

Prescription for Spring Fever
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This is the time of the year when most gardeners start thinking about the upcoming growing season and start to get anxious. Our minds start wandering as we think about the fun and excitement of watching things grow, and then we look outside and realize that winter is still here and will be for some time. Some professionals describe this as the “winter blues” or “seasonal affective disorder”. I prefer to look at things a little more positively and refer to this time as “spring fever”.

Spring fever season is here and I have the prescription for you. Maybe you have been thinking about “getting your hands dirty” by starting some seeds indoors, transplanting houseplants, or even attending a gardening seminar or two. If this at all describes you then you might have spring fever. Follow my prescription and you should be fine until the gardening season starts.

Sowing annual flowers and vegetables using shallow flats and a good germination mix works very well. Cover the flats loosely with plastic to help hold in moisture and place in a warm area or use bottom heat. After the baby plants develop their first true leaves, transplant into larger containers. The best way to transplant babies is to use a pencil as a dibble stick, poking a hole in the media and pushing the plant into the hole. It is quick and painless to the plant. People often think these young plants need to be treated tenderly but they are tougher than they appear. Place the newly transplanted seedlings in a sunny location and keep moist but not too wet. New plants may benefit from a second transplanting depending on the species and how the plants will be used in the future.

Consider taking in one or more of the many exciting educational offerings that are available.

Upcoming Horticultural Events

Gardening in the Black Hills – February 22nd – March 29th – Rapid City
Second Annual Spring Fever Gardening Seminar – March 5th – Rapid City
Urban Tree Workshop – March 9th – Rapid City
Plant Propagation Short Course – Several dates and locations (call for info)
Master Gardener Core Training – March 29th – May 24th – Spearfish
Community Voices Program – April 7th – Rapid City

Call your local county extension office for additional information about these and other educational offerings.

Don't forget about those seed catalogs. It can be very fun and informative to just page through the catalogs looking at the photos and reading a little about the new varieties as well as the older ones. Start to plan your garden based on the information in the catalogs and place an order for new and interesting plants. Enjoy this time of the year for before we know it we will all be outside “digging in the dirt”. Right now spring fever is here and there is no vaccine to prevent it. Use the remainder of the winter to gear up for a great growing season this summer.

As always feel free to give me a call at 605-394-2188 or email to ricky.abrahamson@sdstate.edu for more information on how to combat spring fever. Be sure to check out our website at www.co.pennington.sd.us/extension/extsvc.html for up to date educational offerings and additional information.