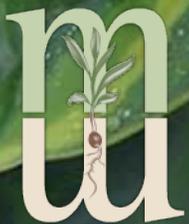




**CORONA**

SEASON AFTER SEASON

# YEAR ROUND PERENNIAL GARDEN MAINTENANCE



[melindamyers.com](http://melindamyers.com)

# Year Round Perennial Garden Maintenance

*Divide gardening tasks into three categories; Must Do's, Should Do's and Might Do's. Breaking down garden care this way helps you feel less overwhelmed and less guilty for what you don't accomplish. Each gardener's list will vary slightly based on available time, energy and garden goals but this a good place to start.*

## MUST DO

- Water
- Weed
- Pest Management

**SHOULD DO** - Address these once Must Do's are complete

- Mulch
- Fertilize
- Edge
- Prepare for winter

## MIGHT DO

- Deadhead
- Support plants

## SOIL PREPARATION IS CRITICAL IN SUCCESS AND REDUCING MAINTENANCE

- Incorporating 4" of organic matter into the top 12" of soil is ideal
- No dig options - prepare a year in advance
  - We will focus on existing gardens and their maintenance

## WINTER

- Evaluate winter interest
  - Homes for beneficial insects
  - Food for songbirds
- Leave healthy perennials stand for winter
- Monitor animal damage and manage as needed or desired (see summer for management options)

- Check for frost heaving
- Watch for untimely growth
  - Early sprouting that occurs every year
    - ✦ Consider moving plants away from artificial heat source as needed
    - ✦ Winter mulching to keep soil consistently cold throughout the winter
    - ✦ Does this plant need to be replaced

## SPRING

- Evaluate the garden plants and design
  - Note if adding spring flowering bulbs for early season color is an option
  - These can be planted among perennials
    - ✦ Double floral impact
    - ✦ Less maintenance - declining bulb leaves are masked by perennials
- Monitor animal damage and manage as needed or desired (see summer for management options)
- Wait to clean up the garden
  - Temperatures consistently in the 50's°F (10°C)
  - Can't wait? Remove and stack out of sight
- Cut a few stems back to 18 to 24" (46-60 cm) and remainder to the ground
  - The standing stems provide homes for some native bees
  - New growth will mask the dead stems
  - These stems eventually decompose

## Corona Tools

When there's work to be done, there's no doubt about the name on the tool - CORONA®.

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Founded in the 1928, Corona is a leading brand manufacturing professional tools built for strength and durability and homeowner garden tools that provide feature-rich benefits like comfort, control and easier cutting.

Corona's proven designs, quality manufacturing processes and unparalleled customer service make it the best choice in tools for contractors, agricultural professionals and avid gardeners alike.



**CORONA**®

SEASON AFTER SEASON

- Mark location of perennials that emerge late in spring
  - Hardy hibiscus
  - Butterfly weed
  - Swamp milkweed
  - Balloon flower (*Platycodon*)
  - Black-eyed Susan
  - Culver's root (*Veronicastrum*)
  - Indian pink (*Spigelia*)
  - Joe-pye weed
  - Leadwort (*Ceratostigma*)
  - *Crocosmia*
  - Red hot poker (*Kniphofia*)
  - Russian sage
  - *Gaura*
- Sub shrubs - butterfly bush and Russian sage
  - Cut back to 6" (15 cm) above healthy buds
  - Russian sage still floppy
    - ✦ Cut back halfway again when 12" (30cm) tall
- Bee balm and garden phlox subject to mildew
  - Remove 1/4 of the stems for better airflow and light penetration and risk of disease
- Planting
  - Soil preparation in new bed is critical as these plants will remain for years
  - Planting into existing gardens
    - ✦ Add compost to planting area - this is your chance to improve the soil
    - ✦ Dig hole at least twice the size of the rootball
  - Container plants planted at same depth as growing in the pot
    - ✦ When planted too deep, suffer collar rot
    - ✦ When planted too shallow, roots subject to drying
  - Peony rhizomes with buds no more than 2" below soil surface
- Water container grown perennials before planting
- Soak bare root for an hour or so before planting
- Loosen or slice through girdling roots (those encircling the root ball)
- **Digging and dividing**
  - Plants need dividing when:
    - ✦ Flops more
    - ✦ Fails to flower
    - ✦ Dead in the center
    - ✦ Repeat bloomers fail to repeat bloom
    - ✦ Reduced vigor or hardiness (some asters, Shasta daisies...)
- General transplanting guidelines for greatest success
  - Spring flowering perennials in late summer - early fall
  - Fall blooming perennials in early spring
  - Summer blooming perennials either time
  - We all have done so when we have time
    - ✦ Some divide spring flowering right after flowering for seasonal bloom
    - ✦ Water more often when transplanting during summer
    - ✦ May need to shade transplants during hot, sunny weather
- How to
  - Dig around outer edge with sharp shovel
  - Lift out of soil
  - Use knife, hatchet, reciprocating saw to cut into smaller pieces
    - ✦ Smaller the divisions, the longer to fill in
    - ✦ Larger divisions will need dividing sooner
  - Discard dead center into compost pile
  - Water as you would new plantings



### About Melinda

Nationally known gardening expert, TV/ radio host, author & columnist Melinda Myers has over 30 years of horticulture experience and has written over 20 gardening books, including *Can't Miss Small Space Gardening*, the *Midwest Gardener's Handbook*, and *Jackson and Perkins' Beautiful Roses Made Easy*. She hosts the nationally-syndicated "Melinda's Garden Moment" program airing on over 115 TV and radio stations throughout the U.S. Melinda also hosts the internationally distributed *Great Courses "How to Grow Anything"* DVD series, including the latest *Food Gardening for Everyone* DVD set. She is a columnist and contributing editor for *Birds & Blooms* magazine, writes the twice monthly "Gardeners' Questions" newspaper column and a nationally-distributed gardening column. She appears regularly as a guest expert on national and local television and radio shows.

Visit Melinda's website,  
[melindamyers.com](http://melindamyers.com)

- **Water properly**
  - New plantings
    - ✦ Thorough and often enough to keep roots moist
  - Established plantings
    - ✦ Thorough and for most when top 4 to 6" (10-15 cm) is crumbly and moist
    - ✦ Usually an inch per week for first few years as plants become established
    - ✦ Drought tolerant plants need less frequent, but thorough watering
- **Fertilize**
  - Properly prepared soil provides much of the nutrients plants need
  - Spread 1 to 2" (2.5-5 cm) of compost over soil every other year or two
  - Organic mulches improve the soil and add nutrients as they decompose
  - Use a low nitrogen, slow-release fertilizer, like **Milorganite**
    - ✦ Usually only need to fertilize once a season - let your plants be your guide
- **Improve soil** in struggling perennial gardens with vertical mulching
  - Spread compost over soil surface
  - Use auger bit on drill and dig small 4 to 6" (10-15 cm) deep holes throughout the garden
  - Pushes compost into root zone of perennials
  - Reduces compaction and increases aeration in compacted soil
- **Weed control**
  - These unwanted plants compete with desirable plants for water and nutrients
  - Some weeds are host plants for insects and disease organisms

- Start early as weeds have space and sunlight to gain control
- Pull, dig or cultivate - being careful not to damage roots of desirable plants
- **Mulch** to help reduce time spent on Must Do watering and weeding
  - Mulching conserves moisture and suppresses weeds
  - Spread layer of leaves, wood chips or evergreen needles over the soil surface
    - ✦ Mulches should be free of pests, weed seeds, jumping worms and disease organisms
    - ✦ Use a layer of cardboard or wood chips beneath mulch for longer weed control
    - ✦ Do not use landscape fabric under organic mulches - just use under stone
- **Edge the garden**
  - This slows the infiltration of grass and weeds into the garden
  - Makes mowing around the garden easier
  - Use a shovel or edger to create an edge around the garden
    - ✦ Dig a V-shaped trench and fill with wood chips for easy mowing

### **LATE SPRING - EARLY SUMMER**

- Evaluate transition between seasons
  - View neighbors' gardens and visit botanical gardens for ideas
- Pruning for more compact growth
  - Mums and asters keep 6" (15 cm) tall to encourage more compact growth
  - Upright sedum subject to flopping
    - ✦ Move to full sun, well-drained soil
    - ✦ Prune back halfway when 8" tall

## **UPCOMING** **WEBINAR**

**November 2<sup>nd</sup>**

*Boosting the Beauty of and Propagating Houseplants*

**6:30 pm CST**

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- Coneflowers
  - ◆ Cut back halfway when plants are 2.5' (.76 m) tall
    - Delays bloom by 2 to 3 weeks
    - More compact growth
  - ◆ Just cut some plants to serve as support and to extend bloom time of the coneflower planting
- Heliopsis
  - ◆ Cut back halfway when plants are 3' (.9 m) tall
    - Delays bloom by 1.5 weeks
    - Reduces height
- For details on pruning various perennials, see *The Well-Tended Garden* by Tracy DiSabato-Aust
- **Staking**
  - Install stakes early in the season so easier to hide
    - ◆ After first flush of growth before flower buds formed
  - Single supports, like metal rods and bamboo stakes
    - ◆ Tall plants with single stems, spikes or heavy flowers
    - ◆ Tie to stake with jute
    - ◆ Add several twists or make figure 8 in tie to keep plant away from stake
    - ◆ May need to secure in several locations for weak stemmed or those with heavy flowers
  - Hoops or rings for full bushy plants
    - ◆ Stand about half the mature height of the plant
  - Sections of chicken wire for small stemmed, bushy perennials
    - ◆ Cut chicken wire to size
    - ◆ Secure with stakes above the planting
    - ◆ Allow stems to grow through
  - **Lattice set horizontally above the plant**
    - ◆ Stems grow through openings
    - ◆ Lattice provides decorative structure in the garden
  - Pea or twig staking
    - ◆ Twigs set amongst the plant
    - ◆ Shorter than mature height of the plant
  - Use nearby plants to provide support

- **Deadheading** removes faded flowers
  - Why
    - ◆ For neater look
    - ◆ Extend bloom time
    - ◆ Prevent reseeding
  - How
    - ◆ Majority of perennials (salvia, Shasta daisy, yarrow, veronica...)
      - Cut back faded flowers to set of healthy leaves or above lateral (side) flower, bud or flowering stems
    - ◆ Flowers on scape or stem fade at different times, like daylily, balloon flower and peach leaf bellflower
      - Remove individual flowers as they fade
      - Once all flowers faded, remove the flowering stem
    - ◆ Flower stem arise from leaves, like coral bells and *Armeria*
      - Prune flower stems back to foliage



## SUMMER

- Evaluate the summer garden plant choice and design
  - Plants tolerant of heat and drought or hot and humid weather
- **Manage pests** that threaten the health and longevity of your plants
  - Most insects are good guys pollinating plants, eating bad insects and more
  - Some only cause cosmetic damage
  - Work with nature whenever possible to manage insect pests
- Reduce the risk of problems
  - Right plant for the growing conditions
  - Grow pest and disease resistant plants whenever possible
  - Keep plants healthy with proper care
- Monitor for problems
  - Easier to control a few insects than a thousand
- Identify the problem
  - Check reliable resources
  - Review recent weather
    - ✦ Is it weather, environment or pest related?
    - ✦ Environmental issues affect a wide range of plants
      - Damage stops when weather changes or environmental cause is gone
  - Review maintenance practices
    - ✦ Over or under watering can damage plants
    - ✦ Excess fertilizer can damage plants
    - ✦ Root damage from cultivation
    - ✦ Mulch covers crowns of perennials
  - Determine if control is needed
    - ✦ Cosmetic not life threatening
    - ✦ Is the pest still present?
- Tolerate some damage until nature moves in to control the problem
  - Lady beetles
  - Green lacewings
  - Praying mantids
  - Predacious and parasitic insects, wasps and mites
- Look for the most eco-friendly way to manage the problem
  - Hand pick
  - Traps
  - Barriers
  - Sanitation
  - Eco-friendly products
    - ✦ Always read and follow label directions when using any chemical - organic, natural or synthetic
- Evaluate management strategies and adjust as needed
- Record
  - **Mark your calendar** for next year to watch for problem
- A few examples:
  - **Insects and other pests**
    - ✦ **Aphids and mites**
      - Lady beetles and lacewings eat aphids
      - Predatory mites eat problem mites
      - Strong blast of water
      - Insecticidal soap, **Summit Year-Round Spray Oil** and **Neem** (also repellent)
        - \* Contact insecticides
        - \* Product must cover insect to be effective
        - \* No residual effect, so need repeat applications
        - \* Can kill beneficial insects it covers as well as problem insects
      - Traps and reflective mulch
        - \* Yellow bowl filled with soapy water
        - \* Reflective mulch, like heavy duty aluminum foil
    - ✦ **Earwigs**
      - Predacious insects that eat foliage and flowers
      - Traps
        - \* Crumpled paper under overturned terra cotta pot
        - \* Cardboard cylinder filled with straws
      - Synthetic or organic pesticides (plant oils as active ingredient)
    - ✦ **Slugs and snails**
      - Resistant plants - hostas with thick, substantive leaves
      - **Invite toads and frogs into the garden**
        - \* Make toad abode
        - \* Provide water

- Traps
  - \* Beer in shallow container
  - \* Boards laid between plants
- Diatomaceous earth sprinkled around the plants
- Organic slug controls (iron phosphate as active ingredient)
- ♦ Japanese beetles
  - Adult beetles feed on leaves of plants
  - Immature stage (grubs) feed on grass and some other plant roots
  - Populations can peak and drop over time - will always be an issue once present
  - Lifecycle of Japanese beetles
    - \* Overwinter as grubs in soil
    - \* Spring, as soil warms, move closer to the surface, feeding on grass and plant roots
    - \* Pupate into beetles that feed on leaves and flowers of a variety of plants
    - \* Beetles mate and lay eggs late summer
    - \* Eggs hatch and grubs feed on plant roots
    - \* As temperatures drop, grubs move deeper into soil to overwinter
  - Tolerate damage
    - \* Japanese lace effect
  - Grow less susceptible plants
    - \* They do eat 300 different species of plants
  - Manage first to arrive to reduce total number invading garden for the season
  - Knock into soapy water
    - \* Morning is best, when sluggish and congregating
  - Vacuum the beetles, then drop into soapy water
  - *Bacillus thuringiensis galleriae* (BeetleJUS, BeetleGONE!)
  - Milky spore
    - \* For Japanese beetle grub control in lawn
    - \* Adults can fly up to 2 miles
    - \* Must tolerate grubs in lawn for disease to multiply and work
    - \* No other pesticides on lawn
- Traps bring beetles into the garden - NOT recommended
- ♦ Caterpillars
  - Caterpillars are larvae of moths and butterflies
  - Eat holes in leaves, flower buds and blossoms
  - Handpick when discovered
  - Use *Bacillus thuringiensis kurstaki* (*Btk*)
- ♦ Sawflies look like caterpillars, but proper identification is important
  - Larvae of fly-like insect and are sub-group of Ant-Bee-Wasp-Sawfly order Hymenoptera
  - Eat holes in leaves
  - ID clues:
    - \* Sawflies have 6 to 8 prolegs
    - \* Caterpillars have 5 or fewer
  - Soaps, horticulture oils or other eco-friendly products
    - \* Most effective when applied to small / young larvae
    - \* ***Btk* not effective on sawflies**
- ♦ Leaf miners
  - Larvae of several different insects
  - Feed between upper and lower leaf surface
  - Most just cause cosmetic damage
  - Columbine, perennial sunflowers, daisies and veronicas commonly affected
    - \* Tolerate damage
    - \* Press the leaf between fingers to kill the insect
    - \* Columbine leaf miner
      - Cut back plants after flowering
      - New growth healthy
- ♦ Plant bugs
  - Adults and nymphs (immature stage) can damage plants
  - Suck plant juices
  - Feeding produces dark, round, sunken spots
  - Severe feeding can cause wilting and leaf browning
  - Small populations usually not harmful and no control needed
  - Cut damaged plants back in fall as insect eggs may be overwintering in the stems

- If control is needed:
  - \* Organic - soaps, horticulture oil and pyrethrins
- A few common diseases of perennials
  - Disease occurs when these three things are all present
    - ◆ Susceptible plants
    - ◆ Disease causing organism
    - ◆ And weather conditions are right for the disease organism
  - Powdery mildew
    - ◆ Grow resistant plants or cultivars
    - ◆ Provide proper growing conditions
    - ◆ Thin stems of susceptible plants by 1/4 in spring
    - ◆ Mask mildew infected leaves with nearby, slightly shorter plants
    - ◆ Cornell Baking Soda Mix
      - 1 1/2 T baking soda
      - 3 T horticulture oil
      - 1 gallon water
    - ◆ Horticulture oil, like Summit Year-Round Spray Oil provides weeks of control
  - Phytophthora and botrytis blights
    - ◆ Sanitation
      - Remove and dispose of infected plant parts
      - Cut infected plants back to ground level in fall
    - ◆ Copper fungicide first application when stems 6" tall
      - Repeat as recommended on product label
  - Leaf spots
    - ◆ Can be caused by fungi, bacteria
    - ◆ Remove and dispose of infected plant parts
    - ◆ Fall cleanup
  - Rust
    - ◆ Plant rust resistant plants or cultivars
    - ◆ Most are not deadly and control is not needed
    - ◆ Some rusts require 2 different plants to complete lifecycle
      - Remove one of the hosts to manage the disease
    - ◆ Sanitation
      - Remove infected plant parts
      - Remove no more than 1/3 the plant's leaves at one time
- Thorough fall cleanup of infected plants
- ◆ Reduce risk - prevent rust
  - Proper spacing and thinning of plants
  - Avoid overhead watering
  - Mulch
- Aster yellows
  - ◆ Phytoplasma (bacteria-like organism)
  - ◆ The disease is spread by aster leafhopper
  - ◆ Attacks over 300 different species of plants in 38 families
  - ◆ No known control
  - ◆ Rarely lethal
  - ◆ Removing infected plants as soon as they are found prevents spread of disease from this to healthy plants
  - ◆ Controlling leafhoppers
- Animals
  - ◆ Grow plants less favored by wildlife (deer, rabbits, voles, chipmunks, woodchucks / groundhogs...)
  - ◆ Fencing
    - 5-6' high around small gardens for deer
    - At least 4' high and secured to ground for rabbits
    - Buried up to 4-6" for voles
    - 6' high, top 12" unattached and bent outward with 10" buried for woodchucks / groundhogs
    - Gates must be secured
  - ◆ Scare tactics
    - Hanging DVD's
    - Clanging pans
    - Motion sensitive lights and sprinklers
    - Plastic owls
    - Rubber snakes...
      - \* Not always effective
      - \* Use a variety of scare tactics
      - \* Move scare tactics so animals do not grow accustomed to them

#### ◆ Repellents

- Commercial and homemade products
- Repellents are most effective when applied before animals begin feeding
- Check label to see what wildlife is repelled
- Reapply as needed or directed on product label
- **Plantskydd** is rain and snow resistant, so need fewer applications
- Monitor wildlife management strategies
- Adjust as needed to boost effectiveness

## FALL

- Evaluate plantings and design
- Cut back and dispose of disease and insect infested plants
- Hostas are often cut back
  - Eliminate leaf nematode and winter home for slugs
- Leave healthy plants stand
- Rake fall leaves into garden beds, but pull off the crowns of plants
- Prepare perennials for winter
  - Continue to water as needed
  - Winter mulch borderline hardy plants
    - ◆ Wait until ground freezes to mulch
    - ◆ Cover plants with evergreen boughs, straw or marsh hay
  - Provide wildlife protection
    - ◆ Feeding habits of wildlife change from one season to the next

## OTHER RESOURCES

- The Well-Tended Perennial Garden by Tracy Disabato-Aust
- In the United States - visit your state's University Extension Service
- In other areas look for information from your University's outreach organization
- Local Botanical Gardens and Nature Centers

## WEBINAR RECORDINGS AND HANDOUTS

- *Maintaining Your Landscape with Pollinators in Mind*
  - [Webinar](#)
  - [Handout](#)
- *Supporting Native Bees*
  - [Webinar](#)
  - [Handout](#)
- *Organic Pest Management for Vegetables and Flower Gardens*
  - [Webinar](#)
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  - [Handout](#)

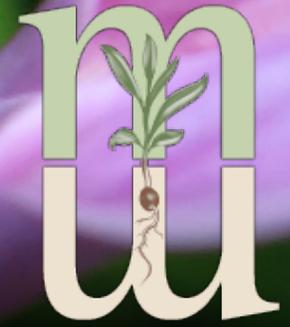


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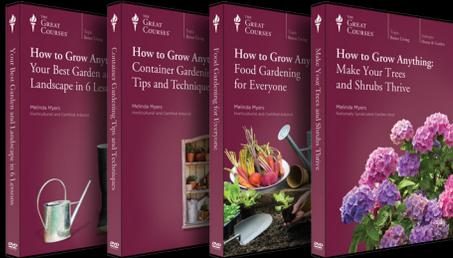
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