



April is the cruellest month. Not so for the garden!!! This is the time when you can do the most and at hardly any cost to yourself! We will still be having problems with frosts for a good couple of weeks yet – so no rushing out over the Easter hols and buying bedding plants. Instead concentrate on these 4 key areas.

Cut back and tidy all perennials
Trim and reshape all shrubs and trees.
Weed and Weed
The Lawn

Right, I'll explain a bit about each. Firstly perennials, these are the smallish plants that come back every year. During the winter they die down to a terrible mess, you should leave the dead growth on over the winter because it protects the plant during the cold and it reminds you that it is there. Yes I have dug plants up by mistake when I have forgotten where they were. So now cut off nearly all the dead bits down to the ground. Make sure you can see new bits coming before you do this and don't cut into the new growth. This way you only have a stumpy bit for a couple of weeks max.

Shrubs – these get out of hand and every couple of years need putting back in shape. Again if you look for a new bud or growth and cut just over that, then again you only have a woody plant for a couple of weeks. The trees if manageable should be trimmed using really sharp saw or loppers. If the trees are huge get a professional in. Remember to take a bit of at a time and keep stepping back to look at what you have done. You can always take a bit more off but you can't stick it back on.

Weeding – you may not think it but now is a great time to weed. They sprout before your plants so you can see them easier now and the roots are still small enough that you can get the little suckers out whole!! Spending time weeding now really helps – later in the year its harder to see them and getting them out usually means damaging something else.

Lastly the lawn. The lawn is usually the biggest thing in the garden and the thing you can see from inside clearly. Everyone spends all their time on costly plants and if they are lucky just mow the lawn every week! In April rake out all the dead moss (I bought a cheap electric one as I had lots of moss.) I raked it up and down then cross ways. This gets it out without tearing up the grass. TIP – don't do it when the grass is wet.

Then apply a WEED and FEED, you can buy this in boxes and roughly you need one box for a 20 ft x 20 ft garden. The weed and feed will kill any moss you missed and make the lawn a lovely rich colour. It really worked for me last year. Remember these 4 areas will lay the basics for the rest of the year - don't go mad – Enjoy it.

Debbie

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