

# timely tips

in more manageable quantities than planting a hill of each type.

I put a complete fertilizer on my lawn last fall. Do I need to fertilize again this spring?

MSU research indicates it's better to hold off fertilizing lawns with nitrogen until late May or early June. Early fertilization promotes lush top growth at the expense of root development. This weakens plants and increases the likelihood that susceptible bluegrass varieties will develop Fusarium blight, a serious turfgrass disease.

Is there any advantage to buying large tomato plants for transplanting into the vegetable garden?

No. In fact, you're better off to buy smaller plants. They'll suffer much less from transplant shock and so will quickly get down to the business of establishing a strong root system to support future growth and fruit production. Large plants that have flowers and/or fruits on them at transplanting time may never develop large, healthy root systems. Their yields may be significantly lower and they are much more likely to suffer

during dry weather.

What's the connection between shade and development of plant diseases?

Plant foliage in shaded areas tends to stay wet longer after a rain, dew or irrigation than foliage in sunny areas. Many plant diseases require moisture on leaves to get established. The cool, humid air in shaded areas may also contribute to development of some diseases, especially those caused by fungi. Water all plants, in shade or sun, early in the day so foliage dries as quickly as possible.

What are dormant oil sprays used for?

Dormant oil sprays are used to control overwintering aphid, mite and scale insect populations on landscape ornamentals. They are applied when plants are dormant. They work by coating insect eggs or insects with a thin film of oil that seals them off from the air and suffocates them. Oils will damage some ornamentals, so be sure to read label directions and cautions before buying and using these products.

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