

MEDIA RELEASE

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Warming up that frostbitten green thumb

5 ways to get your garden ready for spring during the winter months

TORONTO, Ont. —With temperatures below freezing, the ground covered in snow and the sight of plant life scarce, your green thumb may be feeling a bit frostbitten. With spring slowly coming into view, Canada Blooms would like to suggest five ways to start preparing your garden for the warmer days ahead.

1. Pruning:

Winter is the prime time to prune your summer-blooming trees and shrubs to make room for new growth. Take advantage of this time while your plants are dormant and bugs are at a minimum to cut back your wisteria vines, rose bushes, ornamental grasses, and any other summer-blooming foliage growing in your garden.

2. Winter-Sowing:

While it may be too cold to sprinkle seeds in the garden, you can get a head start on growing your perennials and hardy annuals by making some DIY miniature greenhouses out of recycled clear plastic materials. These containers can be placed outside during the cold winter months allowing hard-shelled seeds to naturally germinate, and plants to grow much stronger and sturdier as they withstand the elements.

3. Sow seeds in a heated propagator:

While the perennials and hardy annuals can withstand the cold, some weak annuals require a warmer environment to get started. To get a head start on those plants that require a longer growing season such as geraniums, begonias and peppers, sow these seeds within a heated propagator. To mitigate costs, a similar miniature greenhouse as mentioned previously could be created and placed in direct sunlight indoors to garnish a similar effect.

4. Save up egg shells and coffee grounds:

Both eggshells and coffee grounds act as natural fertilizers for your garden, shells providing calcium while the grounds provide nitrogen. Eggshells have also been known to deter pests such as slugs, snails, and even deer. On the other hand, coffee grounds work quite the opposite, attracting earthworms and helping beneficial microorganisms thrive in addition to improving drainage, water retention and soil aeration.



5. Feed the birds:

During the cold months, insects are scare, water is frozen, and most of the natural food supply is covered by snow making Canadian winters a stressful time for birds. By providing high calorie food options such as sunflower seeds, suet, or peanut butter, you will be helping your feathered backyard residents stay warm and cozy throughout the winter. In return, birds will provide natural pollination among your garden, while also minimizing the amount of weeds and pests.

Canada Blooms will be held from March 11th to 20th, 2015, at the Enercare Centre at Exhibition Place in Toronto. The schedule for the show is available at <u>canadablooms.com</u> for anyone wishing to enter, as well as being found on the Garden Club of Toronto website.

For more information or for tickets, please visit <u>canadablooms.com</u>. Follow Canada Blooms on Twitter @CanadaBlooms and Like it on Facebook.

About Canada Blooms

Canada Blooms is an annual world-class festival that connects people to the joys and benefits of nature through experiences with gardens and flowers by promoting, educating, inspiring and celebrating all aspects of horticulture. Co-locating with the National Home show to create North America's Largest Home and Garden event, Canada Blooms is a not-for-profit organization that gives back to the community throughout the year by funding community garden projects around Ontario, Canada Blooms is also dedicated to providing the community with horticulture expertise, education and resources on an ongoing basis.

Now in its 20th year, Canada Blooms was founded by Landscape Ontario and The Garden Club of Toronto. Each year it is supported by a committed group of partners, sponsors and volunteers.

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For more information, please contact: