

The Garden in May.....To Do List

April so far has been wet and cold. I know we are all waiting impatiently for warmer weather. Some days it is not easy to bundle up and get into the garden but there is work to do! That was my comment last year and the same is true for this year!

- Deadhead Daffodils and Hyacinth bulbs now and leave the green to die down and replenish the bulb.
- Wait until nearer the end of May to plant out annuals from garden centers, many plants will have been in greenhouses and it is a good idea to wait until the night temperatures are warm enough to leave plants out. Generally the long weekend in May is a safe time to get plants out of the greenhouse and you can plant out in the garden and pots. Also, gradually harden off bedding plants ready for planting in your garden later in the month. Stunning containers and baskets can each be a garden unto itself with a variety of plants avail. Be daring, try using unusual plants combinations! Don't forget...use fresh potting soil in your containers.
- Shear early flowering perennials like aubretia , arabis , alyssm....keeps them tidy and promotes new growth
- Plant veggie seeds for summer crops if you did not do so in April , you can sow seeds of beets, lettuce, radish, spinach, turnip, beans(both bush and pole) peppers, potatoes and peas.
- Tomato and pepper plants can probably be safely planted out now...Basil too!
- Mulch (keep it around drip line) and feed Rhodos, Camelias and Azaelas after blooming, prune. Pruning keeps the plant tidy, stronger and encourages better branching for a neater shaped shrub and more blooms. Early flowering shrubs such as Forsythia can be pruned after flowering is finished.
- Deadhead Rhodos after blooming. Be careful not to damage new growth beneath old blossom. A helpful hint, use olive oil on your hands before doing this task, it will stop the sticky bits from messing your hands and wipe away more easily
- Plant new perennials and summer blooming bulbs, tubers and corms (lilies, dahlias and gladioli). When planting dahlias place stakes at same time to prevent damage and also to mark the planting spot.
- It may still be possible to split late blooming perennials if the growth is not too high, do not do anything with spring bloomers until the fall.
- Apply mulch to Clematis and provide framework for vines to cling to.
- Fertilize roses, top dress soil with compost. Watch for signs of aphids and rose sawfly. Aphids can be washed off with a jet of wateralso spraying roses with water and mashed garlic in a spray bottle will keep the aphids away. (a tip from the Queen's Garden at Buckingham palace.)
- Tie in new growth of rambler roses and if not done already, cut out branches from last seasons bloom

- If you are inclined, now is the time to sow perennial seeds for flowering next year. Start in a prepared seed bed to plant out in late summer for blooms next year
- Strawberries will start flowering and setting fruit , feed now as well as fruit trees.
- If needed, thin out seedlings from hardy annuals you have sown.
- Trim hedges , ideally so the base is wider than the top , this allows light to reach the lower branches. Some hedges will require regular trimming to keep them tidy.
- Do maintenance on water features and ponds, clean filters and check if pond plants need to be repotted.
- Pinch out any unwanted shoots of cordoned fruit trees
- Mulch around lilies to keep the roots cool
- Plant trees and shrubs, consult reference material for correct planting information.
- Be wary of dry spells...easy to enjoy the warming weather but remember to water newly planted trees and shrubs
- Provide stakes/supports for paeonies and perennials now
- Watch out for bugs and pests that will start to appear.
- Aerate lawns, feed if needed. Have your in ground sprinklers checked
- Check house plantswater regularly now through summer. Repot if needed and watch out for hot south windows that your plants are not burned.
- Weed ! and hope for sunshine !!

Cheers, Sandi