

## May Gardening Calendar

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It is time to fertilize the lawn. Apply 1lb of slow release lawn fertilizer per 1000 sq. ft. If you use 19-5-9 that would involve applying about 5lbs or 10 cups of the material for every 1000 sq. ft. of lawn. Quite often that distribution is achieved if you use the lowest recommended application rate on the bag. If you have a St Augustine lawn and it appears yellow from iron chlorosis, use the fertilizer Iron Plus. It has nitrogen and iron as ingredients.

For summer color plant zinnias as transplants or seeds in the full sun flower garden. The taller selections like California Giants, Cactus, Dahlia-flowered and Dreamland make good cut flowers. Cosmos, moss roses, vinca, and purslane also produce flowers through the summer in the sun. In the shade consider the "Whopper" begonia, semperfloren begonias, caladium, and coleus.

If you are limited in your pesticide use and provide plenty of nectar plants and some egg-laying sites butterflies can provide extra color and interest in your landscape. Along with the zinnias, use milkweed, mistflower, porter weed, duranta, lantana, salvia, and porter weed for nectar. Provide some citrus, passion vine, dill, milkweed, cannas, sunflower, and flame acanthus for egg-laying sites.

Early May is a good time to plant eggplant, peppers, and okra. Use transplants for the eggplant and peppers. Okra is available as transplants but seed works just as well. Find some of the locally available Oscar okra seed if you want a productive small (6-7 ft.) plant. Fill extra space in the summer garden with southern peas. Harvested before the seeds completely develop, they can be used like green beans after your green bean plants decline later in the summer.

Onions are quite often harvested in May. When the plants have finished growing the bulb, the tops flop over showing they are ready to be harvested. The usual procedure is to pull the plants from the ground and let them sit and dry for a few days there in the garden. After they dry the tops can be cut off and they can be placed in net bags for storage. The bags can be hung in a dry room. It works nearly as well to place the harvested onions on a table in the shade. Depending on the weather they will often last through Thanksgiving.

Most of the cool weather vegetables planted in February decline in May. Use the available broccoli, turnips, and others as long as they appear and taste okay. Carrots have been great but even they should be used up this month. The potato foliage has probably browned indicating that they should be harvested.

Use Bt to protect tomatoes from further damage if you spot caterpillars. About the only product that handles leaf-footed bugs and other stink bugs is Sevin. Apply Daconil if the fungal disease early blight begins to brown the foliage from the bottom up. Some gardeners use seaweed extract at the rate of two tablespoons per gallon of water applied weekly under the tomato leaves to slow down spider mite infestations.

