

Spring into action with this gardening to-do list from expert Lindsay Gray

What an unconventional winter we have experienced! Extreme cold, unseasonal rain in our predominantly summer rainfall areas, severe flooding in other parts of the country – all indications of climate change.



Summer Rainfall Regions

Lawns: Despite the winter rainfall, it is still a bit early to apply your spring application of fertiliser to the lawn. Instead, when you see signs of new growth, give the lawn a light trim, with the blades set on the highest setting. This will encourage healthy spring growth. From September, watch for a forecast of two to three day steady rainfall and then apply a fertiliser high in nitrogen such as Neutrog's Upsurge. Apply at a rate of 50g per square metre. Never apply fertiliser IN the rain as this will cause uneven distribution. Thereafter, mow the lawn regularly and take off no more than one third of the growth to encourage the roots to strengthen, giving a thick cover of healthy lawn.

Garden Beds: Your spring programme should consist of fertilising your garden beds and renewing the protective cover of mulch on the soil. This is a key ingredient of a healthy garden. Feed with Neutrog's Rapid Raiser at the rate of 100g per square metre and thereafter apply a 5cm thick layer of well rotted compost or leaf litter as a mulch.

Spring Pruning: Other than for roses, there is no exact date for spring pruning. In fact, it's easier to prune when the new spring growth appears so that, if you are shaping a shrub or young tree, you can see exactly where to cut to encourage healthy, outward growth.

Splitting perennials: Spring is the ideal time to lift and divide perennials such as daylilies, Clivia (after flowering) and Agapanthus. Prepare the new beds with a thick layer of rich compost, 50 – 100 grams per square metre of Neutrog's Rapid Raiser, and, after replanting, cover the soil with a mulch. You may not experience a fantastic show of flowers this year but the following summer will bring its rewards.

Frost Areas: Gardeners living in frost-prone areas will know that it is still a bit early to remove frost protection from your plants. Once you have experienced your final severe frost, you can remove the protection, replace any winter annuals with summer flowering ones, feed the beds and replenish the layer of mulch over any bare soil.

Winter Rainfall Regions

The challenge in these parts of the country is to sustain healthy growth throughout the hot, dry summers.

Feeding: Maintain your regular feeding regimen for lawns and garden beds as for the summer rainfall region. Put down a thick layer of mulch once the soil has warmed slightly to keep it moist and protected from sun and wind during the summer months.

Spring Pruning: This should only be necessary to tidy up any shrubs that might have lanky growth or the odd stray branch that needs to be reduced in length.

General

Mulch: Any disease-free material can be used as a mulch - compost, dried leaves, gravel, pebbles, peach pips, nut shells, plastic, wetted newspaper, straw, loose hay or a thin layer of cut grass.

Water harvesting: Every gardener should invest in a garden tank (or any water capturing mechanism) this season and catch as much of the spring and early summer rainfall as possible. The smaller tanks are wonderful for filling fish ponds, swimming pools and washing cars!

Happy Gardening!



Lindsay Gray is the principal of The School of Garden Design, South Africa's oldest private garden design school.

Lindsay studied in KZN under Vernon Rippon, Peter Bretherton and Bruce Stead and then in London with master designer, John Brookes and at The English Gardening School. She has authored two books, Making Sense of Garden Design and A Sense of Space : The Gardens of Jan Blok.

Spring Feeding with Neutrog's All Year Round Program



The plants in our gardens are just like humans, they grow best when they are well nourished and fed regularly. Happy healthy plants don't get sick and are less likely to be affected by pests or diseases.

Feeding the soil in each season also suits the feeding requirements of plants. This provides them with consistent and sustained nutrients and gives them the best chance to perform at their optimum."

LAWN

Neutrog's Upsurge is manufactured from a unique blend of organic and inorganic compounds that give your lawn the 'best of both worlds'. The organic compounds provide a slow release feed over a number of weeks which nourish the soil, while the inorganic water-soluble compounds supply the nutrients faster, for the initial boost of growth your grass needs. As the name suggests, Upsurge provides swift results and a healthy and vibrant green colour!

PLANTS

Rapid Raiser is a unique blend of 100% organic materials specially formulated to promote the faster, healthier and sustained growth of all garden plants. It is enriched with sedimentary rock phosphates, which encourage the development of root systems - making it the ideal planting food to establish new spring plants.

The organic compounds which are released slowly improve microbial and earthworm activity, leading to a well structured and healthy soil.

ROSES AND OTHER FLOWERING / FRUIT-BEARING PLANTS

As the name suggests Sudden Impact for Roses is the perfect product for your prized roses; it is however also excellent for all flowering and fruit-bearing plants as well. The balance and ratio of nutrients, combined with the very best raw materials are the secret behind this products success. Use Sudden Impact for Roses in your garden and see an increase in the number of flowers on each bush, an increase in the quality of individual blooms, as well as continued general plant vigour and sturdy growth.

Visit your Neutrog stockist for the year round feeding programme that suits your garden or log onto www.neutrog.co.za



A Water-Wise Garden from the Ground Up

How correct soil preparation can influence your watering regime



Water conservation continues to be the focus of gardeners across the nation as they look to make their gardens more 'water wise'. Aside from correct plant selection - i.e. choosing plants that are appropriate to our gardens' individual conditions, mulching and adopting efficient and effective watering techniques where required, we also need to consider what can be done to improve the soil structure and consequent water-holding capacity.

The addition of organic matter to the soil, whether it be in the form of composts, mulches or organic-based fertilisers, helps to improve

the soil's structure, as well as promoting earthworm and microbial activity. This results in an increase in plant root growth, increasing the plant's ability to draw moisture and nutrients from the soil. Plants will be stronger, healthier and better able to withstand extreme stresses due to either heat or limited water.

The old belief that we apply fertilisers to feed the plants is being replaced by an understanding that organic based fertilisers feed the soil and that as a result of this; the plants grow and perform better.

So how do you begin preparing your soil to be more water-wise?

Coming soon to a store near you, is a NEW Neutrog product which can help you revolutionise your water-wise gardening practice - Seamungus! There are many unique aspects to this



product but certainly one of the most important and exciting is its ability to retain moisture.

Neutrog recently tested samples at Stellenbosch University where it was shown to hold more than **120%** of its own weight in moisture!

How is this possible? Well, Seamungus is a composted and pelletised chicken manure base product, however it has the added benefit of seaweed (Kelp) and fishmeal extracts. Seaweed is well-known for its water retention properties and the addition of this in the manufacture of Seamungus, gives it the same qualities. This

means less watering, as well as a healthier, living soil – great news for areas of low rainfall, or for those attempting to make their garden as water-wise as possible. Seamungus is 100% organic and is safe to use on all your garden plants – even indigenous varieties.

Your plants will just love
SEAMUNGUS™

Look out for Seamungus
– available in a 10kg bag in-store
across all major centres by November.



Highbury Prep Looks to a Green Future

We were excited to recently receive some great pictures of the gardens and grounds at Highbury Prep in KZN. Chantelle Burgin, Director of Marketing shares a bit more information with us about the schools' environmental education initiatives and the subsequent legacy being created for future pupils to enjoy.

The **Going Green** initiative at Highbury is a conscious effort by the Highbury family to develop an Environmental Conscience that will translate into a sustainable future for the school, its community and the environment at large.

Focus areas include waste management, energy awareness, water conservation and gardening. Highbury is 108 years old and many shrubs and trees were planted by the founder of the school "Granny McMillan". We have slowly tried to introduce indigenous planting but that can be a challenge when trying to eradicate plants and trees that are of a sentimental value to past and present pupils eg. Some very large blue gums in and around our car park which boys have sat under for over 100 years.

Highbury is situated in a park like estate in Hillcrest, Durban, which is 14 hectares. Our estate gardens are maintained by 2 full time gardeners. We have used Neutrog products for a number of years on our fields, roses and grass as lawn dressing. We introduced veggies last year and have two large veggie gardens in our Foundation Phase and Senior Primary quads, which our boys are responsible for taking care of, thereby teaching them

about sustainable growth. Many of these vegetables are used in our Highbury kitchens for lunches etc.

Highbury receives many positive comments about our lovely, well kept grounds and many people are passionate about keeping them that way, this can also be attributed to Des Dunstone who drives the processes and creative ideas and last but not least, the excellent Neutrog products that we use.

Neutrog has sponsored the Highbury School veggie gardens with Seamungus – we look forward to seeing the results!



HIGHBURY
PREPARATORY SCHOOL



Join Neutrog's Pooh Bah Club

The Pooh Bah Club is the club for all gardening fans to keep up to date with the latest in gardening products, news, and competitions. Be the first to hear about new Neutrog products launched and receive tips about fertilising your garden and lawn all year round. **To join register today at www.neutrog.co.za – membership is free.**



Neutrog SA is on Facebook

Find Neutrog SA on Facebook and become a fan by clicking the 'Like' button. Receive great tips and gardening advice, take part in discussions and enter unique competitions.



T 0860 110 110
F 086 672 2328
E info@neutrog.co.za
Neutrog Africa Pty Ltd
PO Box 81 Philadelphia
7304