



Johnson's Garden Talk

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

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February 2002



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Garden Tips

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Spring Garden Soil Prep

Now is an important time to get your soil into shape for the spring planting season. While most of the winter has been dry, and the risk of working your soil when it is too wet seems unlikely, never work wet soil. The temptation may be there, but the soil structure can be destroyed by working wet soil.

When the soil is ready (light and crumbly not wet and sticky) add organic matter such as Gard'N-Wise Cotton Boll Compost and a good quality fertilizer such as ferti•lome Gardener's Special. Check at any of Johnson's stores for information on our Soil Recipe which contains everything needed to get your soil ready for spring planting.

Gamble Garden

Although every year is different, planting a gamble garden is something vegetable gardeners should try every season. This winter is no exception. The warm temperatures that we enjoyed in early January got a lot of us in the mood for outdoor activities, especially gardening.

The earliest spring vegetables are normally planted in March. A gamble garden is planting these same crops weeks earlier in an attempt to take advantage of unseasonably warm weather. Many vegetables may be planted in late February if you want to take the gamble. Try items such as:

- cole crops (*broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower*)
- lettuce (*seeds or transplants*)
- onions (*plants or sets*)
- peas
- potatoes
- radishes
- spinach

I would plant small quantities in your gamble garden. Don't plant your complete spring crop this early. You just want to be harvesting before your neighbors!

Annual Pruning

Proper pruning is not done just once. It begins at planting time and continues throughout the life of the tree. The objective is to develop the tree's structural framework to create a canopy that has evenly spaced branches. Try to prune so that the branches are at a fairly wide angle (60°) from the trunk. This allows adequate sunlight to reach all the branches, and creates less chance of wind damage.

Early Spring Grass Seeding

While early September is the best time to plant cool-season grasses because of the warm soil temperature, planting fescue in the winter months can be successful. The newly planted seeds will not germinate in a few days as in the fall, but will come up as the spring soil temperatures allow. If you want to control crabgrass this spring, be sure to apply Hi-Yield Crabgrass Preventer containing Tupersan, which will allow the newly planted seeds to germinate.