

Pre-Spring Garden Preparation

By Jennifer MackInday

Wish you could get a jump start on your garden this year? Here are a few simple tips for pre-spring garden preparation.

Removing pests from your landscape isn't restricted to warm weather. Warm winter days are perfect for finding and destroying gypsy moth egg sacks. The egg masses are typically the size of a cotton ball and are covered with tan colored fibers. You'll find the sacks attached to the underside of branches, behind loose bark, stuck to parked vehicles, on firewood, on roof soffits. The more sacks you removed, the better!

If you plan to use a professional, February is perfect time to schedule spring landscape cleanup service. Contract with your landscaper to handle the following by mid-March:

- leaf and debris removal

- planting bed edging

- tree, shrub, perennial plant pruning

- mulching

- fertilizing

Itching to get back in the garden? Start your seeds inside now for healthy, early plantings. Using damp paper towels for a medium, place seeds one inch apart and roll the paper towels, securing with a rubber band. Place in a warm, dark spot and keep moist with a mister. In a few weeks your seeds will germinated. Once sprouted, carefully transplant to a growth soil mixture rich in vermiculite and peat moss. Keep moist with a mister and make sure to keep near a window. Before you know it will be time to plant your garden!

Don't forget to clean your bird feeders. Remove any soggy or frozen seeds from the bottom, then rinse feeders with warm water and a stiff brush. Avoid soap and chlorine as these could deter or harm the birds.

Finally, check your garden tools and equipment. Now is the time to service your lawn mower and weed trimmer. Have the oil changed, blades sharpened and spark plugs checked. Fill a bucket with sand and pour motor oil over the top. Dip your tools into this bucket several times, then wipe clean. Keep the bucket handy and use throughout the season to keep your tools clean.

Spring may not be here yet, but preparing your landscape and tools now will allow you to spend more time outside this year!

About the Author

Jennifer Mackinday owns House Help, a free contractor referral service. Need help finding a reliable contractor? Phone toll free 877-360-7292 or log on to <http://www.freehousehelp.org> today! Listen to our home improvement and repair podcast anytime at <http://freehousehelp.libsyn.com> Article

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