

# Jane Pepper's Garden

Getting the Most Pleasure and Growing Results  
from Your Garden Every Month of the Year

Jane Pepper

## MARCH

### The Start of the Gardening Year

To me, March is the most exciting month in the gardening year. It might start with snow, ice, and gale-force winds, but it will end with a few early shrubs and bulbs in bloom. And with any luck, you will have sown your peas, onions, lettuce, spinach, arugula, and mustard greens. With all that to look forward to, I welcome March with open arms.

#### Some tips for early March...

Longing to start work in the vegetable garden? Then this may be the most important tip of the year: Pick up a handful of soil and squeeze it in your hand. If it stays in a ball, don't get out the spade yet. But if it crumbles, it's dry enough to start digging. If you're able to work the soil in the vegetable garden, scratch slow-release fertilizer into the soil around asparagus and rhubarb plants. Clean off any debris you left in the garden last fall. The longer you leave this, the more opportunities pests have to get a good start right where you plan to plant this year's crops.

Have your soil tested—before the laboratories get too busy. Buy a soil sample bag from your local agricultural extension office or some nurseries. The results will guide you in applying lime and fertilizer; in fact, they'll help you avoid wasting fertilizer while ensuring the best possible yields.

