

The April Garden

Plant evergreen trees and shrubs early in the month to give them time to settle in before the warmer, drier weather arrives. Dig the hole twice as wide as the root ball, but no deeper as you don't want to bury the root crown. Roughen the sides and bottom of the hole with a shovel or fork to make it easier for the roots to penetrate. It's not normally necessary to amend the soil around your new plant as this may encourage the roots to stay close to home. As you fill the hole make sure that no air pockets are left, but don't tamp down too firmly. Water well, if necessary building a temporary basin to prevent the water running away, then mulch with compost to provide nutrients and preserve moisture.

Look for a good selection of perennials at the VanDusen Garden Sale on April 24.

You may see annuals displayed in your local garden centre, but choose carefully as most should not be planted out until the warmer nights arrive in late May.

Sow tomatoes now to plant out in May. To avoid the devastation of late blight, a fungus disease that strikes after a period of rain later in the summer, plant them under the eaves or some other structure. For more information on suitable varieties and cultural requirements consult your local garden centre or the information available from local seed companies (see Links & Resources). To find out more about late blight see the [BC Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries Pest Management Bulletin](#).

Aerate the lawn and rake or power rake it to remove moss. If moss is a major problem in the lawn, it's probably because the conditions are not suited to grass - consider an alternative (even a moss garden!) Overseed bare spots and trim the edges. Enjoy the creeping speedwell and daisies brightening the grass. When the weather becomes drier, water deeply but infrequently.

Watch out for signs of pests. Most insect species are harmless, or even beneficial, but slugs, aphids and cutworms cause damage. Try destroying them by hand or shoe before an infestation builds up. Remember that pesticides destroy the good insects along with the bad and destroy the natural balance. Also, the best defence against pests is a healthy plant.