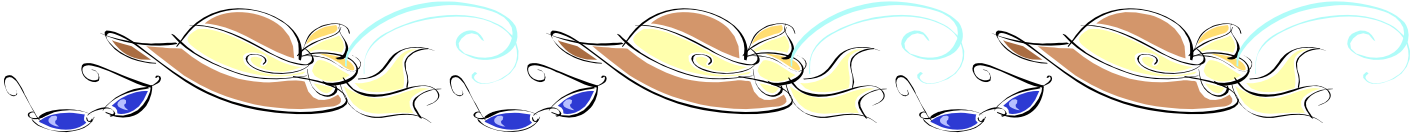




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GARDENING TIPS FOR MAY

PLANTING:

Annuals Seeds: This is the best month to plant. If you have very small seeds, try mixing them with sand, usually 4 parts sand to one part seed, or sprinkle the seeds with a salt shaker.

Dahlias: Choose a sunny location, with rich soil that drains quickly. Set stakes when planting to avoid damaging tubers later. Keep well-watered once you see new shoots popping up. If you water too early, the tubers may rot.

Geraniums: Set in beds or in containers. Use a high nitrogen fertilizer the first month to encourage lush new growth, switch to a high phosphorous fertilizer later. If it is a cold May, wait until the end of the month to plant them outside.

Seeds grown indoors: Toughen them gradually by putting them in a sheltered spot for several days. Gradually increase their exposure to the sun, until in a week or two they can withstand the full sun; then transplant them outside.

Vegetable Seeds: Sow corn seeds at a soil temperature around 62 degrees for fast germination. Plant them from approximately May 1 to June 15. Bush beans can be planted until July 15th. Covering the rows with clear plastic will warm the soil and allow earlier planting. Remove plastic when the seeds have sprouted. Corn should be in blocks of at least 4 rows - it is wind pollinated. Grow popcorn away from sweet corn.

Perennial Seeds: These can be started in flats, or in the garden in a sheltered area, for next year's bloom.

Potatoes: Cut seed potatoes with an eye on each piece, then let them cure for about 24 hours before planting. Try rolling freshly cut potato pieces in bone meal so a little sticks to damp cuts. This helps prevent trouble with potato bugs. Plant in slightly acidic soil to discourage scab. Planting in old tires is an easy method. Add more tires and mulch as the vine grows. Cut potato pieces should be planted with the eyes up.

Squash: Plant summer and winter varieties now. Summer squash (zucchini, crookneck, straight neck) is harvested when fruit is young and the skin is soft. Pick them regularly to keep a continuous supply. Winter squash (butternut, acorn, gold nugget, etc.) is harvested just before frost. It should be cut from the plant with the stem intact. Plant seeds with pointed end down for faster sprouting.

Tomato Plants: Plant outside when the ground is warm. Larger fruited tomatoes take longer to mature. Plant them in full sun, in the hottest spot that you have.

Chrysanthemum Cuttings: Set out rooted cuttings when the shoots are about 4" high. Pinch out the tops.

FERTILIZING:

Spring Flowering Shrubs: Use a complete fertilizer or compost. If it is a dry spring, keep them watered during their bloom season.

Camellias, Rhododendrons: Use light applications of fertilizer every other week.

Trees: Keep applying manure or compost around your trees, extending it well beyond the branches by 1 foot. Tree spikes or a complete fertilizer can also be used. Water in well.

Grapes: Apply wood ashes or a high phosphorous fertilizer.

Garden: If you are tilling your garden now, this is your last chance to work compost or manure into the soil before planting. If you are using fresh manure, till it in and let it sit for a week or so before planting.

PRUNING:

Spring Flowering Shrubs: Some years they finish blooming this month. If you want to thin out your plants or keep their growth under control, the new growth should be shortened during the growing season. A rule of thumb is to cut out one third of the oldest canes at ground level and one third of all remaining branches by one third of their length.

Photinia: If you want to keep the reddish foliage coming back, prune now. This will also prevent legginess. Trim tips to prevent straggly new growth.

Conifers: Remove new growth before it has a chance to develop if you want to limit the plants size. You can also prune large branches if you want to improve its' shape.

SPRAY AND CONTROL:

Holly: Spray for holly leaf miner if needed.

Filbert Trees: Spray for leaf roller if needed.

Apple Fruit Fly: Spray, or try controlling, by attracting the fly. Coat a piece of plastic fruit or a red ball with Tanglefoot and hang it in the tree. Also, bands of burlap or corrugated cardboard on the trunks attract the moth to lay its eggs there instead. Dispose of the burlap or cardboard in the fall.

Camellias: To control cottony Camellia scale (sooty deposits on leaves) spray now. It isn't effective in June or July, since only the egg stage is present then.

Rhododendrons: Spray for root weevils at the end of May to kill the adults as they emerge.

Tobacco Mosaic: Spread to tomato plants by people who have handled tobacco. It causes malformed or mottled leaves. Keep tomatoes away from tobacco, cucumbers, potatoes and other possible disease carriers.

Apples and Pears: Spray for codling moth, or use trapping method. Another method of trapping is by using a pheromone, which is a sex attractant for male moths. Use April-June.

**For advice about what to spray and when, check your local nursery for master gardener office.

HINTS:

Peaches and Plums: After spring drop, thin fruit. Figure 4-6" between peaches and 3" between plums. Let them have their natural spring drop before thinning.

Rhododendrons: Try growing fragrant sweet woodruff as a ground cover beneath them.