



Betty's Bloomers Nursery

Issue 6

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Spring Is Here?

Well, maybe. We haven't seen that Easter cold spell yet. The pecan trees have not leafed out yet and it did thunder in February several times. Even knowing what the "old timers" say, we still can't wait to get started.

Grower tips

Choosing the right bedding plants can sometimes be a difficult task to do. Some of the cool season annuals are in full bloom now for instant color, but may not last long enough when the weather warm up. The soil in your flower beds may still be too cold for warm season annuals. Also, you should be wary of buying tiny little annual plants in full bloom in the flats. Sometimes these plants have been forced into bloom before they are mature enough. Also, some growers use growth retardants on these tiny plants to control their height to be able to store them for longer periods of time before they are not salable in that pot size.

Read labels or ask the sales person what conditions the plants need. Keep in mind that these labels are universal, so a plant labeled full sun may not do as well in South East Texas as it would in Michigan. Generally, the term "full sun" means it can be planted in a location that receives bright sunlight all day. "Partial sun" needs protection from the hot part of the day from noon

until 3 or 4 o'clock. Partial shade will tolerate morning or late afternoon sun, and plants labeled for shade cannot tolerate any direct sunlight.

After making the right selection of bedding plants, prepare your flower beds by adding peat moss, or good composted material. Mix in a good slow release fertilizer or manure, being careful not to overdo it and burn your tender plants. Examine the roots, if they appear to be root bound, gently loosen the roots before planting. Water in well, settling the soil around the roots. Remember to check your new transplants for the next couple of weeks until they get established.

What's in Season?

Choose new azalea bushes now while they are in bloom. It is easier to blend color combinations now when you can see them at their peak. Also, make sure you choose plants with the same growth habits when planting all together. Large bush Azaleas are Indica varieties such as Red, Pink & Purple Formosa, George Tabor, & G.G.Gerbing. Medium sized varieties are the Kurume and Glen Dale varieties, such as Fashion, Red & Pink Ruffles, & H.H Hume. Dwarf varieties include Coral Belle, Hino & Gumpo azaleas.

To Do List:

Now that your lawn has started to green up, use a high nitrogen fertilizer to give it a good start. If you have problems with weeds in your lawn, use a weed & feed fertilizer. If you use a granular type fertilizer made sure you water it in good to dissolve any left on the foliage to prevent burning.

Prune back and reshape Azaleas, Camellias and other early spring blooming shrubs after they have finished blooming. Very old Azaleas are susceptible to a disease known as die back, where entire limbs will die. To prevent this, occasionally, you will need to prune back to the ground all the old growth to allow new growth to sprout.

Use Azalea, gardenia, & Camellia fertilizer now. It contains extra nutrients these plants need to stay healthy.

Something Extra

There are steps you can do to prevent diseases on your tomato & squash plants. 1) Choose disease resistant varieties, 2) Plant in a sunny well-drained location, 3) Allow plenty of space for air flow, 4) Place mulch over the soil to prevent soil-borne diseases from spreading, 5) water early in the day or use soaker hoses, 6) remove any diseased leaves or fruit 7) water & fertilize often adding epsom salts occasionally.