

GARDENING JOBS - MAY

1, May, 2020

May is the busiest time of the year for gardeners. It's the month of the last frost, apples and cherries are in blossom, the temperature has increased and days are a lot longer and plants are being planted out. For these reasons here are a few jobs you can do this month.

1.Planting out, Now you can begin to plant out your tender plants in the garden. There is a belief of a cold snap normally occurring in the middle of May so keep an eye on the temperatures or wait till the end of the month to plant out more delicate plants.

Tips - Protection of plants when a coldsnap and frost are expected can be straw, newspaper or a cloche, fleece or blanket placed over the tender plant.

2.Direct sowing, Most veg can be directly sown such as your leafy veg and some root vegetables that can be successively sown and legumes in late

april-may. Veg that shouldn't be are very long season veg like squash, pumpkins, beans etc. When direct sowing seeds outdoors the steps to take are-

- *Make sure the area you are sowing in is clear of weeds*
- *If the soil is blocky or hard then rake to a fine tilth*
- *Make lines to mark where the seeds will be sown and make the lines the depth the seed will be planted (double the depth of the seed, if very small sow on top)*
- *Scatter the seeds in the line made thinly. If broad beans, peas etc. then sow about 10cm apart.*
- *Cover up and then water in well.*

Tips ! If there is an expected frost then cover with cloche or straw. Making sure it's about 4-5 cm thick and well secured around the plant. If slugs are a problem for emerging seedlings then using slug pellets like ferric phosphate which are organic and won't harm any animals, pets or humans. Also putting netting over them if blackbirds are common as hungry females are

prone to scratching and digging for worms at this time of year, put some food out for them and put netting over the seeds.

3. growing structures, Now is a good time to create a climbing frame for your runner beans or a support structure for peas. To create a structure for runner beans, the largest ones will get about 3m tall so creating a structure this tall using twigs from trees or canes if you know how tall your variety will get then design accordingly

Peas, if in a pot creating a teepee with twine or string wrapped along the outside. In a line outside then a small tent shape made from twigs and tied at the top where the canes meet and then plant a pea plant at the base of each twig.

4. Thin out any veg direct sown, Now and for all your directly sown vegetables this is the month you can start thinning out your veg. Choosing the strongest and pulling the others.

Tips- if you have thinned carrots then this will release a smell that attracts carrot flies, remember to cover with fleece after thinning to stop the flies laying eggs and infesting your plants. Also remember to use your thinnings in a salad.

5. Pest and disease watch, Pests will be reproducing quicker outside and becoming more active. The warm weather is starting and the rains have begun again making fungal diseases pop up outdoors so keep a close eye on tell tale signs such as-

- *Yellowing leaves/ leaf drop*
- *Curled new growth*
- *Wilting plants*
- *Sooty black mould on plants*
- *Black or yellow specks on leaves*
- *There will be a guide on pests on diseases soon so keep an eye out. Any queries or just want to share pictures of your plants email us at-cardenden@orevalleyha.org.uk*