



Johnson's Garden Talk

Lawn and garden information for the friends and customers of Johnson's Garden Centers

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Garden Tips

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Spring Greetings

I guess we had to wait until the calendar said it was spring until we were fortunate enough to have any measurable rainfall. What a week we had in mid March. From rainfall ... to watching the Shockers in the NCAA basketball tournament ... it was a great week! Then we started the spring ritual of forecasting the last frost of spring. Go to the NOAA web site <http://www.crh.noaa.gov/ict/> and you'll find that the average last killing frost is April 9th.

Spring Planting

Usually by this time of the year you can safely plant most annuals if you are prepared to give the plants some protection from the cold weather, if necessary. Customers ask how soon can they plant items such as tomatoes. I usually advise them that if they are planting just a few plants, maybe six, it should be OK. If you're planting a large garden with 12 or more plants, I would wait until later in April. Part of the fun of gardening is to see how soon one can get their plants into the ground. Many of our summer vegetable plants are warm-season plants, meaning they really don't do too much growing until May. I usually wait until the soil temperatures warm to 65° or more to plant items such as peppers, cucumbers, squash and melons.

Cucumbers

I am encouraging gardeners to be sure to try a cucumber called Diva in their gardens this year. This 2002 All America Selections winner matures in only 32 days from transplants; from seed it will take about 58 days. Diva has a thin, tender skin with a very sweet taste. It has been called the finest burpless cucumber on the market. When picked at a young age, the 4-5" cukes are spineless and packed with flavor. There is no need to peel the tender, semi-glossy skin because it is packed with flavor and nutrition as well. Diva will be a great garden performer. It is tolerant of scab, powdery mildew and other diseases that attack vine crops. We will have Diva as transplants and in seed packets.

Annuals & Perennials

Our greenhouses are filled with annuals and perennials just waiting for your selection. We are growing many plants in our production greenhouses that will be ready in late April. One of the best parts of being in the garden center business is caring for and watching the small transplants grow from infants into plants for your garden. At Johnson's, we take great pride in offering you plants that will perform well

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in your landscape. We work with the best growers in the area to offer you new varieties that will stand out in your garden. With regards to our trees and shrubs, we rely on the best growers in the nation.

Radius Garden Tools

New this year is a line of tools which have truly been thought out. Radius hand tools are designed to work with normal hand and arm movements. They have an unusual, green, banana-shaped handle which is very noticeable at first glance. The angle at which the head of the tool is attached is just right for tending to your garden. There are several tools designed for several tasks in the garden from planting transplants and bulbs to cultivating the soil. These are sturdy tools designed for years of service in the garden. Our gardening friends with tough soil will appreciate the strength of these tools. ■