



## Gardening Jobs in May

- Weeds will be in full growth now so adopt a little and often approach to keeping them under control. If you let them take over a patch then getting rid of them again will be a major task. There are weed killers available for all the different areas of the garden: lawns; beds and borders; paths and drives. Use a good sharp hoe to keep weeds under control in the veg patch.
- Dealing with pests: **Slugs and snails** will be munching on your lovely new growth – use slug pellets, granules, slug clear liquid, nematodes, traps, copper tape, bran, hunt them by torchlight, encourage wildlife and do anything else you can think of!  
**Birds** such as pigeons can be a real pest – try deterrents such as hanging CDs that spin in the wind, “buzz off” tape that makes a noise in the slightest breeze or cover plants with netting.  
**Caterpillars** – stop them from appearing by covering crops with fine net or fleece or checking for eggs every day (they appear as little yellow or white dots on the underside of leaves so rub them off when you see them). Alternatively use a chemical control such as Provado.
- **Aphids.** They will be multiplying now so if you can't brush them off by hand use chemical or biological controls or sticky traps if under cover.
- There is still a chance of a night time frost in May. Keep the fleece on hand to put over tender growth if the forecast tells of frost. It's too early to put summer bedding and tomato plants out – they are best kept inside until towards the end of May when they can be hardened off and put outside.
- The sun can get pretty hot in May so keep make sure that you keep the greenhouse ventilated on warm days. It's a good idea to shade your greenhouse with “cool glass” or shade netting before it gets too hot and plants start to suffer.
- If we do get a warm spell then make sure that you water plants in pots and containers and also any newly planted trees and shrubs until they become established. With trees it's best to give them a thorough soaking once a week rather than a little bit every day as this can encourage the roots to stay near the surface.
- Continue to earth up your potatoes.
- Seed sowing: continue to sow lettuce, salad leaves, radish, turnips, beetroot, salad onions, carrots, peas and broad beans. Sow runner beans climbing and dwarf beans in well prepared ground.
- Plant out winter brassicas such as Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower and broccoli. Use cabbage collars around young plants to protect from cabbage root fly.
- Put mulch mats or a layer of straw around your strawberry plants – this will keep them clean, prevent rotting and also help deter slugs.
- Prepare the planting holes for courgettes and marrows. Dig holes about 30cm deep and 1m apart and dig in plenty of well rotted manure. The plants can be put in at the end of May / early June.
- Check gooseberries for signs of mildew and prune out any badly affected shoots. At the same time check for sawfly larvae.
- It's a good time to plant up an herb bed or container now – the plants will quickly establish and be ready for use in summer salads and barbecues. Herbs like a sunny spot and free draining soil so add some extra grit to the compost.

- The grass will need cutting regularly from now through to October. If you haven't already done so then treat weeds by digging them out or use a lawn specific weed killer such as Verdone. There are lots of options for feeding the lawn to get it looking really good – soluble, liquid or granular depending on your preference. Combined weed and feeds are available and can make life easier.
- Plant up baskets and containers with summer bedding – make sure that you use water retaining granules and slow release plant food mixed in with compost or buy a “tub and basket” compost that already has them mixed in. Don't be tempted to put your baskets out until there is no risk of frost. Pinch out the growing tips of fuchsias to make them bushy and encourage more flowers.
- Prune spring flowering shrubs such as forsythia and kerria – prune back flowered shoots to a strong pair of buds and then give the plant a feed. Cut back early flowering perennials such as pulmonaria and doronicum. You can also cut back vigorous alpines such as aubrietia and alyssum – this will encourage lot of new flowering shoots.
- Put supports in for tall perennials so that the plants grow through the support. There are several different types of support and it's much easier to do it now rather than when the plants are tall and floppy.
- Give hedges a trim followed by a general feed.

*This information is intended for guidance purposes only. We are happy to give help and advice on most gardening topics at the garden centre.*

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