

## This Month in the Garden

by Peggy Koppmann

**Now is the Time** – for all good gardeners to get out there and divide. Perennials grow new roots and shoots around the plant that crowd each other and compete for light, water, and nutrients. You may see leaf color become lighter or yellow, stems that are smaller or weaker, or a reduction in flowering. Sometimes the center of the clump will begin to die. Although some plants profit from fall division, most of us do our dividing in the spring. The basic root system of the plant (spreading, clumping, or rhizomes) determines the best way to divide a given plant. Download the [Dividing Perennials](#) info sheet from [chemung.cce.cornell.edu](http://chemung.cce.cornell.edu) for an excellent overview of the complexities and timing of dividing perennials.

This year, we invite all Master Gardeners to do some serious dividing in your garden and pot up the results for our Plant Sale in May. This will give plants plenty of time to become established and eliminate that “just-pulled-from-the-garden” look. Plant in appropriately sized pots, use good quality soil or mix, and label with the name, variety (if known), color, and sun or shade requirements.

**Beat Bud Break** – Finish your pruning before bud break on summer blooming shrubs (Hydrangeas that bloom on old growth should only be pruned after flowering), Rose-of-Sharon, glossy abelia, *Buddleia*, *Caryopteris*, *Cornus* (dogwood species with brightly colored bark), *Hypericum*, Russian sage, privet, *Potentilla*, *Soraria* (false spirea), ....and Snowberry”. Download the CCE Informational Bulletin 23 (*Pruning: An Illustrated Guide to Pruning*

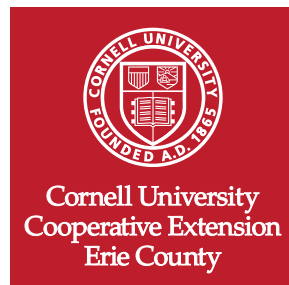
*Ornamental Trees and Shrubs*) for a fully detailed overview of pruning.

**Late to the Ball** – Watch out for late-emerging perennials such as *Begonia grandis*, *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*, and *Platycodon grandifloris*, and perennial hibiscus. Don't plant on top of them or cultivate near them. Gasplant is also a slow starter, but so worth it when it comes into flower. More local nurseries are carrying Gasplant (*Dictamnus albus*), so be sure to put it on your shopping list for this season.



Spruce Spider Mite Photo Credit: Petr Kapitola, Central Institute for Supervising and Testing in Agriculture, Bugwood.org

**And then.....** aerate turf after the soil dries enough to avoid compaction; make succession plantings of cool-season crops; mount a rain gauge near the garden to keep track of precipitation; invest in soaker hoses or a drip irrigation system; hand remove tent caterpillars; scout for Holly leafminer and Spruce spider mite damage; place peony supports; plant deciduous and evergreen trees and shrubs; finish planting bare root roses; start weeding (again!). 🍷



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Ah, sunshine! What else makes us think of spring more than a glorious sunny April day? You can feel the warmth from the sunbeams streaming in the kitchen window. Illuminating the dust bunnies. Showing up the streaks on the dirty glass. Oh, just get outside, and wait for a rainy day to take care of the other stuff. Happy April to all you sunshine lovers.