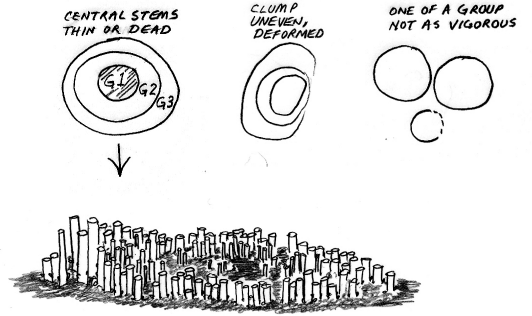


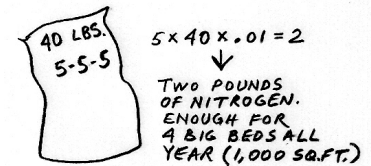
Getting the Garden Ready for Spring (Or: Don't Miss March and April!)

A. Late March & early April - sharp tools, sharp eyes

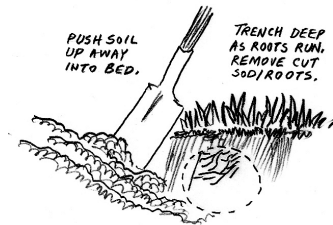
1. Prune the woodies:
 - a) To keep it small? Cut *before budbreak* or wait til August.
 - b) To promote vigorous new growth: Cut hard, now!
2. Cut down the previous year's herbaceous debris
 - a) For looks, sanitation; easier working in bed
 - Or not -- birds, good bugs like debris...
 - b) How far to cut:
 - Lawn, to 2"
 - Deciduous and only-its-leaves-are-evergreen -- can be razed
 - Woody evergreens -- shear or clip to above green buds
 - c) Things to look for as you work
 - Pest and disease problems
 - Overgrown plants
 - Weed hot spots
 - d) Such a puzzle: Naming the plants from old stem, spread, root...
 - A word about tags



3. Rake out debris: Visibility is the objective. Do *not* remove all mulch.
4. Spread fertilizer before edging and weeding - gets mixed in as you go.
 - a) In place now, supports the season of most rapid top growth
 - Fertilizers don't cause growth, as vitamins don't cause child to grow.
 - b) What kind, how much?
 - Calculate 1-2 pounds of nitrogen (N) per 1,000 sq. ft.
 - First number on label is percent N
that number x weight x .01 = lbs. of N in the bag
 - 1-1-1 ratio (such as 10-10-10, 5-5-5...) or per soil test
 - Best: slow release organic _____



5. Edge the bed: Cut an air edge or verify soundness of existing hard edge
 - a) Of critical importance - the edge is the biggest weed in the garden
 - b) Cutting: Use a sharp spade.
 - Slice as deep as invading roots
 - Loosen and lift slice, working in toward bed center
 - c) Make the edge sound. Chase individual roots into bed.



6. Weed the bed
 - a) Fanatically! No bigger time saving over a season.
 - Focus on established weeds, not seedlings
 - Make sure there's a no-man's-land between desirable plants
 - Routing an established weed patch: Begin from center of colony.
 - b) Sharp eye for trouble as you weed
 - Plants that need dividing, since our own good plants can be weeds
 - What weed roots look like -- root system form, method of spreading
 - c) And all of this applies to *lawn* as well as perennials and landscape beds

7. Divide plants and improve soil!

a) Priorities

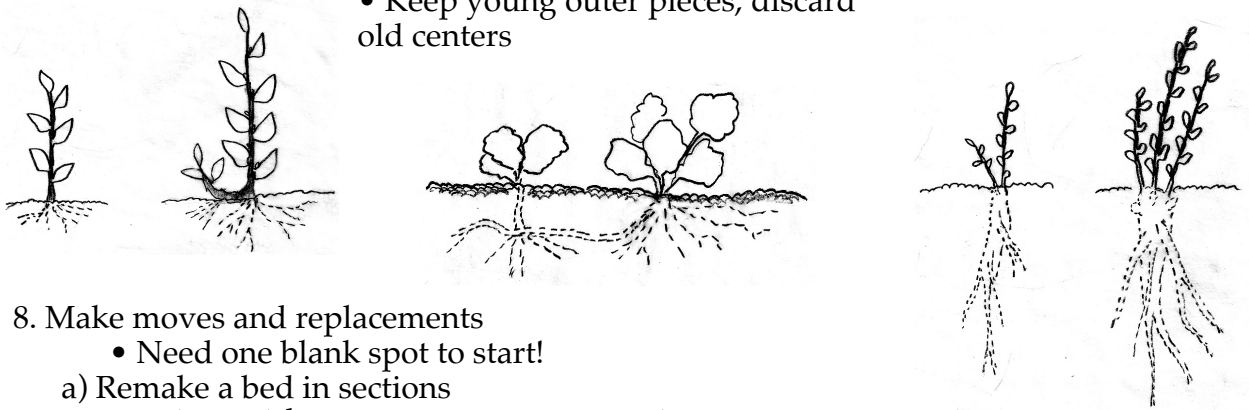
- Plants that must be lifted to remove weed roots
- Evergreens and fast growing, cool weather deciduous types
- Aggressive spreaders
- Plants showing their age in reduced growth, bloom and health.

b) Division's not essential but good to do:

- Divided plant = young = vigorous, fast, full-blooming and *in place*
- Don't neglect lawn and groundcover renewal by division.

c) How? Look at roots - they tell. Offset (left), runner (c), taproot (right)

- Keep young outer pieces, discard old centers



8. Make moves and replacements

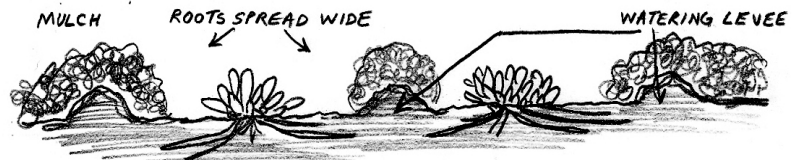
- Need one blank spot to start!

a) Remake a bed in sections

- Rake mulch aside, return it after working
- Remove all plants in area to be divided, then loosen soil 8-18" deep
- Add compost equal in volume to root balls removed
- Level the area and plant new, or re-plant divisions
- Plant to spotlight plant features other than flower, and focal points
- Make watering levee, water in each plant

b) Transplanting tip (divisions and bare root new plants)

- Spread roots wide, neighbors shouldn't touch.
- Leave more room than you think a plant will need
- Frame focal point plants with significant-difference plants or features



d) Plant tips (new plants in pots)

- Slice root bound plants -- slice bottom off, sides up

9. Mulch: Suppress weeds, conserve moisture, encourage roots, renew soil, look good

a) 2-3" deep if leafy; 1-2" deep if woody

b) Materials

- Leafy: grass clippings, fall leaves, straw, coco hulls
- Woody: bark, shredded wood
- Other: newspaper, carpet, stone...
- No weed mats

10. Plant cool season annuals, bare root- and field grown perennials, containers!

11. Record work done and planned for "next time." It's wonderful to have what you need, know your goals when you come back out in May!