



Adding Artful Beauty and Value to your Outdoor Spaces



Around the Garden

March and April 2014

Welcome to this edition of my newsletter and happy spring to all!

Well, we had an extremely cold winter and for many consecutive nights, the temperature was below freezing. Some plants that normally do well in our climate got hit hard by the damaging frost.

I encouraged my clients to be patient as many plants could still recover. Following the cold snap we then had unseasonable warmth and things bloomed very early. So by now you should be seeing new growth along the branches or from the crown of the plant at its base. If you do not see any signs of life now, I'm sorry to say the plant has succumbed to the frost.

Combined with the crazy weather patterns we are also in a drought. We all have been encouraged to cut back on water usage. Now we are all hoping and praying that we get the rain we desperately need. Water is precious and as a key component to gardening, we need to learn how to be water wise.

Xeriscape is a water conscious gardening principal I'd like to introduce you to.

Xeriscape landscape designs focus on reducing the size of lawns, grouping plants within their shared watering need zones and making the garden as water efficient as possible while still being functional, visually pleasing and environmentally friendly. There are seven principles of Xeriscape. If you are thinking of redoing your current landscaping, it is important to keep these principles in mind from the start of your project.

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF XERISCAPE:

1. Planning and Design
2. Soil Analysis and improvement
3. Appropriate Plant Selection
4. Practical Turf Areas
5. Efficient Irrigation
6. Use of Mulch
7. Appropriate Maintenance



Before Xeriscape principles applied



After Xeriscape principles applied

I use all of these principles in my landscape design practice and more and more I'm transforming water needy lawns into water wise and drought tolerant landscaping that is more beautiful, functional and interesting than just a lot of grass.

Using these gardening practices, you can all still enjoy your outdoor spaces even in a drought year. Please watch the video this month, as it has many before and after images of lovely water wise gardens I have designed.

For more information about each principle of Xeriscape, here's a [Wikipedia article](#) on Xeriscape.

I'm happy to answer any questions or help with gardening needs via phone or email. Please feel free to share this newsletter with friends. Enjoy this amazing weather!



March and April Garden Tips

March To Do

- Feed Fuchsias with a fertilizer, 0-10-10 ratio.
- To restore nutrients to a lawn after winter rains, can aerate and/or thatch then fertilize with a high nitrogen feed.
- Control snails and slugs. They love the tender new growth of a variety of plants in your garden. A great natural way to rid these hungry critters is to pour out some beer in a low flat dish. The smell attracts them, they crawl in and drown! OR SLUGGO is a good choice for use around pets.
- Feed Azaleas, Camellias, and Rhododendrons with a high nitrogen acid fertilizer and Ironite after blooms are done.
- Feed citrus with a good citrus food from your local nursery. Add a little chelated iron if still yellow.
- Feed fruit trees and berries with a good all-purpose fertilizer, such as 12-12-12 ratio, and a super phosphate such as 0-20-0, to increase fruit production.
- It is good to add to your existing layer of mulch in your gardens. I tend to like a dark black micro bark that can be purchased in bulk or in bags. A deep 2"-3" layer is advised, as this helps keep weeds to a minimum, helps keep in the moisture in the heat of summer, and lastly when it does break down eventually it helps keep our heavy soils loose and light. One word of caution, when adding your mulch, keep a little away from the crown of each plant. They need to breathe just like we do, so don't crowd them.
- Now is the time to work some aluminum sulfate into your soil around your Hydrangeas if you want that intense blue. There are

Video Tip

Creating a Water Efficient Garden

In this month's video, I introduce you to Xeriscape landscape design.

April To Do

- Colorful Annuals that can be planted now for a splash are Snapdragons, Stock, Poppies, Impatiens, Petunias, Marigolds, Cosmo's and Zinnias
- Select and plant Dahlia tubers. Add plenty of compost and plant deeply. You will be rewarded in summer by some spectacular blooms. You may have to stake but it is sure worth the beauty of this species! There are a variety of heights, flower shapes and bloom sizes.....singles or doubles, huge blooms such as the Dinner Plate varieties or try the Pompons for a small perfectly shaped ball.
- Roses will be blooming now and it's a great time to select ones for color and fragrance.
- The selection of vegetables is great this month. Some ideas to grow are Beans, Peppers, Corn, Cucumber, Eggplant, Lettuce, Onions, Peas, Squash, and Tomatoes. Your choice will reflect on what you and your family enjoy eating. This is a fabulous idea if you have children, as they get to grow their own edibles and may eat more vegetables if they are excited about the whole growing experience. And there is nothing like eating something freshly picked, the taste does not compare to anything from the store!
- The snails come out after the rains. Bait for them or your new vegetable seedlings will be gone almost overnight. Use "That's It" or Sluggo for areas where pets or children play.

several brands on the market at your local nurseries.

- Plant Dahlias this year! They can be purchased now as tubers, looking like a sweet potato. There are many varieties coming in many colors to choose from. Plant Dahlias in a sunny spot, add plenty of compost and plant deep (6"). You will be rewarded with a spectacular display from summer into fall.

Another organic solution is Copper Tape found at most nurseries; this is good for containers also.

- Prune spring blooming trees and shrubs after flowering
- Prune Fuchsias heavily to encourage new flowering wood. Fertilize with Fish Emulsion.
- Prune Clematis and Wisteria Vines after blooming to shape and keep in bounds.
- Control aphids with Safer's Insecticidal Soap or ladybug's for a less toxic solution.
- Apply Ironite to your Azaleas, Camellias and Gardenias if the leaves are yellowing.
- Feed your citrus. They are heavy feeders.



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