



# An early spring greets gardeners

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“ Springtime  
is the land  
awakening.  
The March winds  
are the  
morning yawn. ”

- Lewis Grizzard

## Upcoming Free Events

**Montgomery County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale**  
Saturday, March 24, 2012  
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
9020 Airport Road  
Conroe  
936-539-7824

**Woodlands Forest Expo**  
Saturday, March 24, 2012  
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.  
*Demonstrations, displays, seminars and talks on gardening, native plants, tree care, irrigation, rainwater harvesting and more.*  
Lone Star College,  
Montgomery Campus  
3200 College Park Drive  
The Woodlands

**Mercer Arboretum's March Mart**  
Friday, March 23, 2012  
8 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Saturday, March 24, 2012  
8 a.m. – 1 p.m.  
22306 Aldine Westfield  
Humble  
[www.hcp4.net/mercer](http://www.hcp4.net/mercer)

In case you haven't noticed, spring is very early this year. Already, wild, native flowers are blooming. Dewberry blossoms (a relative of the rose, by the way) are covering the prickly plants. Walter's viburnum is already in full bloom. Gallardia (Indian blanket) is also getting ready to open its petals. One may think it early, but it's time to get most spring planting done now.



squash and watermelon should go into the ground mid- to late March, gardeners can fairly safely put these plants in now to take full advantage of a longer growing season.

### Flowers

Put in the ground butterfly weed (milkweed), gaillardia, coreopsis, cuphea, mist flowers, frog fruit, sunflowers, lantana, liatris, penstemon, phlox, salvia, Stokes' aster, cosmos, Echinacea, nicotiana and verbena now.

### March garden activities

- Divide irises.
- Mulch under plants
- Begin providing nutrients for roses.
- Fertilize fruit trees.
- Get rid of the Winter Blahs

When herbaceous perennials begin budding out, it's a good practice to prune the plants back to the green. There will be a good supply of dead branches, twigs and other green waste items after the horrendous drought. There also will be a great deal of dead leaves. What to do with all of them?



In the Woodlands, there are actually a number of choices to dispose of green (yard) trimmings. Take a moment to see how you can help by visiting the [yard trimmings](#) page on our Web site.

### Vegetables

Put tomato plants in the ground now. Instead of digging a hole in your garden and setting the plants in upright, strip the leaves and stems off the bottom two-thirds of the plant. Dig a trench and lay the tomato plant in it. Put in a handful of good organic fertilizer, water well, and cover the trench, bending the top of the plant upward a little so that about five to six inches of green is showing above the top of the ground. Water again after covering. The tomato plant will root all along the part of the buried stem, thus giving the plant a stronger root system and the capacity to collect more nutrients. In a couple of days, the tip of the plant will grow upwards toward the sun and no one will ever know that two-thirds of the little plant is underground.

Now's also the time to put in beans, both bush and pole beans. In the days when many people canned, bush beans were more popular because all the beans matured at once. People would pick and can at the same time. However, today, pole beans are much more popular. Pole beans mature in sequence, which suits our lifestyle. A gardener can pick a portion of the beans one day and use them for supper. A day or two later, more beans will mature and the gardener can pick another batch

Anytime this month, it's okay to plant lettuce, mustard and radishes. Usually, cucumbers, corn, eggplants, peppers,