

Spring into the growing season

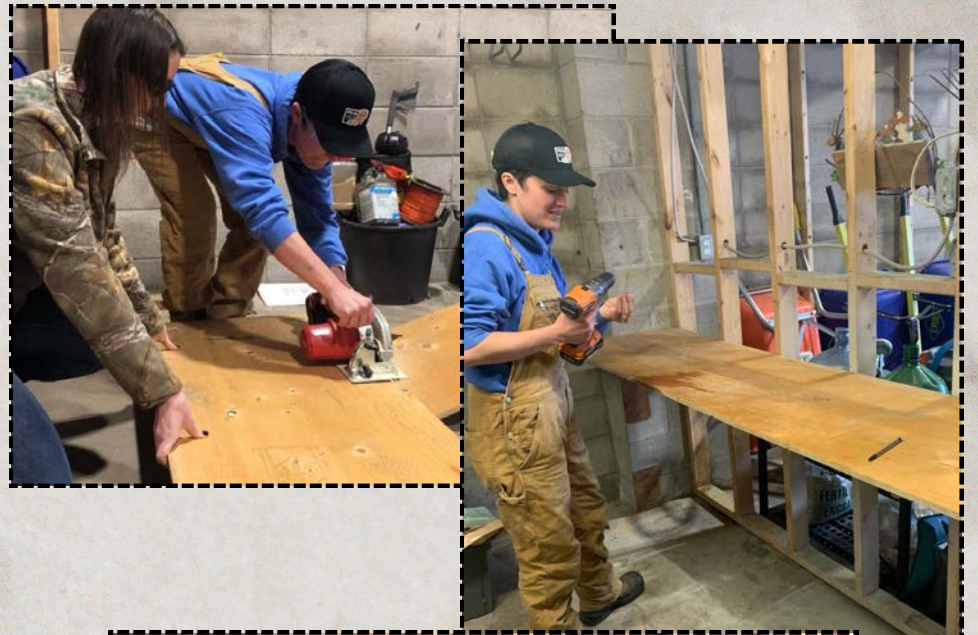
After much anticipation and wondering whether winter was ever going to arrive, we are now hitting the ground running with Spring!

Garden Angels has been working hard on getting the shop ready for the season and getting out to greet our first customers.

This monthly newsletter is intended to be a quick digestible snapshot for the month, highlighting garden practices, showcasing plants, and providing suggestions on any services that will help create your dream outdoor space.

Stay Tuned.

Garden Angels



What's the dirt this month?

2024 Frost Date Estimates for St. Catharines

Average last spring frost - April 28

Average first fall frost - October 12

Growing season - 166 Days

The frost dates are only an estimate based on historical climate data and are not set in stone. The probability of a frost occurring after the spring frost date or before the fall frost date is 30%, which means there is still a chance of frost occurring before or after the given dates!

2024 Total Solar Eclipse

On April 8, 2024, a total solar eclipse (path of totality - where the moon's shadow completely covers the sun) will cross North America, passing over Mexico, United States, and Canada. For St. Catharines:

Begins: Mon, Apr 8, 2024 at 2:04 pm

Maximum (Totality): Mon, Apr 8, 2024 at 3:19 pm

Ends: Mon, Apr 8, 2024 at 4:31 pm

It is not safe to look directly at the sun without specialized eye protection for solar viewing. Use only ISO-certified eclipse glasses meeting ISO 12312-2 standards.

Ticks, ticks, ticks

Be sure to do a full body scan for ticks after being outdoors. Removing attached ticks as soon as possible reduces the chance of infection. Infected blacklegged ticks need to be attached for at least 24 hours in order to transmit the bacteria that causes Lyme disease.

- Use clean, fine-point tweezers to grasp the head as close to the skin as possible and slowly pull straight out. Try not to twist or squeeze the tick. Ticks firmly attach their mouthparts into the skin requiring slow but firm traction to remove them

Symptoms of lyme disease? Bullseye rash, fever, fatigue, headache, muscle and joint pain, swollen lymph nodes

Prevention?

Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellent external icon containing DEET, picaridin, IR3535, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus (OLE), para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone.



5 easy steps for seed starting

Timing. Check seed packet to determine best time to start based on last frost date. Some seeds are best started outdoors and will specify as "direct sow".

Planting. Some seeds require light for germination and should be sprinkled on the soil surface. Other seeds may need to be buried under 1/8- 1 inch of soil. Moisten the newly planted seeds with a mister. To speed germination, cover the pots with plastic wrap or a humidity dome that fits over the seed-starting tray.

Watering. As the seedlings grow, use a mister to keep the soil moist but not soggy. Let the soil dry slightly between waterings. Containers with holes on the bottom can be set down in a tray and water can be added to the tray — "bottom watering" is an effective way to keep newly formed roots moist without getting upper leaves wet and risking rot.

Fertilizing. Seeds contain all the energy and nutrients they need to germinate and get going. After the seedlings get their second set of leaves ("true leaves") you can begin to feed it regularly with an organic liquid fertilizer.

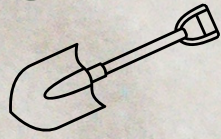
Prepping for the great outdoors. It's not a good idea to move your seedlings directly from the protected environment of your home into the garden; they need a gradual transition. About a week before you plan to set the seedlings into the garden, place them in a protected spot outdoors (partly shaded, out of the wind) for a few hours, bringing them in at night. Gradually, over the course of a week or 10 days, expose them to more and more sunshine and wind.



Diggin' for laughs

Why are waterbeds so bouncy?

They're filled with spring water.



What did the dirt say to the rain?

You'd better cut it out, or my name will be mud!

How do brand-new spring flowers greet each other?

"Hey, bud!"

I just opened a flower shop. Business is blooming.

Should I plant flowers in April?

May as well!

What did the tree say during springtime?

"Well, this is a re-leaf!"

Trivia

1. How many eyes does a bee have?
2. Which country is known as the Land of the Rising Sun?
3. Which bone are babies born without?
4. What is the name of the scale used to measure spiciness of peppers?
5. What is the largest island in the world?
6. What continent do açai berries grow on?
7. What is the only food that can never go bad?
8. Where is the coldest place on Earth?

1. Five, 2. Japan, 3. Kneecap, 4. Scoville 5. Greenland, 6. South America, 7. Honey, 8. Eastern Antarctic Plateau

Get your soil ready for planting



Soil Type

Soil composition plays a vital role in the survival of your plants, allowing good drainage, aeration and nutrient retention. The ideal soil type is called loam, which is typically made up of equal parts sand and silt, half as much clay. You know you've got loamy soil that's good and fertile when it crumbles easily in your hand, but won't ball up when you grab a handful.

pH Levels

pH is the measure of the soil's acidity or alkalinity. A pH scale runs from 0 to 14, with 7.0 being considered "neutral." Any number below 7.0 is considered acidic and anything above is alkaline.

A pH of 6.5 is just about right for most home gardens, since most plants thrive in the 6.0 to 7.0 (slightly acidic to neutral) range. Some plants (blueberries, azaleas) prefer more acidic soil, while a few (ferns, asparagus) do best in soil that is neutral to slightly alkaline.

Soil Amendment

Turning your soil into loam and balancing pH levels according to your plant requirements is an ongoing process. Implement one or more of the following:

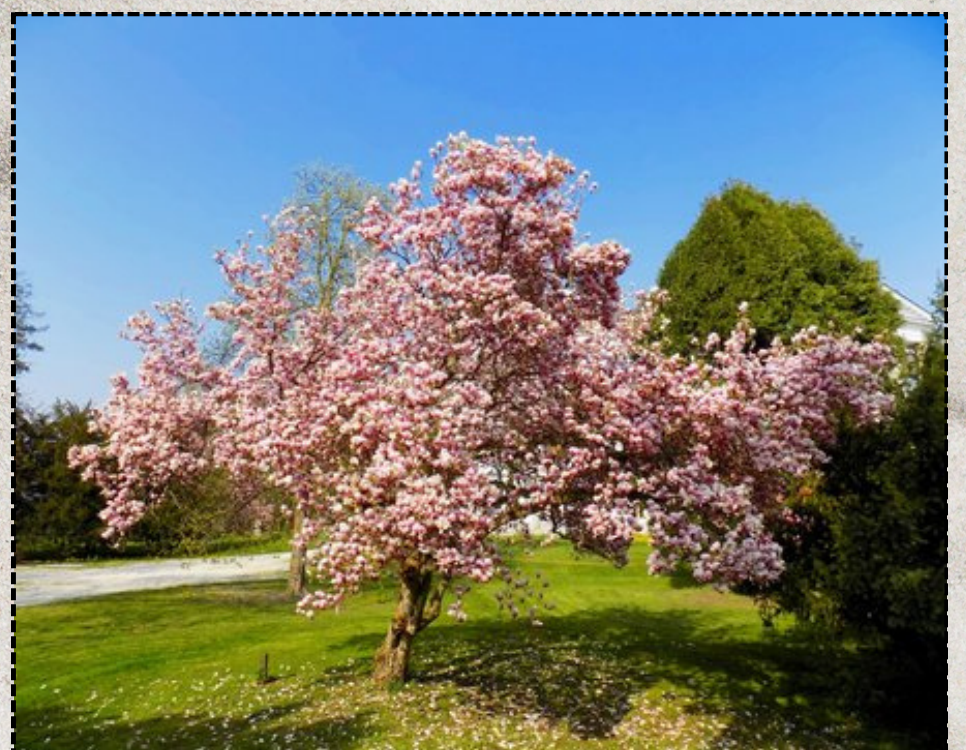
- **Apply organic matter.** Apply two-inch layer to the surface of your garden in late fall after harvest and plants have died. This can be re-worked into the soil in Spring. (or newly added if you missed out in the Fall)
- **Mulch.** Mulch around plants during the summer growing season. Adding two to three inches of mulch will help keep the soil cool and moist during a hot summer and protect your plant's roots while it's decomposing.
- **Cover Crop.** Plant a cover crop solely for the benefit of enriching the soil in the fall. Typical cover crops include annual ryegrass, alfalfa, sweet clover, and buckwheat

Angels' Picks



Princess Victoria Louise

Plant Type	Perennials
Plant Family	Papaveraceae
Genus	Papaver
Common names	Poppy, Oriental Poppy
Exposure	Full Sun
Season of Interest	Spring (Late), Summer (Early)
Height	2' - 3'
Spread	1' - 2'
Soil/pH	Well-drained, Moist/6.5-7.0
Maintenance	Low, drought tolerant, deadhead after flowering



Magnolia Lilliputian

Plant Type	Shrubs, Trees
Plant Family	Magnoliaceae
Genus	Magnolia
Common names	Chinese Magnolia, Saucer
Exposure	Full Sun, Partial Sun
Season of Interest	Spring (Early)
Height	10' - 12'
Spread	6' - 8'
Soil/pH	Well-Drained, Moist/5.0-6.5
Maintenance	Drastic pruning only to be done when young. Later years, remove dead or diseased branches