



## April - May - June 2025

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When is it really, truly Spring? It's unsettled, unpredictable, too short and there's always something waiting to be done. BUT it's still Spring! And where is it? New England gardeners ask themselves that question year after year and, in reality, the answer is always the same: When **you** say it's Spring, **it's Spring!** Never mind the weather reports and forecasts, forget about the confusion caused by warm weather at Christmas, snow and ice, rain and ice, or the annoyance of moving the clocks forward while the birds are still depending on the feeders and the ground is frozen solid. Spring comes on that magical day when you step outside and know that the air and the light are somehow different, that noise you heard was indeed a bird chirping in its nest, and that those little green things pushing through will grow up to be the daffodils you so carefully planted in the fall! Take each day as it comes and remember that Mother Nature has often been described as capricious, willful and determined to reduce Connecticut gardeners to a permanent state of confusion. So far this year, she has been highly successful! But a New England gardener learns to “go with the flow” and adapt to change and all we really care about is that we'll soon be back in the garden again! No matter how many garden chores are waiting, enjoy the fleeting days of Spring. We've earned them!

A few daytime temperatures much higher than normal pushed some bushes and flowering trees ahead of their normal schedule. Unfortunately, this makes them particularly vulnerable to damage in March and April rain/wind storms! Lawns are littered with fallen branches and twigs and Spring clean-up is bound to proceed slowly. Many perennials, ready to break dormancy, may decide to take a little longer. Keep an eye out for frost warnings in April and protect tender plants if necessary, using old sheets or towels but not plastic.

Sometimes, gardeners tend to forget that weather patterns usually “average out” over a period of years...but this, by anybody's standards, was a most unusual winter! Although the past winter was, on the whole, mild, wind and ice storms did a fair amount of harm. You may be coping with damaged shrubbery or trees and replacement may be the only solution. The nursery is here to help you solve garden problems; calling ahead for an appointment will ensure that staff is available to help you with your garden planning. Existing photographs are always a plus and will help you integrate new additions into your existing landscape. It is certainly disheartening to lose favorite trees, evergreens and shrubs to the force of nature, but it is also an opportunity to change the “look” of a landscape, expand a vista or try something new. Take a minute to sit and reflect on what you really want your garden to be from now on. This could be the perfect opportunity to head off in a new direction!

Consider setting up a chart to monitor the sequence and length of bloom from your bushes and flowering trees and to make note of what you see from the house. It is possible to have a variety of bushes flowering from April into October, providing a background for your perennial beds, screening for the vegetable garden and privacy for sitting areas, decks and terraces. Using bushes is an easy way to reduce garden maintenance as many take care of themselves with a minimum of tweaking.

Some garden designers like to ensure that inside and outside colors used compliment each other and that you always have something attractive to look at from the rooms in the house where you spend the most time. All gardens change as they mature and careful editing and/or additions will help you enjoy what you have created even more. In fact, the surrounding background landscape also changes over time and may alter the way you look at and use your garden. All these factors affect your over-all garden plan.

### **A Helping Hand for the Spring Gardener**

It's not unusual for gardeners to get to Spring and then decide that they either didn't plant enough bulbs in the fall or that they put some in the wrong places or that they just plain forgot about that one place that they can see when they're having breakfast and now it looks so bare! What to do? Acer Gardens has a quick fix for you! We will have **pre-planted pots available** featuring daffodils, tulips, hyacinths, grape hyacinths and other spring charmers ready for you to position in the garden or on the deck/patio. Supplies are limited so don't wait too long to come over and choose!

### **Web Site**

We continue to use the Web Site to post current announcements so please plan on checking it frequently. Read about our services, stay up to date on coming events and future workshops, learn about our plants, products and landscape supplies, access our quarterly Newsletter and all the current Information Sheets and Planting Guides and join us on Instagram and Facebook (a great way to see what other gardeners are growing). In response to your suggestions, we will also be posting more "How To" videos! We're always interested in hearing what our customers would like to see on the web site and what would be most helpful to you. Just remember: we don't have full-time office coverage because we like to spend the season down in the Nursery with you so you may have to leave us a message! We'll get back to you as soon as we can!

### **Workshops**

Acer Gardens is planning a series of workshops held over the active gardening months. After this long, gray winter, everyone is anxious to get started ... to get our hands in gardening gloves and our feet in garden boots or shoes! We will be offering our popular **Annuals in Containers** workshop in May and are still finalizing other events. Watch your email and/or the web site for further announcements as our Workshop spaces fill up quickly. (They also make wonderful presents!) As always, we welcome your thoughts and suggestions on future workshops and would love to hear from you!

### **Summer Gardens to Visit**

For 30 years The Garden Conservancy has run self-guided tours showcasing more than 4,500 private gardens from coast to coast ... in over 40 states! Most of the gardens are only open to the public once a year. 2025 Open Days in Connecticut run from May 3 through October 18 with admission at \$10 for an adult. Tickets must be purchased in advance on the web site. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic gardeners are present in all the gardens and very often the owners are available. No reservations are required; Open Days are rain or shine events and a fun way to see how other gardeners create very personal spaces. Visit [www.gardenconservancy.org](http://www.gardenconservancy.org) to search by garden, city or state. Open Days are also listed for near-by Rhode Island, New York and Massachusetts as well as other states.

### **The Plant of the Month**

**The Plant of the Month** will be available the first of each month, starting in April, at the nursery, near the checkout table. These plants are carefully chosen to feature current bloom times and can be used to serve as an accent in your garden. Try something new!

April: **Primula (Primrose)**

Zone: 5-7

Height: 6-12"

Spread: 1 ½ - 2 ½'

These early spring bloomers prefer light shade and rich, well-drained soil full of humus. Available in a wide range of colors, primroses multiply each year and some may even re-bloom in the fall. Prune off dead leaves, spent blooms and water thoroughly during the summer months.

May: **Forget-Me-Nots (Myosotis sylvatica)**

Zone: 3-8

Height: 6-12"

Spread: 1 - 1½'

These late-spring, bright blue, enthusiastic bloomers have re-seeding down to a science and naturalize easily. They thrive in moist soil, can be used as ground covers, and look very well mixed with tulips. Forget-me-nots will grow happily in full sun to part shade and are not usually bothered by deer or rabbits.

June: **Hardy Geranium (Cranesbill)**

Zone 5-8

Height: 6-12"

Spread: 1-2'

These colorful, mounding, hardy plants bloom from mid-spring to fall and are the perfect "tuck-in" plant. They prefer well-drained soil and do best in morning sun with some afternoon shade; some cultivars become flowering groundcovers or tuck-ins in rock gardens. Extremely versatile, many do well at the front of the border, in dry shade under trees or in rose borders. A slow-release fertilizer used at the start of the summer will see these plants through the growing season; once wildflowers, they don't expect much coddling.

**Spring Products**

Available Spring products at the nursery will include pelletized lime, pre-emergent fertilizer, lawn and garden fertilizer, Milorganite, organic lawn and garden products, grass seed, straw and control products for deer, insects, rabbits, voles, weeds, bugs and disease. April is the ideal time to apply lime, if needed, to the lawn; fertilize and use pre-emergent weed control. Specialized products include:

**Alpine Mix:** An excellent growth medium for alpines and succulents. Use in containers or mix into soil to promote good drainage.

**Soil Moist:** Reduces watering by absorbing and slowly releasing water into the soil. Useful both in containers and garden beds.

**Acer's Super Grow 18-6-18:** The nursery's own water soluble plant food with micro-nutrients.

**BT Thuricide:** A bacteria (Bacillus Thuringiensis) used to control gypsy moth and other caterpillars.

**Milky Spore:** A bacteria designed for the natural control of lawn grubs.

**Weed Barrier Fabric:** Designed for the vegetable garden.

**Aftercare for Bulbs**

Don't forget to deadhead daffodils and tulips as they stop blooming. Cut the flowers off but let the stems and leaves turn brown before you cut them down. Bulb experts advise against braiding the leaves. You want all that nutrition from the leaves to go back into the bulbs. It's a good idea to fertilize bulbs after bloom: place 1

½ heaping teaspoons of Bulb Tone around each plant (keep it away from the bulb stem) and water it in well after applying.

Adding spreading plants or ground covers to your bulb areas will cover up the fading bulbs and give your garden a second wind. Many daffodils will happily naturalize and spread over years but, in this climate, most tulips have a limited life span of 3-4 years. If you plant your tulips among perennials slow to break in the Spring, the growing foliage will help to disguise the dying tulip foliage.

### **The Earliest Spring Bloomers**

Winters are long in New England and this last year has been particularly difficult! All gardeners look forward to seeing the bright splash of bulbs in the Spring but sometimes we forget that there are other early Spring bloomers waiting to bring color to the landscape. Many are cold-tolerant; mix them with later-blooming flowers to prevent bare spots in garden beds. Some are “ephemerals”, blooming and vanishing in the space of a few months only to re-appear next year. Planted on the edge of a woodland, they add their own charm to the landscape. Think about using snowdrops, crocus, crested iris, grape or wood hyacinths, winter aconite or fritillaria and then extend the bloom time by adding pulmonaria, creeping phlox, iberis (candytuft), brunnera (bugloss), and mertensia (Virginia bluebells.)

### **Daffodils**

Spring isn't really Spring until you see that first daffodil! Long considered a sign of joy and new beginnings, the daffodil is found across Europe and Mediterranean countries (Spain actually has the most varieties). They were also native to Mexico. Busy bees that they were, the Romans took them on their travels across Europe and they found a natural home in England which now produces 90% of the world's daffodil population. Beloved as a symbol of returning life and joy, there are now over 26,000 different daffodil cultivars coming from 56 species with 13 sub-divisions! Florists consider the daffodil the 10<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary flower. The botanical name of the entire genus is Narcissus ... Daffodil is the common name.

Although they were placed in ordinary garden plantings very early on, daffodils didn't really get settled in as ornamentals until the 1800s, long after the tulip craze had started. They were popular grown around cottages, especially because deer and squirrels leave them strictly alone! Daffodils can always be tucked in somewhere in a garden although they don't like being grown in ivy or pachysandra ... too much root competition!

Flowering in every shade of yellow and white, daffodils are a true perennial; some will flower for decades! Some gardeners have patiently, year by year, established “rivers” of daffodils on the edges of their properties; others are content to have small patches of the bright flower blooming where they can see them from the house. You can easily extend the season because there is a wide range of bloom time among daffodils! Forcing paperwhites is an easy winter occupation although the bulbs cannot be saved. No matter how you grow them, the daffodil brings a cheerful and enthusiastic welcome to Spring!

### **Using Groundcovers**

Groundcovers are often used to cover problem areas and to unify divergent components in the landscape. They can serve as traffic barriers and visual guides as well as define space. They can add color and texture, soften hardscaping, partner with taller plants and minimize garden maintenance very quickly. Whole hillsides have been covered in plants acting as ground cover ... everything from heathers, junipers and roses ... but to most gardeners a groundcover serves to deal with a difficult area in an existing garden. Consider the height of the plant you choose in relation to the space you are covering and decide if you want an evergreen look or are content to see your groundcover die back in the winter. A good ground cover should spread by itself and develop into a dense cover, inhibiting weeds.

Low growing groundcovers will fill the spaces between pavers or flagstones, replace small patches of hard-to-mow lawn and eliminate the need for mulch. Heavy, dense shade can be covered with a selection of mosses. Using groundcovers can eliminate lawn completely in small, confined spaces. Planted around shrubs, groundcovers serve to retain moisture, control weeds and define the shape of a garden bed. Almost none of them want to be fussed over (some can even take limited foot traffic) and therefore make few demands on a gardener's time. Adding organic matter to the soil before planting will give your ground cover a good base. Spring or early summer planting allows the groundcover plants to establish themselves and settle in. When planting under trees use shallow-rooted plants. Pachysandra, myrtle, ivy and vinca all give a very traditional look but there are many other dependable groundcovers, including:

#### Partial Shade Ground Covers

Asarum (Wild Ginger)	Spreads via rhizomes
Carex pensylvanica (Oak Sedge)	Tolerates dry shade
Epimedium (Barrenwort)	Needs good drainage
Galium (Sweet woodruff)	Spreads rapidly
Gaultheria procumbens (Wintergreen)	Red fruits in the autumn
Iris cristata (Dwarf crested iris)	Naturalizes
Lirope (Lilyturf)	Deer-resistant
Mazus reptans (Cupflower)	Takes some foot traffic. Spreads

#### Sun-loving Ground Covers

Carex (Sedge)	Can tolerate dry shade
Juniperus (Creeping Juniper)	Holds slopes; evergreen
Lamium (Archangel)	Rapid spreader
Phlox subulata (Creeping Phlox)	Tolerates deer and drought
Sagina subulata	Resembles moss.
Sedum (Stonecrop)	Takes drought and winds
Thymus (Creeping thyme)	Tolerates foot traffic

#### **The Shady Side: Ferns to the Rescue!**

No perennials bloom forever so, to fill gaps, a gardener needs to rely on plants that display interesting foliage, giving substance and texture to the landscape. Needing little care, ferns are a logical and easy choice.

Some of the oldest plants in the world, ferns contribute to a gardener's landscape in a wide variety of ways. They range from large to small, come in an extensive array of green colors with differing foliage and combine well with other plants. Most thrive in part to full shade (although some can handle dappled morning sun) and prefer an enriched, water-retentive soil. Ferns can be used to soften landscape borders or to give background to flowers and low, spreading shrubs. Planted with bulbs, their growing fronds will spread and cover up dying late spring bulb foliage. Best of all: they are deer and vole resistant!

Although they look wonderful lining a wooded path or shaded patio, ferns can be used as accents to draw attention to other plants, shrubs, tree trunks and even benches. You can add soft textures to your landscape by planting ferns in colonies and letting them spread as a ground cover. Ferns combine well with many plants including astilbe, bergenia, galium, heuchera, hostas, lamium, sedges and wildflowers. Used in containers, ferns will work well with lamium, lysimachia, veronica, vinca and bleeding heart.

Ferns respond well to an early spring application of a slow release fertilizer or a fall top-dressing of leaf-mold. They seldom need maintenance; the deciduous types die back each fall and return their nutrients to the soil. Consider planting:

Dryopteris erythrosora (Autumn Fern)      Height: 18-24”      Spread: 18-24”

This fern is noted for its intermingling of dark green fronds with coppery-red new growth. Keep the plants evenly moist until they are well-established; they will eventually be almost drought-tolerant. Clumps increase very slowly so it can even be grown as a container plant. Removing dead fronds in the spring will keep the plant looking neat. Fertilize in the spring before new growth begins and divide mature clumps as needed.

Matteuccia struthiopteris (Ostrich Fern)      Height: 3-5’      Spread: 3-5’

A shady, damp corner of your garden is the perfect spot for Ostrich Fern. This plant should be sited where the gardener can admire its airy quality as the fronds move in the breeze. Ostrich Fern requires watering as it establishes itself and appreciates a little fertilizer from time to time but it will quickly form its spreading root system and fill in the available space. Many a problem area has been brightened by this fern.

Athyrium niponicum (Painted Fern)      Height 12-18”      Spread: 18-24”

This arching fern prefers growing in a sheltered location in organically rich and moist soil. Fronds are a soft gray-green with silver overlay and will give the best color in early spring. Grown in part to full shade, the fern naturalizes well and can form dense colonies. Divide clumps in early spring.

Cinnamon fern      Height: 2-3’      Spread: 2=3’

Easily grown in medium to wet soil, this fern can tolerate heavy shade and moist, boggy ground. Growing in clumps, this fern is an excellent selection for wet areas along ponds, streams, water gardens or in bogs. Low maintenance, rabbits tend to leave it alone.

Athyrium filix-femina (Lady Fern)      Height: 6-10”      Spread: 12-29”

This dwarf, easy-to-grow fern prefers rich, well-drained soil in part to full shade but will tolerate drier soils than many other ferns. It appreciates shelter from winds to prevent fronds from breaking. Divide clumps every few years. An excellent choice for rock gardens and the front of shade borders.

### **Partial-Shade Perennials**

Many perennials will adapt to partial shade conditions; some seem to welcome a little relief from strong mid-day sun! Spring-blooming shade lovers delight with their flowers and reward gardeners after the long winter wait. Some of them bloom ahead of the daffodils and should be placed where they can be seen and appreciated. They all naturalize well and will slowly spread. But as the season moves along into full summer, the shade is still there! The Connecticut gardener has a wide choice of perennials that will do well in partial shade ... some of them have extended bloom periods (but you may need to deadhead). Most of them will mix well with natives and many grasses. Consider using:

### **Pulmonaria (Lungwort)**

Zone: 4-9      Height: 9-12”      Spread: 18-24”

This early April spring bloomer lives happily in part to full shade but can tolerate light morning sun. A low-growing plant, pulmonaria appreciates cool, rich, moist soil; blooms are available in blue, pink and white. Plants spread slowly but can be divided in the fall if they become too crowded. They are generally deer resistant but attract the first returning bees and hummingbirds.

## **Epimedium (Barrenwort)**

Zone: 5-9      Height: 6-12”      Spread: 12-18”

Another April bloomer, epimediums are easily grown in medium, well-drained soil in part shade. Cut back any remaining old foliage in late winter to let the new spring leaves emerge. Very low maintenance, epimediums make an outstanding ground cover. Their showy flowers, in shades of red and yellow, combine well with other early bloomers. Considered rabbit and deer tolerant, epimediums can even tolerate some drought as the season advances.

## **Tiarella (Foam Flower)**

Zone: 4-9      Height: 9-12”      Spread: 12-24”

This May blooming, clump-forming perennial spreads rapidly. Tiny white flowers, rising well above the leaves, appear in spring and may bloom for almost 6 weeks! Removing spent flower spikes will improve the look of the plant after bloom. Preferring rich, moisture-retentive soil, tiarella's soil should not be allowed to dry out. This plant is rabbit and deer tolerant and is easily grown.

## **Pruning Clematis**

Clematis vines are fast growing and hardy but they should be pruned properly in order to give you consistent flowers at the right time and you do need to know which of the 3 groups your vine falls into. (If you didn't save the white plastic information tag you may have to write down when your vine flowers this year and use the information as next year's pruning guide.)

### **Group 1**

Varieties flower in the spring on growth from the previous season. They need very little pruning but if you want to “tidy them up” do it very quickly after they have stopped blooming.

### **Group 2**

These vines bloom in early summer, on last year's growth, with a re-bloom in late summer or early fall on new growth. In early spring, cut away any broken branches and trim the tips of the branches. Thin out some stems to leave room for new growth.

### **Group 3**

These vines flower on new growth in both summer and fall. In spring, cut the vine back to 12-18”. It's a good idea to leave 2-4 buds on each stem. As the vine grows, train the new growth onto a support.

## **Give Your Bushes a Helping Hand**

Remember that most Hydrangeas (**not** hydrangea arborescens ‘Annabelle’ or Hydrangea paniculata), flower on old wood. Remove any dead or broken branches in spring but do not prune. Fertilizing with a product containing 18-5-9 will encourage blooms. Spent blooms should be removed after flowering. Any light pruning should be done directly after bloom before the bushes set next year's flowers.

Lilac bushes should be pruned each year, after blooming. Remove all spent blossoms. Trim and clear out larger stems from the center to increase air space. You can leave some small suckers/shoots at ground level to develop into larger stems.

This will encourage a wider bloom area. Lightly shape the bush until you like the way it looks but don't give it an un-natural "flat top".

Mature Rhododendrons seldom need pruning but, if you must, prune right after they bloom as they set next year's flowers very quickly. Look for the little green leaf buds on the stem and cut ½" above them. Let the natural shape of the plant dictate your pruning. Give your rhododendrons and azaleas a generous feeding of Holly Tone.

Azaleas and weigela bloom on wood at least one year old. After bloom, these bushes should be lightly hand pruned in order to maintain the natural shape of the bush. Carefully remove selected old wood every 3 years, allowing the bush to rejuvenate itself.

April and May are ideal times for pruning evergreens. Remove dead, diseased or undesirable wood but remember to pay attention to the basic shape of the evergreen.

### **Fertilizing and Mulching Basics**

All plants need nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, nutrients essential to helping plants make healthy leaves, develop strong roots and digest their food. Although these elements are usually present in the soil, the wise gardener knows that soil changes over time and the nutrients must be replenished. The home gardener must choose between granular or water soluble fertilizer. Granular fertilizer delivers food slowly but lasts a long time. Water soluble fertilizers are faster acting but must be applied more frequently.

Most bushes and trees like an application of granular fertilizer in early spring. Annuals like additional boosts of water soluble fertilizer throughout the growing season. Wait until the ground has really warmed up before you fertilize perennials, annuals and vegetables. Roses are always hungry and will benefit from the application of light soluble fertilizer every week during their blooming season. Don't apply fertilizer on wet or windy days ... it will only be wasted.

Decorative mulches are an essential part of low-maintenance landscapes, offering many benefits to your plants and soil. They reduce the amount of water lost through evaporation, keep the soil cooler during the heat of the summer, suppress weed growth and help control erosion. Decomposing over time, mulches add nutrients and organic matter to the soil. There are a few general rules:

Do not place mulch directly against plant stems or tree bases.

Apply mulch layers no more than 1-3" thick.

Thoroughly water newly installed wood or bark mulches.

Don't automatically renew mulch every year --- assess your needs realistically.

### **Dealing with Over-Crowded Perennials**

In general, most perennials should be divided in the spring which allows enough time for the new divisions to grow and bloom and become established before winter. Here in Connecticut we are able to divide easily until mid-May. Grasses are best divided in early spring because they do their aggressive growing in the hot days of summer. Peonies and iris should be divided in the fall. A ring of foliage around an empty, flowerless center tells you it's time to divide!

Many plants (black-eyed Susan and leucanthemum e.g.) benefit from frequent division and almost seem to need it to thrive. Simply dig up the plant and...with your fingers...gently separate the plant into multiple sections. Plant at once, setting the new plant at the same soil level. Tamp the soil down around the plant so that water can pool; protect the new plant from strong sun until it is established.



Some plants should be divided into large segments as early as possible. These include lamium, brunnera, dendranthemum, asters, sedum, hosta, monarda, helenium and coneflowers. Pulling pieces from the outer edges of the clump makes for easy dividing. Place the divisions so that their “best side” is displayed well.

Divide a perennial while it is still healthy and blooming well and replenish the soil with organic matter. Keep the best looking sections to replant and discard any which look weak or diseased. Give the new divisions plenty of spreading room and water as appropriate.

Division of hostas, daylilies and grasses calls for real strength and is often done after a good, soaking rain. The best tool for this is a sturdy garden shovel or fork. Cut the dug-up plant in half or thirds with a sharp knife or the shovel and plant at once.

Some perennials are best not divided. These include: alyssums, dianthus, lavender, perovskia and trillium.

### **The Layered Garden**

The concept of “layering” in a garden is not new (remember that old rule: “ tall plants in the back, short ones in the front”) but, increasingly, garden designers are using layering to organize both large sweeps of flowers as well as to create a garden that is attractive to wildlife and, at the same time, emphasizes specimen plants or bushes. The great advantage of “layering” is that it spreads interest across the entire garden year ... plants don’t peak all at once! Multiple layers don’t necessarily mean a “formal” look ... you can create layers by using drifts of plants and bushes in an informal arrangement and vary the look by pulling the back layer forward in places. Plants can be set underneath each other (especially effective if you don’t like the look of plain dirt or mulch or want to cover “bare legs”) and using a middle layer of plants with a vertical accent can call attention to certain bloomers but also disguise plants past their prime. Vines and climbers add vertical interest and often give almost continuous bloom. You can layer a perennial bed or part of a garden and site it near a sitting area or create a private area for rest and relaxation. Using plants in this manner means you don’t have to see everything at once but can “discover” the garden as you spend time in it. Most of all, a layered garden is attractive ... either as a sitting area or a larger garden area ... for you and your visitors at all times.

Large shrubs, or even small trees, will form the back layer and attract birds at the same time so they can find hiding places. Be careful not to create too much shade as that could limit your plant choices. Then add smaller bushes and tall perennials to form a middle layer and bring in the butterflies.

Finally, put in a variety of small perennials, bulbs, and annuals for your eye to focus on against the backdrop. This layer is the easiest to change as the season advances and you need to refresh the garden. This is often the perfect spot to add ever-blooming annuals. Contrasting foliage will provide a backdrop and, chosen carefully, will serve to showcase the blooming flowers.

### **Getting Those Houseplants Outside**

As the weather begins to warm, many gardeners itch to get their houseplants outside for the summer. A good rule of thumb is to wait until nighttime temperatures are consistently above 55

degrees. If you have any nagging little doubts, wait! Many houseplants are native to tropical or sub-tropical climates and will need time to adapt to a new environment.

Before your plant goes outside, check to see if it needs re-potting into the next larger pot size. This is also a good time to see if your plants need light pruning or reshaping. Add a little fresh potting mix to each plant as some of its soil will have decomposed over the winter. When the plants go outside, place them in a partially shaded spot for at least 10 days.

Once they have adjusted to more light, the plants can be moved to a sunny location in the garden or on the patio. You may need to water the plants daily and change your fertilizing schedule. It's a good idea to inspect the houseplants periodically in case bugs or insects are causing problems.

### **Often-Asked Questions**

#### **Some of my bulbs are really in the wrong place. Can I move them? When and how?**

Wait until the flowers fade and then deadhead them. Before the foliage vanishes, dig out the bulbs (in a big clump would be ideal) with their leaves intact and then plant them in their new location. Be sure to really firm the soil around the transplanted bulbs. They'll go into hibernation and reappear in their new home next spring.

#### **I am so tempted by many of the seed packages displayed in the Checkout Shed? Is it hard to grow from seed? What should I pay particular attention to?**

First of all, read all the information on the back of the package to be sure you can provide the conditions your plants will need to grow and thrive. A soil test will tell you if you need to add organic material to the soil to provide good nutrients to your plants. Baby plants need frequent, shallow watering but, as the plants grow, water more deeply and less frequently in order to promote deep, strong roots. You may want to save seed for next year. Keep a simple log of what you grew and how it did to help you in your future planning.

#### **Is there a right way to plant from a pot to the ground? Can't I just plop them in?**

Your plant will do better as it grows if you follow a few simple guidelines when planting. First, and most important, don't ride them around in a hot car! Take them straight home, water gently, and let them sit in the shade for a bit. Best times to plant: early morning, late afternoon, or on a cool, overcast day. Choose your location carefully so that you can meet your plant's special needs. There's an old saying: "Right plant, right place" which really means: location, location, location! Hopefully, you have already amended your soil if necessary. Dig a bigger hole than you think you will need. Ease the plant out of the pot and gently tease out the roots with your fingers or a fork. Carefully position the plant in the hole (add soil to the bottom and sides of the hole as needed) and make sure the plant ends up with the top of the root zone level to the ground around the hole. Fill in the hole and firm the soil around the plant. Water slowly. Mulch lightly. Check your plant daily for the first week or two to make sure it is getting enough water and thriving.

#### **We garden on a difficult piece of property so there are garden beds scattered all around. How can we make things look more as though we had a plan?**

Repetition across existing beds will help create unity. Repeat some of the same plants in different beds and add a few vertical accents. Try accenting naturally clumping plants to establish pattern and flow and create substance. Using just a few colors, in different shades, from bed to bed will help your eye make a visual connection and the garden will seem more peaceful and cohesive. Planting, if possible, in groups of three, or even more, will also help to give a more solid look.

#### **I love my perennials but I wish some of them bloomed longer! Anything I can do?**

Some perennials just have naturally longer bloom periods than others. You can extend bloom time and stretch the season by looking for and planting both early and late cultivars of your favorites. In some cases, you can add 3-4 weeks bloom time by selecting a range across cultivars of the same plant. Many gardeners also plant later blooming "look-alikes" next to their favorites to get the over-all "look" they particularly like.

**I love to tuck in annuals here and there but I'm never sure when it's safe to plant them. What's the rule?**

Gardeners are always anxious to get plants into the ground but annuals are not quite as sturdy as most perennials. Annuals have different designations and will thrive if you follow these simple rules:

**Hardy annuals** are frost hardy and can be set out when a light frost is still likely.

**Half-hardy annuals** will survive a very light frost and can be set out in moderate spring weather.

**Tender annuals** cannot come through any frost and prefer warm nights. Do not set them out until nights are regularly in the 50s. If in doubt, ask someone at the nursery ... better safe than sorry!

**I like to plant roses here and there in my mixed flower beds but I hate to look at their brown knobby knees! How can I keep them covered?**

Use companion plants (paying attention to the height range of the cultivars you choose) which have an open look to them but still form clumps with upright foliage. You might use lavender, campanula (bellflower), nepeta (catmint), phlox paniculata (garden phlox), perovskia (Russian sage), salvia, geranium 'Rozanne' or any of the mints. Alyssum is a good choice because it will attract hover flies which eat insects known to prey on roses. Keep the under plantings about 12" away from the rose bushes as roses don't like root competition. You could also tuck in Landscape Roses which are short to begin with and throw blooms all summer long.

**Is it true that all vegetables need 6-8 hours of sun a day to grow? I seem to have less than that available but I really want to grow at least part of my dinner!**

That is generally true but of course there are a few exceptions. Leafy greens like the lettuces, kale and spinach grow well in partial shade. Beets, garlic, peas and radishes can get by on 4 hours of sun a day although they'd be happier with a little more. Some fruits like blackberries, raspberries and red and black currants will also do well, especially if grown in moveable containers. Container growing allows you to move your vegetables around as the sun/shade patterns change over the season. Depending on when shade is on your garden you may find that some crops will stretch a little. Avoid experimenting with the proven sun worshipers like tomatoes, summer squash, peppers and cucumbers.

**What do Spires Add to a Garden?**

Sometimes our gardens are full of bright clumps and soft outlines but we need a little drama and punctuation, something that says "Hey, look over here! See these lovely blooming flowers ... I'm just drawing your attention to how well it's going!" And that is what spires do ... they add elegance to a border, punctuate established flower clumps and shapes and provide the accent mark in a full bed. Because they often fit into narrow spaces, spire plants can help connect the various parts of a garden by creating flow and motion as well as highlighting features. Many spire-blooming plants are extremely tough and can easily stand on their own even when surrounded by billowing shapes and soft fillers. The interplay between the various shapes can take building a border to a new level. Even part-shade will accommodate some spires:

adenophora (common ladybells), for instance, gives dependable bloom in late spring and early summer. Perhaps you have room to try out a few spires in your own garden:

Actaea	(Black Cohosh)	Heuchera	(Coral Bells)
Agastache	(Anise Hyssop)	Kniphophia	(Red-hot Poker)
Ajuga	(Bugleweed)	Liatris	(Gayfeather)
Astilbe	(Astilbe)	Lupine	(Lupine)

Baptisia	(Blue False Indigo)	Salvia	(Meadow Sage)
Cimicifuga	(Bugbane)	Tiarella	(Foamflower)
Delphinium	(Delphinium)	Verbascum	(Mullein)
Digitalis purpurea	(Foxglove)	Veronica	(Speedwell)
		Veronicastrum	(Culver's Root)

### **Using Edging Plants**

Paying attention to “details” can give your garden a polished look. Edging plants can complete the picture of your garden beds but can also define path, driveways and lawn edges. Their function is to outline, frame or add contrast to the surrounding borders, lawns or hardscapes. They add ribbons of color or foliage and texture. The one constant should be using multiple plants of one type around each section of the garden. Most edging plants are small and neat and mounding but any plant can be an edger as long as you keep its space and height under control. The key is to choose plants that will fill in without running rampant and are in scale with what you are edging!

If you choose flowering plants as edgers be sure the foliage is attractive for the non-bloom season and adds to the overall look of the garden. You can use annuals and experiment with color or you can select plants that echo the colors in the border itself which produce a unified look.

### **Sun Loving Edgers**

Fescue	(Blue Fescue)
Iberis	(Candytuft)
Lavender	(Lavender)
Pennisetum	(Dwarf fountain grass)
Phlox subulata	(Moss pink)
Sedum	(Stonecrop)

### **Shade Loving Edgers**

Asarum	(European wild ginger)
Astilbe	(Astilbe)
Brunnera	(Brunnera)
Heuchera	(Coral Bells) ”
Lirope	(Lilyturf)
Tiarella	(Foam flower)

### **Annuals for Edging**

Ageratum  
 Allysum  
 Dusty Miller  
 Impatiens  
 Verbena

### **Plant Now for Fall “Wow!”**

Looking ahead is part of gardening. The garden is so full and lush in June that it seems odd to be thinking about late summer and fall but now is exactly the right time to think about filling the late summer garden with dependable, care-free color. Growing and combining asters, Dahlias and other late bloomers will give you a wide range of colors, shapes, sizes, and heights ... and they'll keep blooming until the killing frosts!

## **Dahlias**

The wide range of dahlias and the huge variety of colors they come in make them an ideal choice for perennial beds and containers. In this climate, dahlias should be planted late-April through May when the ground temperature has really warmed. They need a sunny location and well-drained soil in order to thrive and are happy with 6 hours of sunlight a day. If you are planting tubers, do not cover the soil with mulch as it will keep the warmth of the sun from reaching the tuber and helping it to sprout. A low nitrogen fertilizer within 30 days of planting can be repeated 4 weeks later but avoid over-feeding. Dahlias tend to have shallow roots so hand cultivation/weeding is a must. Be on the lookout for slugs and aphids early in the growing season.

Dwarf dahlias can easily be grown in containers. Bedding dahlias make a spectacular display all summer long; topping or pinching them will promote shorter, bushier plants with better stems for cutting. The large “dinner plate” dahlias may require some support or staking before they produce their fall blooms but they will bloom steadily until a killing frost. Dahlias are a wonderful cut flower for the house.

## **Asters**

Asters bring a steady presence to the fall garden. Available in a wide-range of size, shape and color, their long period of bloom (late summer through fall) and wide height range make them invaluable in mixed beds. Mingling well with other fall perennials, asters establish themselves easily, thrive in average soil and will take sun to partial shade. Some bloom in clouds of pale colors; others flaunt deep shades of purple. All combine well with native plants. Cutting the plants back in early June will prevent “aster sprawl”. Divide the plants every 3-5 years to keep them under control and remove unwanted seedlings as you spot them.

## **Dendranthema**

Dendranthema, the true perennial, hardy mum, has fallen victim to name-changing lately ... but to gardeners, they are the true mum, the one that comes back faithfully every year to bloom steadily from late summer through the fall in every color but blue! Planted early in the spring, in full sun, with well-draining soil, dendranthema grow a strong root system; your role is to shear the plant back in mid-June to help make it bushier and delay bloom until the fall. Like all mums, they are heavy feeders so fertilize regularly. Although they thrive in full sun, dendranthema can handle a bit of shade. (Mums set buds in response to a day’s length so don’t put them anywhere where they could be exposed to night-time lighting)! Deadhead spent blooms and thin by division every 2-3 years.

## **Japanese Anemone (Windflowers)**

With a long blooming season (6 weeks or more starting in late August), Japanese anemones produce masses of white, pink or purple flowers held well above their slender stems. The clumping plants appear delicate but, once established, require minimal maintenance and will naturalize to form colonies.

Happy in full sun to part shade, these salt tolerant plants prefer evenly moist, well-drained soil ... do not let the soil dry out ... and are attractive to late butterflies but deer and rabbit resistant. Preferring morning sun and partial shade, they can spread quickly in moist, humus-rich soil. They don’t require dead-heading as they have attractive seed heads but cutting out spent flowers will keep the plant looking tidier.

## **Helenium (Sneezeweed)**

As a native plant, helenium can be found growing in moist, low-lying meadows. They prefer medium to wet soils and, grown in full sun, quickly reach 3-5’, producing a range of yellow, gold, orange and red flowers from August to October. Cut back in early June to control height and encourage branching. Long-lasting cut flowers, helenium combines well with asters and sedum.

## **Sedum (Stonecrop)**

Easily grown in dry to medium well-drained soil, in full sun, sedum is a clump-forming perennial which produces tiny flowers from September through October and often well beyond. A great favorite for drying, the flowers last a long time and can be left on the plant to add interest to the late fall garden. Bees and butterflies are very fond of the nectar produced by these plants. Mature plants are easily divided in the spring.

## **Cimicifuga (Bugbane)**

This amazing flower brings height to the autumn garden with plumes of tiny, star-like white flowers rising from dark-green foliage from September through October and often into November. (Some cultivars bloom in mid-summer.) Easily grown in partial to full shade, cimicifuga is happiest in rich, moisture-retentive soil and forms attractive clumps. Planted in groups, this perennial adds height and late bloom to the fall garden but single plants can also make a statement.

## **Ornamental Grasses**

Late season ornamental grasses help your garden's fall landscape by adding soft colors and textures as a backdrop to more brilliant colors. As the fall season progresses, most ornamental grasses turn golden and, uncut, provide a source of food and shelter for over-wintering birds. Many grasses have dwarf cultivars and are suitable for adding to flower beds or even containers. They require sun but tolerate a wide range of soils. Try:

Muhlenbergia capillaries	(Pink Muhlygrass)
Panicum virgatum	(Switch Grass)
Pennisetum alopecuroides	(Fountain Grass)
Miscanthus sinensis	(Maiden Grass)

## **Montauk Daisies**

This popular late-bloomer, with its classic daisy look, will flower well into fall if its few simple needs are met by the gardener. Grow this plant in full sun, in average (don't fertilize) well-drained soil. It has a tendency to flop as it matures so cut the plant down to about 6" in mid-May and then again by half in late June. This will control its legginess and give a more compact but still extremely free-blooming plant. Combining well with asters and perennial chrysanthemums, Montauk daisies attract bees and butterflies but are both deer and rabbit resistant. Salt and drought tolerant, it does well at the seashore, makes a nice cut flower, and is very long-lived, even living happily in large rock gardens. This plant earns its keep!

## **Growing Great Phlox**

Phlox paniculata is one of the most dependable summer-into-fall perennials available and can easily serve as the back-bone of your late garden. Blooming July through September, summer phlox bears flowers in shades of white, pink, coral, red, lavender and deep violet and reaches 4' with a spread of 1-3'. The flowers are showy and often fragrant and are highly attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies. Best grown in full sun, phlox paniculata will tolerate some partial shade. It prefers well-drained, rich soil and will benefit from a light mulch to keep its roots cool. Intolerant of drought, the plants do need to be watered in a dry spell. Avoid overhead watering so as to keep powdery mildew at bay; recent new cultivars are increasingly mildew-resistant. Summer phlox should be divided every 4-5 years in the spring or fall; it may self-seed but those colors will probably not come true.

## **Attracting Hummingbirds and Butterflies to the Garden**

Gardeners have always been fascinated by the antics of both butterflies and hummingbirds and it is possible to plant flowers which will please them both! They are attracted to flowers of deep color ... red, orange, purple and pink are all favorites ... and they prefer short flower tubes. Fragrance doesn't seem to matter. Hummingbirds tend to feed a little earlier in the day than butterflies so you could easily hope for a fairly steady daily flow of visitors! Here are some choices:

### **Perennials**

Alcea (Hollyhock)  
Agastache  
Aster  
Hemerocallis (Daylily)  
Lilium (Lilies)

Lupinus (Lupines)  
Monarda (Bee Balm)  
Nepeta (Catmint)  
Phlox

### **Annuals**

Fuschia  
Marigold  
Nicotiana

Petunia  
Salvia  
Verbena  
Zinnias

### **Vines**

Campsis (Trumpet vine)  
Cardinal  
Clematis  
Dolichos (Hyacinth vine)

Ipomoea (Morning Glory)  
Lonicera (Honeysuckle)  
Mandevilla  
Scarlet Runner Bean

### **Shrubs**

Buddleia (Butterfly bush)  
Clethra (Summersweet)  
Daphne  
Diervilla (Bush Honeysuckle)

Hibiscus (Rose of Sharon)  
Viburnum  
Weigela

## **Maintaining Your Pollinator Garden**

A pollinator garden is often "a little bit on the wild side" but, as a gardener, you still need to keep an eye on it and follow a few simple rules. Many gardeners don't cut back perennial pollinators until spring, allowing native bees to build their ground nests and remain undisturbed throughout the winter. (Most insects will emerge for the new season once the temperatures reach about 50°.) If you are using native plants, don't enrich the soil ... those plants are used to making do without too many nutrients.

When you do plant or add to the pollinator garden, avoid double flowers as they don't usually produce seed and pollinators don't seem to like them. When you do plant, plant densely ... it makes it easier for the pollinators to find the plants and feed efficiently. It will help also cut down on weeding and maintenance!

Don't use pesticides. As your pollinator garden establishes itself natural predator insects will help control the pesky bugs for you!

Native pollinators don't usually stray too far from home so a water source would be a big plus ... even a dish of water would be appreciated

## **What do Annuals Bring to the Party?**

The easiest answer: **COLOR!** Deep, vibrant, consistent, non-stop color. Perennials bloom for a short, predetermined time and then they stop but annuals just keep going! They exhaust themselves in their one season but that reliable color is there from summer to frost. Most perennials are on the labor-intensive side; many need some on-going work whether they are in bloom or not but the majority of annuals, once planted, require nothing more than water, a little fertilizer and maybe some dead-heading.

Annuals are often the basis of well-filled containers and many gardeners use annual-filled containers to cover temporary bare spots in a garden bed. Patios and decks often feature massed pots of annuals ... an easy way to make a “statement”. Window boxes are an ideal home for annuals, as are hanging baskets. (Those are difficult homes for perennials and annuals are an easy solution to the “what to use” question.) The range of foliage annuals exhibit adds to their general adaptability, giving the gardener many choices.

## **Combining Annuals and Perennials**

The Connecticut gardening season is on the short side and every gardener’s goal is to have something blooming all the time, in every bed. That takes a lot of planning and a lot old-fashioned work! Fortunately, the goal is achievable ... the most carefully planned perennial bed will benefit from a mix of annuals and perennials. That mix enables a gardener to experiment, to try out new designs, new color combinations, or new foliage textures.

Sometimes landscapes change and color combinations need to be updated. Annuals give intensity of bloom and a steady period of flowering and then it’s over. Perennials (often taking three years to fully establish themselves) give a steady presence and concentrated bloom for a short period. A combination of the two gives continuity and allows for experimentation. Need some height? Try an annual vine. Want a dark note? Think about an annual with dark leaves. Foliage a little boring? Try an annual with bigger leaves or one completely covered in flowers with almost no foliage showing. Keeping good records will be helpful as you work out your new design.

## **Garden Containers**

It’s time to think about containers again! This year, the nursery is featuring several new lines of unusual containers. Acer Gardens will have many pre-planted containers for you to choose from but, of course, you can bring your own empty container to the nursery and staff will be happy to help you design something just right for your garden. Maybe it’s time to try a container featuring just one color but using varying shades of that color. Looking at a color wheel will give you some idea of complimentary as well as dramatic colors which might fit into your over-all garden plan. Containers can be used to lead the eye along a path, to frame a view or to cover-up a temporary “hole”. The possibilities are almost endless! You can change the look of your containers at will by changing the plantings. Troughs and containers have the advantage of portability and can be moved around the garden as the season advances or as “holes” develop.

Many gardeners find that elevating a container by placing it on a pedestal gives the container greater impact in the garden and really shows off trailing flowers. Placing more containers around the elevated one can create a further dramatic effect and make a real statement. Be sure the pedestal is securely anchored so that it won’t blow over and that the container itself is heavy and won’t wiggle.

Accurate watering is key to growing good containers as is a good ratio of plant to pot. Think about where your containers will be placed as you choose your plants. Containers for decks and terraces will be on view 24/7 so they can be made to reflect how you choose to entertain or become extensions of the larger garden. A container sited for the “wow” factor can be filled to over-flowing with wild colors and luxurious blossom and you should feel free to depart from your normal style. After all, if it doesn’t work it’s easy to change.



Be sure that all your container plants share the same sun, soil and water requirements and set up a realistic fertilizing schedule. Some gardeners prefer to use a potting mix with fertilizer already mixed in for their containers and eliminate the need for additional feedings. If you do use fertilizers, remember to water first before you feed ... the plants will absorb nutrients better. (By the way: the best weeder for closely-planted containers is still an old-fashioned grapefruit knife!) Many gardeners photograph their containers as the season advances and keep them to use as guides for next year.

### **Plants Prepared to Help you 24-7!**

Often referred to as “Guardian Plants or “Beneficials”, some plants become home to good insects which help protect your plants from bad insects and diseases. These insects, in turn, repel or eat aphids and thrips and serve as a form of natural pest control in gardens.

Marigolds have long been used in vegetable gardens to protect peppers from thrips. They will also protect most annuals. White Alyssum attracts the Hover Fly which in turn eats aphids. A border of white Alyssum (or a hanging basket) will help to protect your flower beds and roses all summer long and you will have the benefit of its continuous bloom. Growing carrots, dill and parsley will attract ladybugs and spiders who in turn will eat the bad bugs.

A number of herbs and plants naturally repel insects and are good choices to plant near your sitting area:

<u>Plant</u>	<u>Repels</u>
Artemisia	Moths
Catmint	Flies and mosquitoes
Garlic	Japanese beetles
Lantana	Mosquitoes
Lavender	Mosquitoes and gnats
Lemon balm	Mosquitoes and gnats
Lemon thyme	Mosquitoes and gnats
Nasturtium	Squash bugs, pumpkin beetles
Rosemary	Cabbage moths
Thyme	Cabbage worms

### **The Vegetable Garden**

Acer Gardens is your “go to” place for vegetable seeds and starter plants. Knowledgeable staff will be happy to help you choose what you need to make your vegetable growing a pleasure and to answer questions.

Plotting your garden on graph paper will help you establish boundaries and maximize your available space. Remember to rotate your crop’s positions from year to year to keep the soil fresh. If you are using rows be sure to leave access routes for weeding and fertilizing. More and more vegetable gardeners are going vertical in an effort to maximize available space ... tomatoes and cucumbers in particular benefit from this concept, as do peas and some squashes and melons. Hanging baskets can also be utilized for vegetables. Acer Gardens continues to offer an outstanding selection of seed varieties of popular gourmet and heirloom vegetables.

Many vegetables can be planted as soon as you can work the soil. Leaf lettuces, such as Black Seeded Simpson, are harvested young and re-planting every 2 – 3 weeks will keep you harvesting into fall. (The nursery now carries pre-blended lettuce varieties, including both a Gourmet Mix and a Heat Wave blend.) Arugula, cilantro and spinach will also continue producing on a similar schedule but do not re-plant in the heat of the summer. Radishes, a fast and easy grower, can be planted in short rows at 2 – 3 week intervals. Spring is the optimum time to direct sow or plant peas, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, cabbage, leeks, carrots, parsley, onions, Swiss chard, kale and micro- greens.

Fennel bulbs and onions can be planted now ... both hold well in the vegetable garden. Late May is a good time to plant cucumbers, tomatoes, corn, peppers, melons, pumpkins, and squash. Plant basil near the tomatoes to discourage the insects that feed on them. Alyssum, nasturtiums and marigolds planted in the vegetable garden will fend off many aphids, thrips and beetles and will protect your squash and pumpkin crops.

The wide-ranging herb selection keeps expanding and now includes stevia (the sugar substitute), lemon grass, a wide range of thymes and lemon verbena (the leaves are wonderful in water or iced tea). Many of our new basil varieties are resistant to downy mildew. Thai basil will be available again (try it with fish as well as using the leaves in oriental dishes.) Oregano 'Hot and Spicy' will add a mild chili pepper flavor to Mexican dishes. Most herbs will do well in patio and deck containers but Thai basil should be grown separately as it actually needs to dry out between waterings.

Herbs can be more than kitchen companions to the vegetables you grow. Think about inter-planting herbs and vegetables in the garden. (Harvesting dinner will be easy!) Try basil and tomatoes, chives and carrots, rosemary and beans. Marjoram, oregano, sage and tarragon enhance many vegetables. Grow dill separately as it can become invasive and needs a lot of spreading room as well as successive plantings.

Acer Gardens' Information sheet on **Growing Vegetables** is available on the web site and at the nursery.

### **Growing Great Winter Squashes**

Winter squash (spaghetti, acorn, butternut and buttercup) is a large, vining plant; it wants to sprawl and it takes up room ... as much as 8' for a trailing vine! Many people have success growing winter squash vertically, on a trellis, which provides increased ventilation and less chance of disease. Like all squashes, winter squash requires 6-8 hours of sunlight a day and needs almost 100 days to fully mature. Plant at the end of the cool season when there is no threat of a frost.

Squash is low maintenance but will reward good soil nourishment ... top dress the soil with compost before you plant, fertilize monthly and keep up on the watering. Don't use a fertilizer high in nitrogen as that will result in long vines with not much fruit. A granular fertilizer with added phosphorous (the middle number) is a good choice. The ideal is to let the vegetable ripen on the vine. Winter squash does have a tendency to ripen all at once but it stores for a long period of time ... up to 6 months in a cool, well-ventilated area. You'll enjoy tasty dinners for many months!

### **Using Compact/Patio Vegetables**

Even if you don't have a "real" vegetable garden, you can certainly grow herbs and many vegetables. The nursery has a large selection of herbs and vegetables which will all do well planted together in containers! Dwarf vegetables are always a good choice as are vegetables that take up little space (lettuce, radishes and scallions) or crops that bear over a long time (tomatoes and peppers). "Bush" and "Compact" sizes will do well grown in containers or tucked into the front of flower beds. Lettuce and containers are born companions but lettuce makes a terrific border plant too! Plant seeds every 3-4 weeks for successive harvests. Some new cucumbers and squash plants are designed to be grown vertically and take up very little room.

Choosing vegetables with the same water and sun requirements will be a plus. Almost all vegetables do best when grown in full sunlight, at least 6 hours per day. Leaf vegetables (lettuce, greens, spinach and parsley) will tolerate a little shade, especially as the season lengthens.

Pick a container larger than you think you will need. Be sure the container has good drainage (holes in the bottom) because containers need more watering than vegetable beds as they dry out quickly from sun and wind. Some plants may require daily watering. Don't let the soil dry out between waterings as this could cause the plants to drop their flowers and fruits. Acer Gardens' bagged potting mix is a good soil choice; use a slow release or organic fertilizer at planting time.

### **Garden Help**

The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station will answer inquiries on lawn problems (860 683-4977), soil testing (203 974-8521) and plant disease issues.(203 974-8601)

*Acer Gardens*  
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