

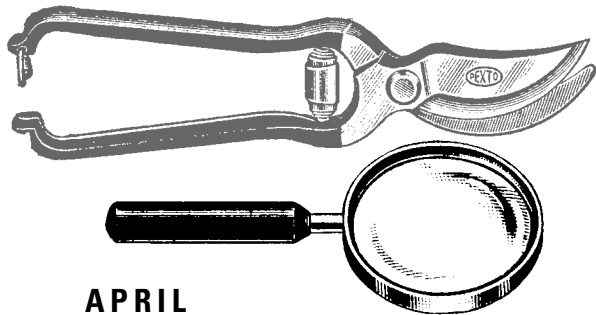
FAMILY GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE GARDENING

Month-by-month gardening ideas and activities for you and your children to enjoy together.

The series is available on our website at www.queensbotanical.org/family_guide

Sustainable gardening means that your landscape and individual plants, whether trees or groundcovers, basically take care of themselves once established. Because the plants are well suited for our climate, they need little more than what Mother Nature already provides. Sustainable gardening with Mother Nature also includes a complex web of fascinating organisms—some visible with the naked eye and others requiring the assistance of a magnifying glass. These creatures play an important role in balancing the garden ecosystem. You and your family can create a wildlife sanctuary along with a beautiful garden. Give it a try!

Part of the fun is starting a garden journal. Be sure to record the date, time, weather, and any interesting things you observe or any questions you have as you explore your landscape.



APRIL

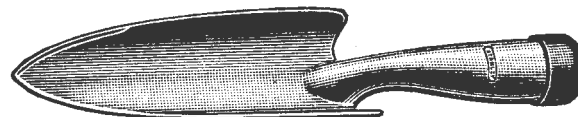
Tools: magnifying glass, gloves, hand trowel, ruler, paper, tape, crayons, pruning shears, containers and soil for starting seeds, journal

- Start summer flowers and vegetables indoors. Try growing plants from seeds of food you eat at home.
- Squeeze a clump of soil in the vegetable plot with your hand. If it becomes a mud ball, leave the soil alone. If it is a bit crumbly, grab the trowel and plant some peas along with seeds of lettuce, endive, arugula, spinach, and Swiss chard.
- Look closely at deciduous trees (the ones that lose their leaves in fall). Try to identify the species using a tree guide. Tape a sheet of paper to a few different trees and rub the crayon so that the bark pattern transfers to the paper. Paste this into your journal. Try to imagine how a tree grows and why bark patterns vary.
- Gently push back mulch and winter's accumulated leaves from beds as bulb shoots begin to show. Put leaves in the compost pile.
- Look in shrub branches for Praying Mantis egg casings. Check back in May to see them hatch!



Queens
Botanical Garden

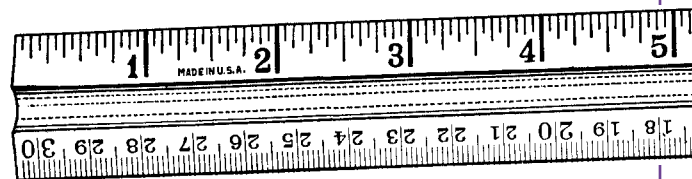
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MAY

Tools: hand trowel, paper, crayon

- Work compost into all plant beds. Side dress perennials and dig into annual beds. Add lime if indicated by a pH test.
- Know the nutrient needs of your plants. Some need a lot. Others don't need much. Use slow-release organic fertilizers.
- Buy started annuals that have more green leaves than flowers.
- Learn about companion planting.
- Watch the Praying Mantis egg casings! They should be hatching by the end of the month. Ladybug nymphs are out too and all these baby beneficial insects are hungry!
- Make leaf rubbings of the same trees you used to make the bark rubbings. Paste and label the leaves in your journal.



JUNE

Tools: tin can, waterproof marker, ruler, magnifying glass, bug net, bug boxes, pruning shears

- Create a rain gauge with the tin can, marking 1/4- to 1/2-inch measurements from the bottom up.
- Mulch planted beds to keep moisture in and weeds down.
- With guide in hand, search for garden insects. Try to figure out which ones are good and which ones can be pests. Record your observations in the journal. Paste pictures from the Internet or sketch insects and learn more about their role in your garden environment.
- Don't use any type of chemical control for garden pests.
- Put out a toad house and build a bat house to install on a wall of your home.
- Learn about butterfly lifecycles and put images and information in your journal.