



“From the Potting Shed”

Riverview Garden Club - May Helpful Hints

2022

May is one of the busiest gardening months! It's a time when our gardens come alive and start bursting with blooms and it's also a big month for planting wildflowers, perennials, tender annuals, and more. Here are some suggestions of what to add to your garden in May, along with important maintenance tasks to ensure a long, healthy growing season. The work you put in now will pay off in the summer months ahead!

Things to do in the garden this month...

Plant Wildflowers and Perennials:

- After your last frost date (May 1-10), you can plant tender annuals, wildflowers, and perennials to your garden.
- When planting wildflower seeds, remove all existing growth from the area and plant seeds on bare soil.
- May is the perfect time to add wildflowers to your garden, meadow, or even to replace part of your lawn.
- Add annual wildflower seeds for instant color and to attract pollinators.
- Now is the time to add perennials to an existing garden bed or start a new perennial bed.
- Plant bare roots or perennials with minimal growth-the smaller the plant, the more the root system can grow and become acclimated to your garden.
- Dig and divide early-blooming perennials after flowering.
- Lift, divide and replant late summer and fall-blooming perennials.
- Add an organic fertilizer to your perennials after you plant and make sure to keep them watered.

Plant Bulbs:

- Tender bulbs like Dahlias, Gladiolus and Calla lilies and more can be safely added to your garden (or containers) after your last frost date.
- If you've started summer blooming bulbs indoors, make sure to gradually bring them out for a few hours a day for several days to help get them acclimated before planting them in the ground.

Plant Vegetables:

- If you've started Tomato, Pepper, Herb Seeds, or other vegetables indoors, be sure to harden them off (gradually bringing them outside for several hours a day for several days) before adding them to your garden.
- Direct sow varieties like Beans, Pumpkins, Corn, Zucchini, Cucumbers, and Lettuce.

Garden Maintenance:

- *Keep up with weeding!* The more you identify and remove weeds when they're small, the easier it will be throughout the season.
- Take photos of weed seedlings to keep on file for next season to make sure you don't mix them up with your perennial plants.
- Fertilize your flowering perennials to help give them a boost.
- Consider using an organic, all natural fertilizer. Read the label carefully and water the fertilizer in after applying it.
- Fertilize needle evergreens with acid type fertilizer
- Fertilize bulbs as they finish blooming
- Fertilize annuals and container plants
- Add a natural mulch to the beds to help retain water and suppress weeds.
- As an alternative to wood mulch, plant living groundcovers instead! Plant varieties like Alyssum, Thyme, or Clover around your plants to help suppress weeds, stabilize, and enhance the soil.
- Look for pests and other problems; spotting them early can mean less chemical controls. Note: slugs and caterpillars can be removed manually
- Apply deer repellents consistently, change and vary the products you apply so deer won't become accustomed to the taste/smell.

Move houseplants outdoors:

- Give your houseplants a natural fertilizer and gradually move them outdoors for several hours each day to acclimate them to the weather.
- As night temperatures moderate into the 60's move houseplants outdoors to a sheltered area
- Place plants in a screened porch or under an awning and avoid full sun and windy locations.

Divide and transplant perennials:

- Wait for a cool, rainy day to divide perennials like Hostas and Daylilies that have outgrown their space.
- Wait until the plants are at least 5" tall, but make sure to do so before they start budding.
- Prepare the hole prior to digging out perennials so plants go directly into their new location

Set up plant supports:

- If you have perennial or annual vines, or top-heavy varieties like Peonies, make sure to set up your trellises and supports in the early season.
- Replace trellises and supports you took down before winter for your climbing vines like Clematis.

Spring flower maintenance:

- Deadhead spring flowering bulbs, but allow foliage to remain until they turn yellow this will nourish bulbs for next year's display
- Once the plants turn brown, you can cut them back to the ground.
- Begin deadheading roses and fertilize roses
- Move self-sown annuals and perennials to desired locations

Lawn care:

- For your first lawn mowing of the season, leave the grass clippings on top of the lawn to help add nitrogen back to your soil.
- Fertilize lawns in late May

Pruning:

- Prune spring-flowering shrubs like Forsythia and Lilacs after they've finished blooming.
- Wait to prune evergreens, hedges and other shrubs until late spring into early summer

Start your garden journal:

- As things start to come alive and bloom in your garden, make sure to keep records in your garden journal.
- Take note of when things start to bloom, varieties you divided and transplanted, as well as the growth of new varieties in your garden.
- This is important to compare your notes to last season and to help you plan for the years ahead.

Happy Gardening!