

garden

By Roger Myers

Roger Myers is the President and Founder of American Beauty Landscaping. Established in 1979, ABL is the Valley's industry leader with more than 100 national, state and local awards to its landscape design and build credit.



Spectacular Spring!



Spring is my favorite season as I really enjoy that first mowing of the lawn; the first smells of new vegetation and the anticipation of the arrival of all those spring bulbs.

I look forward to working in the yard again; it's therapeutic after the stress the office can cause all day! If you enjoy the process as I do, here are some of the things that need your attention.

1. The Lawn. Rake and remove all debris, such as fallen tree branches, and gravel thrown in the yard by those aggressive plow trucks! If the thatch layer is more than one inch, now is the perfect time to perform core-aeration – the act of plugging holes in the lawn to encourage a biological breakdown of the thatch. Apply a balanced slow-release fertilizer such as triple 14, or 14-22-09 as soon as possible. I then apply the second round in early May, and include the crab grass and broad leaf weed control. Mow the lawn early and short. This allows the sunlight to warm the roots, thus stimulating an early green-up and rapid growth, (unless of course you don't appreciate the extra work!) If you have bare-spots that need repair – now is the time to over-seed, although the cold soil slows germination. I recommend the new seed-aide mulch for covering your seed. It's cleaner and easier than straw and biodegrades without the need of removal. Don't forget to fertilize the newly seeded areas! No food – “no growth”! When it's tall enough to mow – mow it. No need to baby it.

2. The Beds. Remove leaves and debris that have accumulated over the winter, and inspect your plants for winter damage. Prune off any broken or dead limbs on your ornamentals. Now is the time to apply dormant-oil on the enonymous to prevent scale. If you have bulbs, apply a good bulb fertilizer now to really pop those blossoms. Cut back perennials such as Sage, grasses, or Sedum, if you haven't yet. You may want to stir up your existing mulch to refresh it, but avoid the temptation to apply new mulch at this time. If you apply new mulch on top of the cold soil, it will keep the soil cold longer, thus retarding your plants' emergence and blossom time. May is the time to add new mulch, don't forget to cut a new edge on your beds for a clean-neat, like-new appearance. Nothing adds curb appeal like a well cared for landscape! Just prior to mulching, add a slow-release granulated fertilizer specially formulated for your specific plants. Most ornamentals appreciate acid, and iron for good health and growth. As May approaches some plants are ready for selective pruning; that's a whole new article by itself. I just hate “meat-ball landscaping”, the art of sculpturing everything you own into the shape of a meat ball... to be continued!

See you next month, happy gardening.