WELCOME, SPRING!

Three gardeners tell us how they know spring has arrived where they live.

“The hummingbirds begin to linger.”

Connie Erickson

After years of watching the hummingbirds just pass through, Connie has finally convinced them to stay awhile. When they do, she knows that spring has come to her garden.

“Winters here are very cold. We really have only four months maximum for gardening,” Connie says. “Gardening season begins with a frenzy around May 15.”

Her medium-sized suburban yard—bright and sunny in the front, shady in the back—is filled with flowerbeds and rustic antiques. She especially enjoys growing roses, claiming they are worth the extra attention they sometimes need.

Her casual, cottage-style garden is also filled with more than enough hand trowels—her tool of choice.

“I have many of them scattered throughout the garden in hope that I can...”

Connie’s Rose Recommendations

- Feed regularly. Fertilize roses every four to six weeks during the growing season, beginning in early spring. Bayer Advanced Garden 2-in-1 Systemic Rose & Flower Care granules (#67672) feed the flowers while protecting them from insects.
- Toss the peels outside. Connie gives her rose bushes an extra treat by digging in banana peels around the base of the plant. The roses get a boost from the potassium.
- Provide more vitamins and minerals. Roses also benefit from magnesium. In early spring when leaves are forming on the bushes, Connie sprinkles a couple of teaspoons of Epsom salts at the base of each rosebush, scratches the salt into the soil, and water well.
- Let them sunbathe. Plant roses in a sunny location—the more sun the better, but at least six hours each day.
- Give them some space. Roses do best with a little room to breathe, benefiting from the air circulation.
“The rain turns warmer.”

Washington
ZONE 8

Peggy Franklin
While warmer spring rain is a good clue, Peggy also knows her gardening season has begun when the crocus bloom. In her part of the Pacific Northwest, this usually happens in late January. Peggy and her husband own about five acres and actively maintain two of those acres. Their rural property’s location—near Puget Sound and on the western foothills of Mount Rainier—offers moderate weather, making it easy to grow a variety of plants.

After careers in computer software, the Franklins realized their true passion and became owners of a large landscape company. They have installed various types of gardens on their land, all of which are wheelchair-accessible.

“I am happy to say that a person in a wheelchair can enjoy every part of my garden complex, including our

Creating an Accessible Garden

■ Down the garden path. Consider all levels of mobility when designing garden paths and entryways. Make sure paths, gates, and entries are wide enough (around 3 feet) to accommodate a wheelchair. To allow a wheelchair to turn around comfortably, the path must be around 5 feet wide. Minimize uphill or downhill slopes in paths, and use materials that are firm and slip-free.

■ Easy grows it. Choose low-maintenance plants, and consider placing them in raised beds, which minimize bending and stooping. Place plants at the right height for any person by gardening vertically—mount hanging baskets on fences, walls, or trellises.

■ Hands-free watering. Have an irrigation system installed, and set its watering patterns with an electronic water timer (#36660). This device can be programmed for specified days of the week, times of day, and lengths of time.

“Bunnies suddenly multiply!”

Florida
ZONES 9-10

Aly Evans
Because Aly describes her suburban yard’s style as “tropical meets petting zoo,” it’s no wonder that for her, spring’s arrival has nothing to do with plants, which flourish in her area almost year-round. Her four children care for an astonishing variety of pets in the midst of their gardening projects.

“We garden all year long, so I got to play all the time,” she says. Spring planting season in her part of Florida cranks up around March. Warm winters there have only the occasional cold snap, so most foliage is green all the time, and tropical plants overwinter easily.

Aly’s handiest tool in the garden is her scissors: she uses them for trimming and clipping small branches that she turns into decorative arrangements. And what is the best gardening advice she ever received?

“Bunnies suddenly multiply!”