



**PEGGY MARTIN ROSE**

## APRIL IN THE GARDEN

Sources Texas Garden Almanac, Dr. Doug Welsh, Professor & Horticulturist Texas A&M University "Texas Gardener" Magazine, Chris S. Corby, Editor, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.

(www.fgmg.com)

### GARDEN TASKS



- You will need to begin dead-heading annuals, perennials and roses this month. This encourages the plants to continue flowering instead of going into seed production.
- Fertilize annual and perennial flowers with a nitrogen fertilizer. A good organic choice is blood meal. Fertilize once a month.
- Continue to add organic matter such as compost or pine bark to your flower beds each time you plant. It is nearly impossible to add too much to our Texas soils. The summer heat increases the activity of micro-organisms which break down organic matter.
- As stated in March, water only when plants are showing beginning signs of stress such as leaf rolling or wilting. As Doug Welsh states, " The best setting on the irrigation time clock is "OFF". Tremendous amounts of water and money are wasted by letting the time clock run on the same schedule spring, summer and fall." With predictions of another drought year water conservation is imperative.
- Prune spring-blooming trees and shrubs when bloom is completed. Apply fertilizer at this time also to encourage new growth on which new blooms can form.

### WHAT TO PLANT



- Hot weather is just around the corner, so don't delay in planting warm-season vegetables such as tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, corn, eggplant, cantaloupe, watermelon, okra, Southern peas, summer squash, pumpkins and sweet potatoes.
- Continue planting warm-season annuals and perennial flowers such as ageratum, angelonia, begonias, black-eyed Susans, cleome, coleus, coneflowers, cosmos, croton, geraniums, hibiscus, impatiens, lantana, marigolds, pentas, periwinkles (look for the new Cora series which is very disease resistant), pincushion flower, plumbago, salvias, shrimp plants, verbena, and zinnias.
- Consider planting warm-season foliage color with coleus, caladium (wait until soil temperatures are 70 degrees or they will rot), purple heart, copper plant, alternanthera, perilla, ornamental sweet potato, black taro, beefsteak plant, cordyline and Persian shield.
- Bulbs, tubers, and rhizomes can be planted this month. Plant agapanthus, amaryllis, calla lilies, cannas, crinums, daylilies, African and butterfly irises, gingers, and rainlilies.



**PERSIAN SHIELD**

### CREEPY CRAWLY CORNER



**LEAF-FOOTED BUG**

This insect is a "piercing-sucking" pest that can severely damage tomato and pepper fruits. Both the nymph and the adult inject saliva into the fruit which causes it to stop growing and affects the taste. The best control is early and constant vigilance. I check my tomatoes almost daily for these unwanted guests and sweep the ones I find into a mason jar 3/4 full of soapy water. I use an artist's paintbrush to sweep with. They fly, so some inevitably get away. If the population gets out of control, use the least toxic, effective pesticide labeled for the job.