First let’s talk a little about your soil.

Most gardeners think that soil tests are done only to find out what nutrients are deficient. However, it is just as important to know if you have adequate levels of nutrients, so you don't add unneeded fertilizer.

The most basic soil test checks pH and the levels of phosphorus and potassium. Most of the lawn and garden soil tests that we send to get tested show more than adequate levels of both phosphorus and potassium.

If those nutrients are not needed, applying them is a waste of money and can be a source of pollution. In extreme cases, excess phosphorus can interfere with the uptake of micronutrients. So, if you haven't taken a soil test in several years, take one this spring. We have a testing probe in our county offices for you to borrow to get your soil samples.

Begin by taking a representative sample from a number of locations in the garden or lawn that goes from the surface to 6 to 8 inches deep. Mix the samples together in a clean container and select about 1 pint of soil.

Take the soil to your local K-State Research and Extension office to have tests done at the K-State soil-testing laboratory for a small fee. A soil test determines fertility problems, not other conditions that may exist such as poor drainage, poor soil structure, soil borne diseases or insects, chemical contaminants or damage, or shade with root competition from other plants. Soil samples should be air-dried before being submitted for testing. Also, be sure to use a clean container to collect the sample.

If you are starting a new flower garden or hard landscape, you could start rounding up items that you would like to use in your garden area, so they are ready to go when the time is right.

Inventory your Garden Tools.

A clean, sharp garden tool makes a big difference in performance and takes less time to maintain. Hand pruners kept in relatively good condition can be sharpened in about 10 minutes. Well-maintained tools provide a cleaner cut, are more rust resistant, and last longer than tools that do not receive proper care. Wooden handles are less likely to splinter or break with proper care.

Gardeners who spend 4 hours a week pruning may need to sharpen once or twice a year. If you need more information about cleaning tool’s we have a publication that might help you.

Talking about Spring:

Let’s get up and Start Moving!!!

This past year has been a real challenge for most of us, but it is Spring time and we can get outside to walk, ride the bike, work in your garden, etc.

When the whole family is involved in physical activities together, children learn that being active is fun and makes you feel good. And busy parents can combine family time with exercise time.

Working together as a family to prepare a list of activities you would like to do together is a starting point. Make sure your list of activities are things everyone can do and enjoy together.

Try to plan at least one activity a week to do together as a family. When family schedules get really busy, going for a walk or riding bikes together may be the easiest thing you can do.

Make physical activity a priority!!!

Getting Spring Fever?

It’s that time of year when the days bring on the sunshine and warmer days. That’s when we get anxious to start working in our yards and gardens. But it might be a little early yet.