



A Regenerative Guide to Managing Your Yard in Wisconsin

April

One teaspoon of healthy soil contains more living organisms than there are people in the world. Take care of your soil and your soil will take care of your garden.

Do

- Leave your leaf litter in your garden as long as you can stand to do so. This provides habitat for soil microbes and cover for worms and other soil life.*
- Fill your bird feeders - Birds are migrating through Wisconsin between mid-April and the beginning of May. Offer them a snack and enjoy their whimsical beauty. You may even spot some new species as they fly through your yard on their way to their summer digs.*
- Spray compost tea - April is a good time to start inoculating your soil and plants with healthy, helpful bacteria and fungi. This will give your plants a head start on fighting disease this coming season. Spray compost tea up to once per week.*
- Prune your roses - Cut out any weak, damaged or dead canes and any canes smaller than a pencil. Prune back established shrub roses to $\frac{2}{3}$ of their total height.*
- Prune summer-flowering shrubs, if you haven't done so already (ex: hydrangea, ninebark, smokebush, weigela). This encourages them to branch and increase their flower counts.*
- Plant perennials - Perennials are happy to establish in the cool, wet spring weather. Minimize soil disturbance in order to leave as much of the soil ecosystem intact as possible. This ecosystem is what will feed your plants throughout the season.*
- Plant roses - Spring is a great time to plant roses. Kendra's favorite roses can be found on David Austin's website. Bareroot planting is best done in spring.*

- Manually remove (i.e. using a soil knife or pulling at the base) any invasive species or weeds (ex. Garlic mustard, burdock, creeping jenny, bull thistle, canada thistle). Invasive species can throw off the balance of the ecosystem in your garden or yard.
- Plant trees and shrubs - Spring is a great time to get trees and shrubs established. The cool temps and moist soil keep your new plants happy.
- Divide any perennials or move any plants that you want in a new location. Minimize soil disturbance whenever possible.

✗ Don't

- Do not prune any spring flowering shrubs (ex. lilacs, forsythia, spirea, pearlbush, dogwood). Wait until after these bloom to prune, otherwise you will lose this season's flowers.
- Do not prune trees - Trees should be pruned in late winter before their sap begins to flow to prevent damage.
- Do not try to plant spring-blooming bulbs (i.e. tulips or daffodils), as it is already too late. These need to be planted in the fall in order to have a long enough cooling period to bloom.
- Do not use any synthetic or chemical weed killers or lawn fertilizers. These destroy your native soil ecosystem; they kill soil microbes and throw off the balance in your yard. Remember: a healthy soil ecosystem feeds itself, eliminating the need for man-made fertilizers. Feed and take care of the soil, and the soil will take care of your plants.
- Do not use neonicotinoids - They affect all insects (not just the unwanted ones), which are all important to a healthy ecosystem. Think: paralyzed bees, butterflies, ladybugs. Sad thought for your pollinators.
- Do not use Roundup or anything with glyphosate in it. It is hazardous to everything above and below the soil, including you, your kids and your pets.

See you in May,

Kendra & Chris