but deer and rabbits avoid treated plants for up to a month.



Vegetable gardens. If you don't have beets, spinach, lettuce, swiss chard in the ground, do it immediately. When planting members of the cole family such as cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower, add lime to the soil because the resulting higher pH (more alkaline soil) inhibits soil-borne diseases that can remain in the ground for up to seven years after first appearing and can devastate cole crops



Early May is the right time for a second application of **horticultural oil** to manage pests on trees and shrubs. Horticultural oil is not a pesticide — it works by smothering eggs so they cannot hatch

May is the month to fertilize your perennials.

They're entering their growth cycle for their late spring and summer displays, and the fertilizer 'boost' will ensure a long and colorful display as you add the nutrients to bolster both root and flower production. But remember: when applying fertilizer, *less is best*.



Plant now to allow new additions to establish roots before summer's heat

Shrubs, trees, and certain perennials are fine to plant now. Anything that can survive our winters should be going into the ground this month. The earlier you get trees and shrubs in, the longer they have to establish their roots before the heat of summer takes hold. Perennials also benefit from time to settle into their new home. And, because rainfall so far this season is several inches below normal, it is vital your plants get adequate water when there are no watering restrictions.

It's tick season. Whenever you go out to garden, take a few seconds to spray *all* your clothing – not just below the knees, but on shirts and elsewhere – to deter ticks that want to jump on anything warm-blooded for their next meal. Use sprays that specify use of EPA-registered tick repellent ingredients. These include DEET, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and PMD.



Soil and Plant Nutrient Testing Laboratory
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Soil Test Report

Prepared For:
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Sample Information:
Sample ID:
Order Number: 53781
Lab Number: S210329-133
Area Sampled: 7000 sq ft
Received: 3/29/2022
Reported: 4/14/2022

Results

Analysis	Value Found	Optimum Range	Analysis	Value Found	Optimum Range
Soil pH (1:1, H2O)	6.5		Cation Exch. Capacity, meq/100g	26.1	
Modified Morgan extractable, ppm			Exch. Acidity, meq/100g	5.8	
Macronutrients			Base Saturation, %		
Phosphorus (P)	13	4-14	Calcium Base Saturation	63	50-80
Potassium (K)	113	100-160	Magnesium Base Saturation	13	10-30
Calcium (Ca)	1207	1000-1500	Potassium Base Saturation	1	2.0-7.0
Magnesium (Mg)	76	50-120	Soil Density, g/cc	0.87	
Sulfur (S)	29.0	>10	Optional tests		
Micronutrients *			Soil Organic Matter (LOI), %	16.0	
Boron (B)	0.9	0.1-0.5			
Manganese (Mn)	6.0	1.1-6.3			
Zinc (Zn)	7.6	1.0-7.6			
Copper (Cu)	0.1	0.3-0.6			
Iron (Fe)	4.4	2.7-9.4			
Aluminum (Al)	17	<75			
Lead (Pb)	1.4	<22			

* Micronutrient deficiencies rarely occur in New England soils; therefore, an Optimum Range has never been defined. Values provided represent the normal range found in soils and are for reference only.

Soil Test Interpretation

Nutrient	Very Low	Low	Optimum	Above Optimum
Phosphorus (P):	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Potassium (K):	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Calcium (Ca):	██████████	██████████	██████████	
Magnesium (Mg):	██████████	██████████	██████████	

A UMass soil test offers a wealth of unbiased information at a low price

Resist the temptation to feed your lawn repeatedly. Instead of purchasing multi-step 'programs', find out what your lawn really needs with a reasonably-priced, highly accurate, and unbiased soil test from <https://ag.umass.edu/services/soil-plant-nutrient-testing-laboratory/ordering-information-forms>. Healthy lawns need a large population of beneficial insects, bacteria and microbes to make nutrients available to the roots. Lawn insecticides indiscriminately kill these good guys along with the bad so reconsider annual applications of "insect control."



Written and created by Betty Sanders. For more horticultural suggestions for May and throughout the year, please visit www.BettyOnGardening.com