

Alexon Design and Landscaping Newsletter

Spring is Here!

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April 2010

Dear TJ,

Below is a "what to do and what not to do" for your plants and trees for the month of April. The weather is warming up and here are a few tips to ease the transition.

Your Desert Garden - Monthly DO List for April

April is our transition month in the desert, when the temperatures start to get up toward 100°F. If we have had winter/spring showers we'll see beautiful wildflowers all over the Valley. As the weather warms up, you'll have to begin increasing the amount of water. Plants will indicate when they need water by having drooping, wilted leaves. Note the time interval; this will tell you just how many days between watering.

Grass

Begin Bermuda grass seeding when nighttime temperatures remain at 65 degrees. Covering with mulch helps keep birds under control. Bermuda over seeded with rye will resume growth when we have 65 degrees nighttime temperatures.



You can encourage last year's Bermuda to come out of dormancy and gradually kill the rye grass by mowing every four days and lowering the blade each time. Mow, hoe or handpick weeds as soon as they appear. In desert rock areas Bermuda grass weeds can be controlled with pre-emergence herbicides.

Trees/Shrubs

- Pay special attention to



deciduous fruit trees, providing adequate soil moisture for fruit sizing in the late April and May period.



- Two to five year old citrus trees transplant most successfully. Larger, older trees are more costly, harder to transplant, and suffer more from transplant shock. It will generally be three years after transplant before fruit production and that is the same whether you plant a 2 year old tree or a 10 year old tree. Keep new plantings well watered for two weeks and then lengthen your irrigations out gradually until you are watering once a week. As the weather warms, adjust your irrigation timer to water more frequently. Be sure to run your system long enough to wet the top two feet of soil. Deep, infrequent watering is much better than a daily sprinkle.

Flowers

- Allow your wildflowers to go to seed. They will produce a natural healthy feast for birds as well as reseeding themselves to come up again next year.
- The second half of April is the time to pull up your geraniums, petunias, snap dragons and plant summer flowers so the roots can establish before the tough heat arrives.
- Propagate chrysanthemums in April. Divide chrysanthemums to prevent root binding.



Vegetables

- Plant seeds: beans (lima & snap), black eyed peas, carrots, cucumber, jicama, melons, okra, summer squash, green onions, peanuts, radishes, scallions, green beans.
- Place shade cloth over tomatoes to keep bugs away.
- If you haven't pruned your herb garden, now is the time to do it. For frost damaged herbs, look for new



growth emerging on the lower half of the plant. Use sharp shears to cut the plant back by 1/3 to 1/2 or more, down to healthy new side shoots. Add new compost and water well.

- Fertilize producing vegetable gardens.

Your Desert Garden - Monthly **DON'T** List for April

1. Don't prune citrus except to remove dead or damaged wood and branches obstructing pathways, views, or structures.
2. When pruning never remove more than 1/4 of the total plant. Always use sharp, sterile, quality pruning tools and disinfect them between cuts to prevent the spread of disease.
3. Don't cheat on soil preparation for flowers and vegetables.
4. Don't use insecticides on herbs. Most bugs, including aphids, can be handled by spraying with your garden hose. If a plant becomes heavily infested with aphids, just get rid of it.
5. Don't fertilize dormant Bermuda grass until late April or May.
6. Too much fertilizer can cause salt burn and too little can cause nutrient deficiency problems. Water both the day before and immediately after applying granular fertilizers.
7. Don't water grass at night when the temperatures are coolest as this fosters the growth of fungal diseases.
8. Don't mow when grass is wet. This also may result in fungal disease.
9. Don't delay on weed control. Handle weeds while they are young, tender, and their roots are manageable, or before they sprout.
10. Don't use a pre-emergent in an area where you are going to plant veggies and flowers from seed. It will prevent seeds from germination. It will not affect transplants.
11. If you are growing a lawn from new seed, don't plant seeds now. Wait until May.
12. Bird holes in saguaros scab naturally; don't try to repair them.

Featured Design - Oasis in the Desert

Location: *North Scottsdale*

Designers: *Jeremy Smith and TJ Wilcoxson*

Our clients recently moved here from Houston and unfortunately were welcomed with more rainfall in the first two months of the year, than we had all of last year.



That was the only negative to this wonderful project. We



mixed two colors of flagstone with stacked stone and masonry for our hardscape items. We then softened up the backyard with native plants and trees.

And lastly we made it a resort with landscape lighting and fiber optic lighting.

You can reach **Jeremy Smith** of California Pools at **480.345.0005**

and

TJ Wilcoxson of Alexon Design at **480.699.7796**.

See more of this property: [Click Here](#)

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