

## A Spring Problem Self-Remedied

Planting in containers comes with its own set of challenges. With their limited space and heightened exposures, containers often dry out quickly and require irrigation more frequently. Because of additional moisture, nutrients present in soil residing in containers can inadvertently be leached out of the soil before they are fully absorbed by the plants. Nitrogen in particular is very susceptible to leaching due to its transient nature. When soil temperatures are cooler, as is the case now as we exit winter, biological activities are slowed and



naturally-replenishing nitrogen can be hampered.

Cooler soil temperature is particularly challenging with raised beds due to their exposure on all four sides. In addition, heavy rains will further complicate matters by cooling the soils further, and adding additional flushing-water. This problem is typically solved naturally with rising soil temperatures as we get deeper into spring and then summer. If you can't wait for the warm-up, amending with additional nutrients can help. During times of inconsistent weather (rain, high winds, and wide temperatures swings), when many attempt to establish spring gardens, the leaching and cooler temperature issues may be pronounced. Time is the ultimate cure, but providing a little boost of compost when needed may help take the edge off your anxious customer.

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