

## Dreams of Spring

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With the recent warm weather, it's easy to begin dreaming of your spring garden plans. Seed catalogs have begun to arrive and the possibilities seem endless.

If you are a seasoned gardener or if you're a garden novice, now is the time to gather the plans, tools, knowledge and seeds you will need for the coming growing season.

The location of your garden will be determined by your specific site and by the types of plants you wish to grow. A vegetable garden will require a sunny, well drained location with access to water. Flowers may prefer a shady location. Trees and shrubs need to be planted with thought given to their natural form and size. Research your favorites to determine what they require, and what some of the most common problems may be. A bit of knowledge can help you to avoid unnecessary losses.

A soil test should be done every 2-3 years and the recommendations followed to insure that your plants are getting the nutrients they need to be strong, healthy and productive. Soil test forms may be downloaded from the UNH Cooperative Extension web-site at [www.ceinfo.unh.edu](http://www.ceinfo.unh.edu), under Agriculture; Problem Diagnosis and Testing Services. Directions for taking a soil sample and where to send your sample are provided.

There are many systems for growing vegetables and flowers, including but not limited to; container gardens, raised beds, companion planting, row crop systems, greenhouse production and high tunnel production. You can make it as simple or as complex as you like. Each system has its strengths and weaknesses, choose one that fits with your budget, location and needs.

Knowing about and planning for common insects and diseases will help to control plant losses. For example the use of plastic mulch will help to reduce weeds, this will reduce the amount of time you spend weeding and limit nutrients lost to competition.

Knowledge of common insect pests and their life cycles will lead to early detection and control methods will be more effective. A new pest

website can help you to identify and control pests common to New England; [PRONewEngland.org](http://PRONewEngland.org). This web site was developed with cooperation of all of the New England States and provides links to multiple useful sites. Make sure to choose plants that are adapted to the local conditions. New Hampshire spans several winter hardiness zones, from 6 at the Seacoast to 3 in the North Country. There are variations within these zones as well. Low areas will have colder low temperatures, while a windy hillside offers its own challenges to plant survival.

Remember, information, plans and preparation will make the coming garden season a success.

For more information please contact the office at: 539-3331

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