

# Horticulture Learn & Grow

[www.extension.uiuc.edu/champaign](http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/champaign)

## Landscape Maintenance Calendar

Times listed are approximate for central Illinois. For northern Illinois - add two weeks and southern Illinois - subtract two weeks. For more specifics, check with your local U of I Extension Office. Always read and follow all pesticide label directions.

### January

#### Flowers

- Use branches from Christmas trees to mulch perennial flowers.
- Start seeds indoors for pansies, begonias and geraniums.

#### Lawns

- Research alternatives to turf in shady areas. Consider shade-loving perennials or ground covers.

#### Trees/Shrubs

- Check plants for rodent and deer damage. Erect barriers where needed. Rabbits leave a clean 45-degree angle cut. Deer leave a ragged edge.
- Promptly remove any branches split from ice and snow to prevent further damage.

#### General

- Mix sand with sidewalk salt to reduce the amount of salt needed. Try to keep salt off of landscape plants.
- Order nursery catalogs.

### February

#### Flowers

- Start tuberous begonias from tubers.

#### Lawns

- Get lawn mower ready. Sharpen blades, change oil and clean air filter.

#### Tree/Shrubs

- Force branches of forsythia, flowering quince and pussy willow. Select stems with plump buds. Place in container with warm water.
- Prune trees and summer flowering shrubs while still dormant. Many shrubs can be reduced in size by using renewal or heading back methods. Sterilize tools in between each cut with 10% bleach when pruning diseased plants. Summer flowering shrubs bloom on new wood after mid June.
- If needed, rejuvenate shrubs such as Anthony Waterer spirea, honeysuckle and privet by cutting stems down to 4 to 6 inches.
- Inspect trees with a past history of tent caterpillar. Look for dark brown or gray egg masses that encircle the twig. Destroy by pruning or scratching off with thumbnail.

#### General

- Order seeds and garden plants.

### March

#### Flowers

- Clean up any plant debris that wasn't removed last fall. Gradually pull back mulch.
- Cut back ornamental grasses to within a few inches of ground before growth starts.



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# Horticulture Learn & Grow



## (March Continued)

### Lawns

- Actively growing broadleaf weeds can be treated with postemergence herbicides.
- Rake up any twigs and debris.
- Establish lawns by sod throughout season as long as adequate water is available.
- Establish or renovate turf by seed. Prepare soil properly and get good seed to soil contact. Select turf mixes and blends appropriate to the site and to maintenance practices. Southern Illinois – March; Central Illinois – March 15-April 15; Northern Illinois – April.

### Trees/Shrubs

- Finish pruning trees and summer flowering shrubs.
- Transplant or plant trees and shrubs. Plants preferring spring transplant over fall include most oak, birch, baldcypress, dogwood and magnolia.
- Apply systemic imidacloprid insecticide to susceptible, high profile plants such as linden trees and roses for control of Japanese beetles. Read and follow all directions.

### General

- Scout late March and into April for winter annual weeds such as henbit, chickweed and creeping speedwell. Remove before flowering or seed set.

## April

### Flowers

- Begin planting and dividing most perennials except bearded iris and peony.
- Plant pansies and hardy annuals.
- Finish pulling back mulch from around perennials and roses.
- Prune summer and fall blooming clematis.
- Spray emerging peonies with fungicide if diseases such as botrytis have been a problem in the past.
- Plant bare root plants before they leaf out.

### Lawn

- Mow lawn to 2 inches removing no more than 1/3 of leaf blade at any one mowing.
- Establish or renovate turf by seed or sod. Prepare soil properly and get good seed to soil contact. Select turf mixes and blends appropriate to the site and to maintenance practices. Northern Illinois – April; Central Illinois – March 15-April 15; Southern Illinois – March.
- Apply preemergence crabgrass control to areas with past history of annual grassy weeds when the soil temperatures reach 55 degrees F for at least three consecutive days (generally late April). Do not reseed turf at the same time unless siduron is used as the herbicide.
- Use postemergence herbicides for actively growing broadleaf weeds as necessary. Consider spot treatment rather than complete lawn application.
- Reduce thatch if more than .5 inch by using core aerifiers or vertical mowers.
- Core aerifiers may be used to reduce soil compaction and poor soil drainage.

### Trees/Shrubs

- Continue planting trees and shrubs.
- Prune spring flowering shrubs such as forsythia soon after bloom. Use renewal pruning by removing oldest stems at soil level. Spring flowering shrubs bloom on old wood before mid June.
- Examine trees and shrubs for winter injury. Prune out and remove all dead and diseased wood.
- Fertilize if not done in fall and if soil test or reduced growth indicates need.
- Scout for spider mite damage on spruce. Shake needles over white paper.
- Begin fungicide treatments for apple scab on crabapples if it has been a problem in the past. Consider replacing trees with disease resistant cultivars.



(April Continued)

## General

- Average last frost date is approximately April 21. For your area, check with your local U of I Extension. Or <http://www.sws.uiuc.edu/atmos/statecli/Mapsv2/mapsv2.htm> for map.

## May

### Flowers

- Remove spent flowers on spring flowering bulbs but wait until foliage ripens naturally before removing it.
- Plant tender annuals after the last expected frost date, approximately May 15.
- Set flower supports early. Let plants grow through them.
- Plant tropical water lilies and lotus when water temperature is over 55 degrees F.
- Over-wintered tender annuals or tropicals such as hibiscus, gardenia, mandevilla and geranium may be pruned, cleaned, fertilized and gradually introduced to a protected location outdoors once night temperatures reach 50 degrees F.
- Begin pinching top 1-2 inches of new growth on chrysanthemums to encourage full bushy plants. Stop pinching in early July.
- Severely prune sage, butterfly bush, Russian sage and *Caryopteris* to stimulate growth. Wait until lavender shows new growth before pruning off winter-killed stems.
- With sharp spade, edge flower beds.

### Lawns

- Fertilize in early May with one pound of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. Slow release nitrogen forms are preferred.
- Continue postemergence herbicide treatment for broadleaf weeds if necessary.

### Trees/Shrubs

- Pinch azalea and rhododendron blossoms as they fade.
- Fertilize azaleas after bloom. Use fertilizer for acid-loving plants.
- Prune spring flowering shrubs such as lilac, weigela, viburnum and flowering almond soon after bloom using renewal method.
- Monitor pines especially scotch and mugho for caterpillar-like sawfly larvae on new shoots.
- Finish pruning spring flowering shrubs such as lilac and viburnum soon after flowering.

### General

- Do not irrigate late in afternoon. Foliage should be dry going into evening.
- Practice good sanitation. Remove and destroy infected leaves.
- Mulch with organic mulches to reduce weeding and conserve moisture.

## June

### Flowers

- Deadhead flowers to encourage additional blooming, reduce reseeding and to reduce disease.
- Trim back some perennials such as aster and beebalm to lessen need for staking and delay or stagger bloom times.
- Monitor roses for black spot fungal disease. Remove and destroy infected leaves.

### Lawn

- Mow and water as necessary.
- Fertilize in mid-June if making 4 applications per year and only if adequate water will be supplied in summer. Slow-release nitrogen forms are preferred.



(June Continued)

- Continue postemergence herbicide treatment for weeds if necessary.
- Establish or renovate lawn with sod only.

## Tree/Shrubs

- Trim pine candles if reduction of growth is needed.
- South of interstate I-80, monitor for bagworms feeding on plants especially junipers, arborvitae and spruce.
- Mulch with organic mulches to at least the drip line of the tree.

## General

- Remove any stagnant water to avoid mosquito problems. Consider flowerpots, gutters and birdbaths.

## July

### Flowers

- Fertilize container plantings.
- Continue deadheading.
- Renew organic mulches.

### Lawn

- Mow and water as necessary. Raise mowing height to 2 ½-3 inches as temperatures exceed 85 degrees F.
- Decide if lawn will be irrigated adequately to keep it from going dormant. Do not bring cool season grasses in and out of dormancy by watering sporadically.
- Treat for grubs depending on product and past pest history.

### Trees/Shrubs

- Water newly planted trees and shrubs.
- Scout for fall webworm nest building near ends of branches.

### General

- Monitor for insects and diseases. Early management is best. Check with your local U of I Extension office for identification and management information.
- Don't let weeds go to seed. "A year of seeding equals 7 years weeding."
- Water plants if not receiving at least one inch of water per week. Water deeply and thoroughly. Avoid light sprinkling.

## August

### Flowers

- Divide bearded iris. Divide every 3 to 5 years. Check rhizomes for iris borer caterpillars.
- Continue deadheading.
- Do not fertilize roses after August 15.
- Order spring flowering bulbs for October planting.

### Lawn

- Scout for grubs. Peel back sod. More than 8 grubs per square foot can cause wilt or death of turf.
- Establish or renovate turf by seed (best time). Prepare soil properly and get good seed to soil contact. Select turf mixes and blends appropriate to the site and to maintenance practices. Northern Illinois – August 15- September 7; Central Illinois – August 15 – September 15; Southern Illinois – September.

### Trees/Shrubs

- Continue watering as needed.

### General

- Continue watering, weeding and pest monitoring.



## September

### Flowers

- Transplant and divide most perennials. Best time for peonies.
- Move decorative containers into a protected area to prevent winter damage.

### Lawn

- Mow and water as necessary. Mowing height may be lowered to 2 inches as temperature decreases.
- Fertilize in early September. This is the most important application of the year.
- Reseed bare or thin areas with improved cultivars. Consider renting a slit seeder.
- Reduce thatch if more than .5 inch by using core aerifiers or vertical mowers.
- Core aerifiers may be used to reduce soil compaction.
- Establish turf by seed (best time). Prepare soil properly and get good seed to soil contact. Select turf mixes and blends appropriate to the site and to maintenance practices. Northern Illinois – August 15-September 7; Central Illinois – August 15 – September 15; Southern Illinois – September.

### Trees/Shrubs

- Plant most trees and shrubs. Be sure not to plant too deep. Check for trunk flare.
- Water trees and shrubs. Plants, especially evergreens, should be well hydrated entering winter.

### General

- Get soil tested at local soil lab. If needed, add lime to raise pH or sulfur to lower pH.

## October

### Flowers

- Dig tender bulbs such as dahlias, caladiums, cannas and gladiolus after the first frost. Do not wait until freezing damages stems. Cure in warm room then store at approximately 55 degrees F.
- Plant spring flowering bulbs such as tulip, daffodil and crocus.
- Wait until ground freezes before mulching.
- Remove old stems of perennials if diseases were a problem. Undiseased stems may be left for winter interest and wildlife use.
- Stop deadheading roses and let them form hips.

### Lawn

- Mow as necessary. Small layers of leaves can be mowed.
- Use postemergence herbicides for cool season annual and perennial broadleaf weeds as necessary. This is the preferred time for treatment. Consider spot treatment rather than complete lawn application.
- Irrigate if necessary. Turf should be well-hydrated entering winter.

### Trees/Shrubs

- Transplant trees/shrubs when dormant.
- Pine trees begin to drop their older interior needles. It is a natural occurrence.
- Protect young plants from rabbits and rodents by using cylinders of chicken wire or hardware cloth.
- Continue watering evergreens if rainfall is not adequate.

### General

- Average first frost date is approximately October 15. For your area, check with your local U of I Extension. Or <http://www.sws.uiuc.edu/atmos/statecli/Mapsv2/mapsv2.htm> for map.



## November

### Flowers

- Protect grafted roses. Hill 10 to 12 inches of well-drained soil over crown. Once soil is frozen, add 10 to 12 inches of shredded leaves.

### Lawn

- Continue mowing as long as turf is growing.
- Apply winterizer fertilizer to turf after last mowing of the season, usually around Thanksgiving holiday. Quick-release nitrogen forms may be used.

### Trees/Shrubs

- Fertilize if not done in spring and if soil test or reduced growth indicates need. Should not exceed 2-2 1/2 pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.
- Apply anti-desiccants to evergreens and broadleaf evergreens when temperatures are above freezing.

### General

- Oil and repair tools and store in dry place.

## December

### Flowers

- Apply non-packing mulch such as shredded leaves, pine needles or evergreen boughs to ground covers or perennials.

### Lawns

- Avoid walking on frozen grass. This can damage crowns and create unwanted paths.
- Winterize lawn mower.

### Trees/Shrubs

- Using an upward sweep with a broom gently remove snow from evergreens especially arborvitae if branches are severely bending.

### General

- Curl up with garden catalogs and plan for next year.