

What to do now in May.

- 1) Continue to sow your favourite vegetables. Read the packet and sow appropriate varieties for the time of year. *Little and often is the general rule to avoid gluts.* F1 seeds are designed for commercial growers who need uniformity and will all come to harvest at the same time. This is not much use for ordinary gardeners: we don't want two dozen Cauliflowers coming to head in the same week. Non F1 seeds have more natural variation in them and are more appropriate for domestic gardens.
- 2) Earth up the soil around your Potato stems as the foliage grows. This is to avoid tubers being exposed to the light which will turn them green and poisonous. Watch out for late Spring frosts.
- 3) At the end of the month you can sow your French and Runner Beans. Soak the seeds for 24 hours beforehand. (NB, if the seed floats it is dead so get rid of it). Beans love humus rich soil so if you can plant them over a trench of well rotted compost/manure then do so. Keep them well watered. To avoid mice and rats eating the seeds spray the soil above them with an animal repellent. If you sowed some plants in pots last month then plant them out in the second half of the month after hardening them off.
- 4) Courgettes, Squashes and Pumpkins can be planted out or sown at the end of the month. They also like humus rich soil.
- 5) Sweet corn can be planted out or sown. It is only worth doing if you can plant out a big block of it. It is wind pollinated and a few in a row have little chance of success.
- 6) Plant your Tomatoes into their final stations in your greenhouse. If growing outside chose a suitable variety like "Gardeners delight" and place it in the sunniest and most sheltered part of your allotment.
- 7) Keep on top of watering. Do not let your vegetables suffer any kind of "check" because of drought. It always leads to "bolting" or a loss of quality.
- 8) Watch the weeds which will be growing furiously by now. Do not let them compete with your crops. The weeds will always win!
- 9) Place a collar or some straw around your Strawberry plants to lift the developing fruit off the ground. Be very careful how you water now. Keep the water away from the fruit and foliage as much as you can to help prevent moulds and rot developing if weather conditions deteriorate.
- 10) Transplant your Leeks into their final positions. Tip them carefully out of their pot, trim off half of the roots and place in a hole made in your soil with the end of a broom handle or dibber. Do not fill the hole with soil. Fill it with water and leave.