

Yard and Garden – 03-21-09 – Ted Griess / Extension Horticulture Assistant

On March 20, 2009, at 7:44 a.m. EDT, the vernal equinox arrived on the continental USA. Because the Earth tilts on its axis, the sun passed directly over the equator. Thus yesterday, hours of daylight and darkness were nearly equal all over the world. For those living south of the equator, yesterday ushered in the autumnal equinox. Br-r-r. The thought of colder temperatures and shorter days makes me shiver. Conversely, we who live on the northern half of the globe celebrated the onset of longer days and warmer temperatures. Spring has finally arrived. Although I've always enjoyed living in a region where one experiences the four seasons, I can say without a doubt, spring is my favorite season.

Even though spring is officially here, one must not forget sporadic freezing temperatures may still occur for at least the next six to eight weeks. Furthermore, we will undoubtedly receive an occasional spring snow storm. The good news is neither will last for any length of time.

The fact is, when spring arrives, most gardeners have an almost uncontrollable urge to get outdoors and begin spring cleaning of the home landscape. I can certainly identify with this mindset; however, I encourage you to resist. Be patient. Give the landscape a rest for another week or two before exposing those tender emerging plants to the unpredictabilities of Mother Nature.

What can you do to satisfy the desire to garden? Planning before planting is always a good idea. I hate to admit it, but all too often I have begun gardening projects with little forethought, and as a result, the outcome has often been less than favorable. To avoid mistakes, take time to plan. Determine what grew well last season and what did not. Then make adjustments for the new season. You will be glad you did.

While you're laying the groundwork, allow me again to offer a suggestion. This coming week on Friday, March 27, and Saturday, March 28, the Kearney Lawn and Garden Show takes place in the Exhibition Building at the Buffalo County Fairgrounds. The show is offered at no charge to the public and will be a great source for new gardening ideas. Furthermore, while attending the show, don't forget that Buffalo County Extension has lined up an array of free gardening seminars. For a complete lineup, log onto the Buffalo County Extension web site at www.buffalo.unl.edu. Once there, you will notice that we share the web with the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. For local lawn and garden information, click in the Navigation section (left side of the page) on Home, Lawn and Garden. There you will find assorted gardening information that I have posted.

Furthermore, may I remind you the panel of gardening experts from NETV's *Backyard Farmer* program will present at the Extension Building on Friday evening, March 27, from six to eight o'clock. What an excellent opportunity to meet those gardening experts and have them help with your gardening plans.

By attending, you will have the opportunity to ask the panel about your gardening concerns. If you'd prefer, send me your questions ahead of time by email, and I will attempt to have them answered, hopefully that evening. If time does not allow for all questions to be answered, I will send the remaining with the panel and perhaps they will address them on the new season's televised ***Backyard Farmer*** that begins on April 2, 2009, on Nebraska Education Television One at 7:00 p.m. Also on NET1, ***Backyard Farmer Extra*** begins the next Saturday April 4, 2009, at 8:30 a.m.

In the meantime, revel in the joy. Spring has arrived once again.