

## **Time Exchange - Garden jobs for May**

May is peak time for most gardening, enjoying the last spring and preparing your garden or yard for summer.

### **General gardening**

Weeding. Now is a key time – if you put in some work now, you'll have less weeds in summer.

Keep an eye on the weather and protect young and tender plants from frost and cold winds.

Water – early in the morning if possible. Especially needed for anything that is newly planted, young, or in containers.

Liquid feed plants in containers every 2 weeks.

Mulch where you can.

### **Fruit & Veg**

Plant potatoes – its not too late.

Earth up potatoes that you've already planted by covering the leaves with soil. This stops the tubers from turning green and poisonous. If you've planted them in the ground, wait until stems are 20cm tall then earth up over them to make a ridge. If you've planted in containers, you earth up more gradually.

Sow in a greenhouse or on a windowsill: climbing French beans, dwarf French beans, runner beans, courgettes, pumpkin, squash, indoor cucumbers, basil, and sweetcorn.

Sow in the ground or in containers: peas, spinach, lettuce, rocket, carrots, radish, beetroot, parsnips, coriander, parsley, dill, and spring onions.

Sow in trays/pots/seedbed for transplanting next month: cabbage, kale, broccoli, purple sprouting broccoli, cauliflower.

Put up supports for climbing beans, runner beans, peas to climb up – and make sure broad beans are supported.

Once the risk of frosts has passed, plant out or direct sow climbing French beans, dwarf French beans, runner beans, courgettes, pumpkin.

Pinch out growing tip of broad beans when the lowest truss starts to form pods. This helps to make them less attractive to blackfly.

Plant up strawberry runners taken last year.

Plant herbs.

Protect young crops from slugs and snails.

### **Flowers**

Plant out summer bedding towards the end of the month.

Deadhead tulips and daffodils. Lift & divide spring bulbs. Tie up daffodil leaves neatly, but don't cut the leaves. Allow leaves of all bulbs to die back naturally. Apply liquid fertiliser to spring bulbs ensure good flowering next year.

Put supports in place for tall-growing or top-heavy plants.

Check for lily beetle grubs and vine weevil.

Divide primulas and primroses once they finish flowering.

Divide Hostas, other herbaceous perennials, and bamboo as they begin to sprout.

Cut back spring-flowering trailing plants, like Alyssum and Aubretia once they finish flowering – this promotes fresh growth and a second flush of flowers.

Remove dead leaves from spring-flowering alpine plants.

Take softwood cuttings of Fuschia, Pelagorium, and other tender perennials.

Sow outside: Sow cornflowers, sunflowers, and other hardy annuals outside. Sow nasturtiums outside towards the end of the month.

In greenhouse or on a windowsill: Sow Nasturtiums for planting out next month. Sow pansies, Bellis, and other winter and spring bedding plants.

## **Shrubs and trees**

Plant evergreen shrubs and trees, conifers, and container-grown shrubs and trees.

Always check for bird nests before carrying out any work to shrubs and trees, and never disturb a nest.

Tie in climbing and rambling roses

Prune tender shrubs and sub-shrubs such as Fuschia and Penstemon.

Prune spring-flowering shrubs and sub-shrubs such as winter heathers, Kerria, Choisya, Ribes, and Japanese quince, after flowering.

Prune Clematis montana.

Prune frost-damaged evergreens.

Tie in climbers.

Take softwood cuttings of deciduous shrubs such as Forsythia, Philadelphia

## **Lawns**

Mow lawns weekly or leave to grow for No Mow May to encourage wildflowers and wildlife.