



# Tsugawa's Garden Tips for April

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**Planting:** Camellias: Plant in an eastern or northern exposure, or under trees where they'll have partial shade. They tend to get leaf burn. Plant with plenty of soil amendments. Gladiolus: Continue planting every 2 weeks if you want continuous summer blooms. Annual Seeds: Try planting asters, cosmos, marigolds, petunias, snapdragons and zinnias. Fuchsias: If you think it is warm enough, put them outside. Cover them if frost is predicted. Pinch back the ends and use the cuttings for rooting new plants. Berries: Plant any berry. NOTE: Do not plant raspberries where tomatoes or any of their relatives have grown. They can harbor a fungus which attacks raspberries. Broccoli: Put out transplants in well-limed soil, 18" apart and in firmly packed soil. Usually wait until daytime is around 50 degrees. To control maggots, put sawdust around plants or use a chemical control. Carrots: If soil is heavy, try a short variety. Baby carrots stay sweet longer and mature faster. Do not put fresh manure on carrots as it tends to make the roots fork. Vegetables: Try early potatoes, bush beans, and short row plantings of other spring crops. As soon as leaves appear on trees, hardy crops can be sown. Tomatoes: Toward the end of the month, try putting a few plants out. Some ideas for growing: Encircle the plants with Wall-o-water. These are connected plastic cylinders that hold water and keep the new plants warm on cool nights. Customers have reported great success using them. We also have customers who use plastic milk jugs with the bottoms cut out. Make sure you leave the lid off the jug.

**Fertilizing:** Fruits: Spread saved wood ashes around fruit trees and other non-acid loving fruits. Then provide potash, which is needed to make fruit sugar. Garden: When possible, till under a light dressing of manure. Don't put on heavy mulch before the soil warms up. Rhododendrons and azaleas: Acid type fertilizer is helpful before blooming. Lawns: Use a complete fertilizer. Peonies and Iris: Work bone meal lightly into the soil: be careful of plants that are still coming up. Spring blooming shrubs: Mulch with compost, or add fertilizer after blooming.

**Pruning:** Evergreens: Prune leggy new growth if you want a bushier plant. Hydrangeas: The variety which blooms on shoots of current season's growth – PeeGee and other summer bloomers – should be pruned. DO NOT prune the usual blue or pink flowering H. macrophyllas (French Hydrangeas) because their flower buds were set last fall. Spring flowering shrubs: For forsythia, flowering quince, abelia, ceanothus, spirea, etc., cut the branches that have bloomed to shape your plant.

**Insect and Disease Control:** Fruit trees: (Not peaches) Spray just before the buds open. If you are using a chemical spray, read the directions on the bottle for the time table and directions. Lime-sulphur sprays will discolor painted buildings, and can damage acid loving plants. DO NOT spray your trees when in full bloom, as this can kill the honey bees which are so necessary for pollinating. Coddling Moths: Attacks on fruit trees can be controlled by trapping them. Hang containers with molasses, water and a little sugar in the trees (you can also purchase coddling moth traps). Hang these up at blossom time, when the moths emerge. They fly after the petals fall and at dusk if the temperature is over 60 degrees. Keep replacing containers as needed until the end of May. Cutworms: They look like a grub, and coil into a ball when touched. They work at night for 17-21 days. You can use a chemical control or try these less toxic



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methods: Interplant your crops with onions, scatter eggshells or wood ashes around your plants. Peonies: Prevent botrytis blight (black spots on leaves) by spraying with a Bordeaux solution. Camellias: Control cottony camellia scale (which produces a sooty smudge on leaves) by spraying.

**Gardening Tips:** Grass Clippings: They are very rich in nitrogen, but they compact very easily so don't put thick layers on your garden or flower beds. Also, if you have put weed and feed on your lawn, this could cause big problems in your garden. Spring flowers: It is best to pick the spent blossoms on your daffodils, tulips and other spring bulbs so they do not produce seed heads. This will produce a stronger bulb. Planting: Keep track of what you plant so that you can tell what you like best. Some ideas for doing this: write them in a journal, write the varieties that you planted, and keep track of where you planted them.