

It's easy being green
Nurseries prepare for the bloom

By Daniel Wells & Ryan Cook

Greeson oversees production for Natorp's and he's been working since October, starting new plants that will be ready this spring. Greeson and gardening experts at other greenhouses in the county urged homeowners to begin their planning now.

Planning

"The two biggest things people can be doing now are thinking about are they going to add to their landscape and will they do it themselves, and deciding on a budget," said Darlene Cooper of Sharon Nursery in Mainville.

Having a plan, you might end up buying an eye-catching flower, that's not suited for your soil or the amount of sunlight your flowers beds get.

Dan Druffel, owner of Double D Plant Ranch in Morrow, recommended booking a landscaper early. Waiting until spring to make an appointment can be detrimental because most landscapers will be booked and unable to help until later into the season, Druffel said.

Although there's not a lot that can be done until the ground thaws, Cassie Neutzling of Greenfield Nursery in Mainville said, "A good way to add early color is to plant in containers. These can be easily protected if cold weather threatens."

Pruning

Ohio State Extension Educator Greg Meyer said late winter and early spring are good times to prune many trees and shrubs, which are at low stress right now.

As they begin to grow and insect populations and temperatures increase, pruning can be harmful to some plants.

"You've got to know what plant you're dealing with and what options you have for pruning," Meyer said.

Some plants, like roses, flower on the old wood.

"If you prune them too quick you won't have any flowers," Meyer said. Meyer said informational sheets on pruning for a wide variety of plants are available online at ohioline.osu.edu.

"Particularly after the winter we've just had you're going to have to prune out cracked and damaged limbs," Meyer said

Soil

It's a good idea to get a soil analysis done to see if your garden can support the plants you have planned for the spring.

One tablespoon of healthy soil should contain as many as nine billion live microorganisms, according to Marvin Duren, owner of Marvin's Organic Gardens on U.S.42.

Duren recommends using yard debris left from the winter to begin a compost heap, which can be used to improve soil quality and reduce soil compaction.

"It's free if you're willing to go out and gather other people's waste," Duren said.

He also recommends adding mycorrhizal fungi, which can be purchased at local garden centers, to your soil.

The fungi live form a mutually beneficial relationship with plants, expanding their root systems, making them more resistant to drought and toxins such as heavy metals. In return the plants provide the fungi the carbohydrates they need to survive.



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