

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

April's potpourri of gardening tasks



Blue-eyed star grass is a perennial early spring bloomer.

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After your new crops are sowed, apply a layer of mulch for added protection, water retention, and erosion control.

The ground is too cold and wet to scatter seeds so many people have started their sprouting endeavors indoors. If this describes you, remember that before you transplant outdoors, your seedlings will need to be hardened off. Once we have reliable days of sunshine, hardening off is an easy process performed over seven days.

- On day one, move your seedlings outside in filtered sunlight for one hour, then bring them back indoors.
- On day two, the seedlings get two hours of sun playtime.
- On day three, offer three hours.
- Repeat each day adding one extra hour of sunshine before bringing them back inside.
- By the end of seven days, it is usually safe to transplant your seedlings wherever you want



Fennel has delicate fern-like foliage and delicious bulbs for salads and roasting.

them to establish. Use your best judgment and make sure the soil and temperature are warm enough.

Don't forget to spread organic snail and slug bait or your new sprouts will be supper for these gastropod mollusks.

Continue harvesting your winter vegetables of broccoli, kale, cauliflower, spinach, Swiss chard, and salad greens. Although my arugula is bolting to set seed, I continue to cut the leaves and flowers to use in my salads. Once the days get hot, I'll dry and save the seeds for scattering in the fall. Speaking of seeds, make sure to read the instructions on any seed packet you purchase. Many seeds must be soaked to help with germination. Wait to plant your vegetable seeds until the soil reaches 65-75 degrees. Most seeds require a planting depth and width that is twice the seed size, except for tiny seeds such as lettuce, celery, and dill which can be scattered and lightly raked. Tiny seeds don't like to be buried because they need sunlight to germinate.

Camellias have been illuminating the garden for several months, but the substantial storms have knocked a plethora of blossoms to carpet the ground. Pick up and destroy all fallen camellia blossoms as a prevention against camellia petal blight. If leaves are distorted, pale, and fleshy, you might have camellia leaf gall which causes the leaves to turn white and fall off. The best control is to pick up and destroy any affected leaves before they turn white.

Clematis leaves are beginning to unfurl on what appears to be dead vines. Don't be tempted to cut back unless you know what type of clematis you have. There are three types of clematis: Group 1: woody-stemmed bloom on last year's stems. Prune *after* flowering in spring. Group 2: double and semi-double varieties bloom twice. Prune *after* spring flowers fade and cut back dead wood in winter. Group 3: large blooms that appear in summer and fall grow on the current year's growth. Prune severely in winter leaving two buds on each stem.

These are just a few of the garden potpourri of chores that can be accomplished in early April in anticipation of spring sowing later in the month. Lawns will welcome an aerating and feeding anytime now. Shrubs, trees, and ground covers will benefit from fertilizing this month. For more ideas, check out my book, "Growing with the Goddess Gardener" available at <https://www.CynthiaBrian.com/online-store> or wherever you buy your garden books.

Happy Growing. Happy Gardening! Happy Spring!



Arugula is starting to bolt, yet still tender and delicious.

Photos Cynthia Brian