Don't panic about our crazy weather!

Our unusual weather in recent weeks has inspired spring blooms to begin early. They were subsequently pummeled by the return of winter weather and temperatures over several nights.

Sensitive foliage, buds, and blooms may or may not survive the frosts, but don't worry - almost all plants will be fine. There isn't anything a gardener can do about this for the most part. The key thing to remember is NOT to jump the gun and plant any spring crops early during another burst of unusually warm weather. Patience!

Growing season is almost here! Keep an eye on long-term forecasts.
Prepare for Growing Season with Grow It Eat It!

Have you had it up to THERE with winter? Get a jump on spring with a food gardening class! Grow It Eat It classes are offered in most counties and taught by Master Gardeners. You can take classes in any county, regardless of the county you live in. Take a class and get growing!

New to growing your own? The Basics will help you Start a Vegetable Garden in 5 Steps. The bottom of our vegetable profile page has a suggested list of vegetables for the first-time grower.

Don’t have room to plant in the ground? Our Container Gardening page is for you! The 20 Recommended Crops for Container Gardens (PDF GE133) publication is designed for school container garden shoulder seasons, but can take out some of the guesswork. Watch the video below for a great introduction!

2017 is the Year of Small Fruits!

Small fruits will have pest problems but, with good care, you can usually produce delicious, healthy fruit without using pesticides.

Take a look at our Year of Small Fruits page for tips, tricks, recommendations, and more

Featured Video
Container Gardening: An Easy Way to Grow Your Own Food

Container Gardening: An Easy Way to Grow Your ...
Jon Traunfeld from the University of Maryland Extension talks about everything you need to know, from potting soil to planting, to grow vegetables in containers.

Read about container gardening (PDF HG600)

--- View on YouTube

Q&A

I was looking to buy a peach tree or two for my yard this year. First, can peach trees grow and produce well in Maryland? Second, if they can, which ones do you recommend? I looked through some catalogs and there are so many to choose from. I am looking for one that produces peaches that I can eat fresh off the tree.

Peach trees are hardy in Maryland, but they are one of the most difficult fruits for a homeowner to grow. They are plagued by insect and disease problems, especially brown rot. The first year or so you could probably get away with not spraying the trees for pests and diseases, but in following years a strict spray schedule needs to be followed. Our advice would be to start with small fruits like berries and blueberries (2017 is the Grow It Eat It Year of the Small Fruits) that can be grown organically. But if you have your heart set on fruit trees consider fig, Asian pear or sour cherries because they have fewer pest problems. Even so, you may will not get a consistent crop year after year. See our ‘tree fruit’ section on the Grow It Eat It website for recommended varieties and best practices.

Have a plant or pest question? University of Maryland Extension's experts have answers! Send in your questions and photos to Ask an Expert.

Have a suggestion for a topic to cover in the HGIC newsletter? Send in your suggestions.