

Hopewell Township Environmental Newsletter

Essential Spring Gardening Tasks

Can't wait to get outside and start your garden(s)? Below are some tips for getting your garden ready to launch the spring season successfully.



Research & Make a Plan - understand the limits of your planting zone. [USDA's plant hardiness zone for this area code is 7b (5-10F) or +4 temperature change since 2012.] Check your garden site for hours of sunlight and a practical water source.

Check your garden tools - are they clean & sharpened?

Tidy Up - but leave the dead stalks of perennials until just before first growth. This creates a buffer for plants and harbors beneficial insects.

Prune trees and shrubs - Before leaves emerge, look for broken branches, overlapping branches, dead or diseased branches and cut them off.

Do some weeding - It is important to get ahead of them before your plants begin to grow to lessen the competition.

Add compost and mulch - choose organic compost and cover beds with 1-2 inches. There is no need to rototill compost into the ground.

When the temperature is right and garden beds are prepared search for the best plants for your zone and area. Try including native species into your beds.

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GARDEN TASKS

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HOUSEPLANTS

3

ENVIRONMENTAL
FOOTNOTES



Commission Members

Beth McClain - Chair

Jane Hankins - Vice Chair

Ken Strait - Land Use Board

Cheryl Lalancette - Secretary

Jerry Lewis

Burt Doremus

Marion Carll - Editor

Meetings

First Wednesday of every month @7:00 PM (new this year)

Newsletters

Available on township website and Facebook Page. Copies are available at the township office and at the Senior Center.



Every yard should have a brush pile! If you trim trees or shrubs, stack the branches and leaves in an unused corner of your yard away from your home. This provides shelter for birds, insects, and small mammals through the winter.

Give A Shift About Nature

Composting

If you have the space, a compost heap or bin will give you back nutritionally rich soil that will help your garden blossom and your food and plants grow. Put into your compost crushed eggshells, recyclable egg cartons, plastic-free tea bags, vegetable peelings, garden cuttings but not weeds that have bloomed.



Placing a rotting log or two in your yard will transform your property into a biodiversity hotspot. Salamanders, toads, insects, snakes, and other animals find food and shelter in rotting wood. One research group found 398 species of fungi on a single log!

Give A Shift About Nature

6 STEPS TO CREATE A VIBRANT AND LUSH ORGANIC LAWN

Growing a health, strong, beautiful organic lawn requires not just a change in fertilizers but also a change in mindset

1. Thicken your lawn by reseeds-ing in the Fall
2. Feed the lawn with compost
3. Water wisely
4. Cut it on high - 3 in with a sharp blade
5. Leave the clippings - invest in a mulching blade
6. Feed responsibly - use organic fertilizers

(For further information visit [The Organic Lawn Care Manual @SafeLawns.org](https://www.SafeLawns.org))

Repot Your Houseplants

March is a great time of year to take a close look at your indoor potted houseplants to see if they need repotting. Choose a container that's slightly larger than the current pot and make certain there are drainage holes. Have some fun and get creative with your choices! Water the plant in its current container and tease the roots apart if they are potbound. Add some potting soil to the bottom of the new container and place the plant in making sure the roots are spread out. Add more potting soil and gently tamp it down. Make sure you allow for an inch between the top of the soil line and the top of the container. Water and watch it grow.

ATTENTION RESIDENTS

From the HTEC*



Open - Conservation Area Maintenance Work

One of the goals for the Hopewell Township Environmental Commission this year is to create a maintenance plan for the "Barrett's Run Grassland Restoration" project. After assessing the needs and in coordination with the township maintenance department the plan has been put into practice.

You may notice some mowing to cut back the growth and the removal of some invasive trees that are not conducive to the natural habitat. Fear not! The cutting and invasive tree removal will propagate better habitat for flora and fauna.

In the meantime, feel free to explore the pollinator meadow, meet macro-invertebrates that live in the

stream, and practice your bird watching skills. Look for evidence of the food, water, and shelter that make this a suitable habitat for these creatures and more! Read the signage and learn how the American Littoral Society and others helped to restore this area from farmland to the productive ecosystem it is now.

When: Spring 2024

Where: Open - Space Conservation Area on Sewall Road

Other: If you have questions or concerns please attend one of our meetings, or call the township office. *Hopewell Township Environmental Commission



WHEN TO START SEEDS INDOORS



1 Grab your seed packets and download the **FREE PRINTABLE** at <https://empressofdirt.net/indoor-seed-starting-schedule/>

2 Look up your average last frost date at <https://www.almanac.com/gardening/frostdates>



3 Find your last frost date here:

Sow Before Last Frost	Last Frost Date			
	March 15	March 30	April 15	April 30
Group 1: 12 weeks / 90 days	Dec 15	Jan 1	Jan 15	Feb 1
Group 2: 10 weeks / 75 days	Jan 1	Jan 15	Feb 1	Feb 15
Group 3: 8 weeks / 60 days	Jan 15	Feb 1	Feb 15	Mar 1
Group 4: 6 weeks / 45 days	Feb 1	Feb 15	Mar 1	Mar 15
Group 5: 4 weeks / 30 days	Feb 15	Mar 1	Mar 15	Mar 30

Sow Before Last Frost	Last Frost Date			
	May 15	May 30	June 15	June 30
Group 1: 12 weeks / 90 days	Feb 15	Mar 1	Mar 15	Apr 1
Group 2: 10 weeks / 75 days	Mar 1	Mar 15	Apr 1	Apr 15
Group 3: 8 weeks / 60 days	Mar 15	Apr 1	Apr 15	May 1
Group 4: 6 weeks / 45 days	Apr 1	Apr 15	May 1	May 15
Group 5: 4 weeks / 30 days	Apr 15	May 1	May 15	May 30

4 Print out the notes and use the chart (above) to assign each seed pack to its sowing group based on how many weeks before last frost they say to start. *Happy Gardening! ~ Melissa*



empressofdirt.net/indoor-seed-starting-schedule/