

QUALITY POTTERY

MARCH PLANTING TIPS

March 15 is traditionally the last day of frost. If the native velvet mesquite trees are leafing out that, too, is a good sign that we will now be frost free until fall.

- Last sowing of carrots, beets, and heat tolerant leaf lettuce.
- Set out transplants of tomatoes and peppers.
- Plant basil, squash, sweet corn, Lima beans, snap beans, cantaloupes and watermelon.
- After danger of frost you can plant Lima beans, black-eyed peas, cane sorghum, chilies, chiltepinas, cotton, gourds, indigo, panic grass, teosinte, tobacco, and tomatillos.
- Mulch trees, shrubs, and vegetables (will retain moisture and lessen stress on plants as temperatures warm up).
- Plant such annuals as marigolds to add color and deter pests from garden.
- You may want to sow tall plants such as sunflowers and amaranth on the west side of your plot to screen other plants from the hot afternoon sun.
- If planting corn consider the traditional "three sisters" arrangement of corn, beans, and squash or melons together. The corn creates a trellis and shade. The beans fix nitrogen in the soil and grow up the corn. The squash or melons take advantage of the shade and nitrogen while creating a living-mulch over the ground to protect the soil.
- **Instant color** Bougainville is an easy to grow vine or bush. Rather than worrying about it freezing consider it an annual. *Get nine months of beauty!*
- **Garden Color:** For sunny areas select from petunias, pansies geraniums, gerbera daisies, marigolds, alyssum, lobelia, snapdragons, verbena, stock, nasturtium, dianthus, scabiosa, salvia (many varieties), gazania, ageratum, and hollyhocks. Begonias, dahlias, and caladium are nice alternatives for shady areas.
- **Vegetables:** Plant tomato, pepper, and eggplant starts. Plant seeds of squash, melons, cucumbers, and watermelon.
- **Herbs:** Plant cilantro and parsley for early harvest, before the summer heat arrives. Basil, chive, oregano, sage, and thyme may be planted this month.
- **Citrus:** Keep in mind that there is still a possibility of frost during the first half of the month, so be prepared to cover in the event that temperatures dip into the 30's.
- **Irrigation:** Closely monitor irrigation of established trees and shrubs. Be prepared to increase frequency of irrigation as temperatures warm up. Continue to water slowly and deeply.
- **Pruning:** Evergreen trees and shrubs be sure to remove all clippings, and water deeply after pruning. Do not prune frost damage from frost tender plants until new growth appears.
- **Weed Control:** Apply a pre-emergent if you did not do so last month. This will help prevent weeds from popping up. As weeds do emerge re-spray.
- **Roses:** Feed established roses with Flower and Vegetable Food or Magnum Rose Food (for potted roses). Add Epsom salts (Magnesium Sulfate). Spray young buds with a systemic insecticide to prevent thrips and aphids. Also, deep water three times a week.