

# SPRING CARE TIPS



## TAKING CARE OF PERENNIALS

Cut back any dead parts of perennial plants and grasses that remain from winter, to a height of 4-6 inches and dispose of cut vegetation. Leave all new growth and green basal\* leaves of plants such as Black-eyed Susans, Asters and Penstemons.

\*Basal leaves grow in a tight cluster or rosette at the base of a plant.

## LEAVE DORMANT PLANTS UNTIL SPRING

Prune shrubs to remove dead or diseased branches. Native shrubs and trees should never be sheared or shaped. Check out our Pruning Guide for more instructions on pruning.



## START REGULAR WEEDING

Start hand weeding now when you see new growth, and at least twice monthly by the end of April through June. Be sure to dig up the roots of any weeds as many weeds can grow back even from small root chunks.



Visit the Virtual Service Center:  
[www.allianceforthebay.org/maintenance](http://www.allianceforthebay.org/maintenance)

## PROTECT POLLINATORS

Synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides are harmful to pollinators. Install native plants, which need no fertilizer or pesticides, and provide food and shelter for wildlife. Weed by hand when possible. If you must apply weed killer or pesticide, use organic products and natural solutions. Wait until later in the spring when more flowers are in bloom to serve as an alternate food source and apply in the evening after most pollinator foraging is done for the day.



## ADDING NATIVE PLANTS

Native plants are the foundation of your RiverSmart garden. These plants have been naturally present for thousands of years and are adapted to local conditions. They are uniquely suited for rain gardens and BayScapes due to their capacity to filter stormwater with a deep root system and require little extra water, fertilizer, or pesticides. Check out our list of commonly used native plants or our web series Native Plant Narratives.



## NOURISH THE SOIL

1. Rake lightly around plants to remove large debris, though complete cleanup is not necessary. Diseased plant material should be clipped.
2. Mulch can be placed in areas where the soil is bare to conserve water and suppress weeds. Add approximately 2" of undyed hardwood organic mulch. Also, leave a bare space of approximately 6" around tree trunks to prevent harmful moisture.
3. As an alternative to mulch, you may wish to consider planting **native groundcovers**, "green mulch" which saves time and money, and adds beauty to the garden.

