

Spring hasn't been kind to gardeners thus far!

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Published April 16, 2016

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If you aren't frustrated by now with the weather, you aren't a gardener! It's truly been challenging to get anything accomplished in the garden.

It's been too wet to do any tilling or planting in my vegetable garden. I was able to plant some lettuce and other greens in a raised bed about three weeks ago. They emerged and are just sitting there.

My asparagus started growing and was about four inches tall when the first freeze hit - mushy asparagus is not appealing.

The good news is that many other plants have not put on much growth and therefore, have been fairly protected by these recent freezing temperatures. Most of my landscape plants look pretty good.

The bad news is that anyone with peach and apple trees that were in bloom during the recent cold snap probably lost most of those blossoms.



Spring cold weather damage always depends on the stage of growth of the plant when the cold temperatures hit.

Since we had a cooling period prior to the freezing temperatures, only those plants that were extremely sensitive were damaged for the most part. This included magnolia blooms and the above-mentioned apples and peaches. Tulips, daffodils, hyacinths and forsythias tolerated the cold.

I am sure that we are not completely out of the woods in terms of cold damage. Our last frost of the season is quite variable.

Despite the fact that our annual average last frost date is April 16, we may still have a frost in May. I remember one season we had a frost on May 28.

I have learned over the years to be patient and just go with the flow. Of course, it's easy for me to say as my livelihood doesn't depend on my landscape. I always feel for those of you who are growing crops for a living - it's not easy.

The big gardening topic for this year is protecting our pollinators, particularly the bees. Over the next few months I will be talking about ways that gardeners can do their part to protect pollinators.

You can start right now by enjoying dandelion blooms. Don't kill the dandelions - at least now! I know this is very hard for some but dandelion blossoms are great for bees.

In addition, the best time to control dandelions is when they are at the puff ball stage or when they go to seed.

Therefore, if you wait until dandelions go to seed, you get the best of both worlds. The bees get to enjoy the pollen and you will achieve much better control of the dandelion.

But if you are going to kill dandelions in the lawn, plant something else in the flower or vegetable garden that is attractive to pollinators.