



The Island Garden

By Roger Marshall

It's official, at least I say so, you can plant out right now. However, be prepared to cover up freshly planted flowers and veggies if a late frost should hit. Also, remember that the ground is a little cold, so don't expect your plants to start growing fast for another couple of weeks.

Should we get a late frost, use a spun fleece such as Reemay, or blankets to cover your plants. You can also make a cloche out of two panes of glass to help protect your plants against early spring winds off the ocean. I have found that protecting plants with a glass cloche almost doubles their size in the early part of the season. To hold the glass at the top of the cloche, cut two grooves the thickness of your glass in a 2- by 4-inch piece of wood. Each groove should be at 45 degrees to the vertical, 90 degrees apart. Slot the glass into the groove to hold it at a 45-degree slope.

In the vegetable garden

If you've planted onions and leeks, hit them with a high-nitrogen fertilizer. A lawn fertilizer is ideal, but make sure it has no weedkillers in it. Your potatoes should be in right now and your garlic should be at least a foot high. Mulch around the garlic and feed it with a high-nitrogen fertilizer.

I think it is still a little early to plant out tomatoes and peppers unless you put them under spun fleece or glass. Tomatoes won't reliably set fruit until the nighttime temperatures are above 55 degrees, so there's no rush.

You can, however, start peas,

It's time to plant

snow peas, and sugar snap peas. Soak them overnight in water to help the pea swell before planting. Protect them against animals that just love to eat the peas before they can germinate.

Feed your asparagus with high-nitrogen fertilizer and harvest spears for the next few weeks. In about six weeks, you should let the spears grow out to help the plants store food for next season. If you have an asparagus bed that is less than two years old, only harvest a few spears until the plants grow larger.

In the flower garden

Feed bulbs with a general-purpose fertilizer to help promote growth for next season. Deadhead daffodils, but do not cut or break the leaves. It is this leaf growth that helps the bulb store food for a good show next season. Wait at least six weeks before cutting leaves or digging bulbs. Mark where your plants are so that you can divide large clumps when the leaves die back.

You can plant dahlia tubers, gladioli corms, and other tender bulbs now. The shoots probably won't die if we get a frost. But I'd hold off on moving indoor plants out yet. Their leafy growth can be severely retarded by a cold night or two.

On your lawn

Now is the time to feed with fertilizer to promote strong growth that will fill in any winter killed patches. Sprinkle seeds over bare patches so that spring rains can help promote growth. Remove all dandelion weeds before the heads go to seed, or you'll have a many more dandelions next year. If your neighbor has dandelions, you will never eliminate them completely, but there's nothing to say you can't keep trying.

In the greenhouse

Same as for almost everything else, fertilize and feed the plants. In the cold greenhouse, the winter plants are gone and new seeds are growing fast. Lettuce is ready to harvest. Peas are about a foot tall, and the peppers and tomatoes have flowers. The greenhouse rhubarb is about three weeks ahead of the outdoor plants. The sorrel is going to seed. Artichokes are already a foot tall, so things are moving ahead rapidly.

In the heated greenhouse, the main chore is watering every day. Plants are growing really fast and daytime temperatures rise rapidly. On a clear sunny day, greenhouse temperatures can reach 100 degrees before 10 o'clock, so you'll need to keep a window open during the day.

Fruit trees

The plums and apricot blossoms are already past their bloom and should be sprayed with Ferbam or dormant oil. Peach trees are in bloom and should not be sprayed. Apple blossoms are just coming, so a late spraying with dormant oil can be made, but not if the blossoms are already out. Hang sticky red balls in the trees to tell you when apple maggot flies are going for the fruit, and spray as soon as you see them.

Soft fruit

Pick strawberries, and put compost around raspberries, blueberries, and red and black currants, or hit them with a general-purpose fertilizer. Keep the area clear around your soft fruit to help them get plenty of sunlight and produce lots of fruit.

Now is the busiest time of the year in your garden, so get to it because you are setting up the yard and garden for the entire year. Above all have fun.

House OKs no discharge bill amendment

In a press release from the Rhode Island General Assembly, state Rep. Bruce Long's (R-Jamestown, Middletown) bill to delay the activation of a law requiring Rhode Island boat owners to obtain discharge certificates was approved by the House of Representatives. If passed by the Senate, the bill will delay activation of the ordinance for one year to give the legislators time to

amend the legislation requiring boaters to display a decal verifying that the boat is in compliance with laws prohibiting discharge of sewage into state waters.

Identical legislation has been sponsored in the Senate by Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Paiva Weed (D-Jamestown, Newport). The bill is expected to be taken up by the full Senate within the next few weeks.

Jimmy Fund sailing event fund-raiser scheduled

The 2006 Jimmy Fund Regatta presented by Northern Trust to raise money for cancer care and research at Boston's Dana-Farber Cancer Institute is ready to set sail June 3 and 4. Unlike most world-class regattas, the second annual Jimmy Fund Regatta is giving everyone a chance to get involved and help sink cancer.

At 12:30 p.m. on Saturday, June 3, racers and casual boaters are invited to join the Sail for Jimmy. This leg of the Jimmy Fund Regatta encourages boaters of all abilities to participate in an 18-mile course in Newport Harbor. The Sail for Jimmy is open to all power boats and sail boats more than 23 feet. The entry fee for boaters not participating in the multi-day regatta is \$75 for boats under 50 feet and \$125 if the boat is longer. There will be a big bash called "Party in the Paint Shed" at the Newport Shipyard on Saturday night at 8 p.m. For \$75 those attending will enjoy a casual dinner, dancing and live music by New York City band Cracked Ice. There will be a cash bar.

Boaters are encouraged to support the work of the Jimmy Fund by raising money above and

beyond the entry fees. The highest fundraiser of the Sail for Jimmy will be recognized at the Party in the Paint Shed with the Frank McCaffrey Memorial trophy, which honors a beloved local sailor who succumbed to leukemia in 2001.

Organizers expect the Jimmy Fund Regatta and all of its social events will raise more than \$200,000 to benefit the Jimmy Fund. "The Jimmy Fund is all about hope," says Newport Shipyard owner and event host Charlie Dana, who is also a Dana-Farber trustee. He adds, "Sailing in the Regatta is a beautiful way to be optimistic. You don't have to be a sailor to help out. The Party in the Paint Shed is going to be over the top."

To register for the Sail for Jimmy and to purchase tickets for the Party in the Paint Shed, log onto www.jimmyfund.org/regatta. Northern Trust is sponsoring the Jimmy Fund Regatta for a second year. Northern Trust is a leading provider of investment management, asset and fund administration, fiduciary and banking solutions for corporations, institutions and affluent individuals worldwide. Founded in 1889, Northern Trust has the earned distinction as an industry leader in high-tech service and has over \$2.8 trillion in assets under administration.

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