**May Gardening Calendar**

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If you have not fertilized the lawn, now is the time to do so. Use a slow release lawn fertilizer such as 19-5-9 and apply 1 pound of nitrogen per 1000 square feet (about 5.5 pounds of fertilizer).

Apply the second dose of pre-emergent herbicide to prevent sand burs sometime after the middle of the month. Crabgrass Preventer, Amaze or XL work well.

In the vegetable garden, the greens are generally finished. They may look okay but usually turn bitter by now; plant okra and southern peas to replace them. Keep the tomatoes and peppers well watered and fertilized. Slow release lawn fertilizer applied every 3 weeks works well.

If stink bugs show up, you may have to use carbaryl (Sevin) but otherwise organic pesticides should be able to keep the pests under control. Spray a Bt product such as Dipel, Thuricide or Bio Worm Control to kill the caterpillars. Two tablespoons of seaweed extract mixed in a gallon of water does a fairly good job of slowing down the spider mites. Spray it weekly under the leaves. If the pests appear, increase your spray frequency to twice per week.

Harvest summer squash when it is young for best quality. At some point you may be faced with squash vine borer damage. The vine quits producing and the stem collapses. Pull the plants and discard them into the compost pile. Next year use tatuma or another of the square stem squashes. They taste the same and are resistant to the borers,

Harvest potatoes any time after the flowers appear. Onions are ready to be harvested when the tops flop over.

May is a great month for rose blooms. Keep them well watered and apply same slow release lawn fertilizer every month. Modern hybrid tea roses do best with a weekly spray of acephate for insects and triforine for fungus diseases. Peaches and apples also need to be sprayed weekly to produce high quality fruit. Use Sevin or malathion for insects and captain for fungus. Organic gardeners can try sulfur products; spinosad and neem oil for both roses and fruit.

Petunias and dianthus will continue to bloom well in the flowerbeds but snapdragons need to be replaced with zinnias. For hot weather flowers in containers in full sun, consider moss rose and purslane. In the shade, consider begonias, coleus and caladiums. Perennials that tolerate hot weather can be planted in May to bloom this summer. Esperanza (Texas Gold), and firebush, duranta and poinciana can all be found in area nurseries. They won’t bloom well until fall but the tough modern roses and old fashioned roses can also be planted now. Butterfly (mutabilis) rose becomes very large and is covered with simple flowers that can change color from pink to crimson as they age. Expect mutabilis to grow to 10 feet tall and 12 feet around. Martha Gonzales rose only grows to about 5 by 5 feet but it has reddish foliage and blood red blooms for 8 months of the year. Mrs. Dudley Cross grows to 6 feet tall and about 7 feet around. It produces florist type blooms of yellow-peach color. For more examples of tough roses, visit plantanswers.com.

Keep the hummingbird feeder filled with fresh sugar water. Mix 1 part sugar with 4 parts water by volume. Refill and rinse the container each week for best results.