May in the allotment

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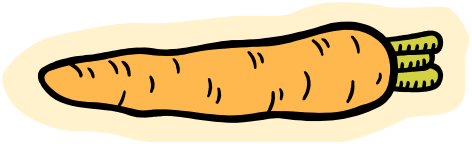
VEGETABLES

SOW OUTDOORS



- French beans (sow main crop in May with subsequent sowings to the end of June to harvest until the end of October)
- Runner beans
- Beetroot
- Broccoli
- Winter cabbage
- Savoy cabbage
- Calabrese
- Carrots (intermediate or long-rooted varieties)
- Cauliflower e.g autumn giant
  - sow autumn varieties to harvest in Autumn
  - sow winter varieties to harvest next spring
- Chicory (forcing varieties)
- Kale
- Kohlrabi
- Lettuce, endive
- Courgette, marrow, pumpkin can be sown outside in late May
- Peas
- Radish
- Spinach (summer varieties e.g. King of Denmark)
- Spring onions
- Swede
- Turnip (early varieties e.g. Purple-top Milan)

SUCCESSIONAL SOWINGS

Many vegetables can be sown over a period of several months. They should be resown at regular intervals to ensure a constant supply of fresh produce. These include beetroot, french beans, carrots, peas, lettuce, endive, radish, spinach and turnip.

SOW UNDER COVER

- Sweetcorn

PLANT OUT OUTDOORS

- Brussels sprouts
- Summer cabbage
- Red cabbage
- Celery and celeriac
- Leeks

PLANT OUT IN GREENHOUSE

- Aubergine
- Peppers
- Tomatoes
- Cucumber (greenhouse varieties)

Roundup lethal to amphibians

The weedkiller Roundup is widely used and purported to be safe by its manufacturers. However, recent surprising results from the University of Pittsburg showed it is lethal to some amphibians.

The study looked at the effect of Roundup on 25 species including 6 amphibians. Roundup caused a 70% decline in amphibian diversity and 86% decline in the total mass of tadpoles. Two species of tadpoles were completely eliminated and a third almost eliminated (leopard frog, grey tree frog and the wood frog).

As predators of slugs frogs are incredibly valuable to many gardeners. In return for their invaluable pest control services plot holders often dig ponds to provide them with a habitat. Roundup is used on some allotment sites to clear overgrown plots. Could this be harming the frogs on our sites?

http://www4.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2005-04/uopm-rhl040105.php

FRUIT

- Put up codling moth traps to prevent codling moths from mating and laying eggs in your apples
- Birds love to eat soft fruit so prepare nets or fruit cages to put round fruit bushes
- Pull out unwanted raspberry shoots to prevent canes becoming too dense
- Strawberries planted late should not be allowed to flower in the first year so pick off any developing flowers

OTHER TASKS

- Propagate perennial herbs by taking cuttings
- Horsetail, bindweed, dandelions and other perennial weeds are grow furiously. Ideally dig out their roots. At least make sure they do not set seed and spread.
- Keep mowing the grass every week
- Sow new grass before the weather gets too hot
- Pinch off tops of broad beans to discourage blackfly which love the succulent tips
- Cover carrot plantings with fleece to keep carrot root fly away

Companion Planting

This is based on the idea that growing two different plants together may benefit one or both of them. Although companion planting alone is not enough to keep pests at bay some planting combinations can contribute to a healthy organic garden. Here are a few ways that plants may benefit from their neighbours

Trap cropping - Sometimes a companion plant is more attractive than the crop plant. For example, mustards can draw diamondback moths away from cabbage.

Nitrogen fixation - Nitrogen-fixing plants such as peas, beans and clover can provide nitrates to neighboring plants. Corn benefit from being planted next to beans for this reason.

Biochemical pest suppression - Chemicals exuded by some plants repel certain pests and so protect vulnerable plants. For example, African marigolds release a chemical called thiopene which repels nematodes and so protecting plants vulnerable to nematode attack.

Allelopathy - Chemicals given off by one plant can suppress the growth of another. This is often unwanted but can sometimes be used to good effect, e.g. mowed rye suppresses weeds while many vegetables grow through it unchecked.

Planting arrangements - Tall sun-loving plants can be planted next to low-growing shade-loving plants to get higher total yields from an area of land.

Attracting beneficial insects - Certain plants attract beneficial insects that keep certain pest populations in check. Grow

these next to plants vulnerable to attack by the pests.

Numerous planting combinations are reported in books, leaving the novice campanion planter reeling. To make it worse some plants may only be effective companions during certain periods of their growth. Experimentation is the name of the game. Once you've found an effective combination stick with it and let the rest of us know. Here are a few to try.

French marigolds (*Tagetes patula*) produce a strong scent while they are flowering. This helps keep whitefly out of greenhouses so Tagetes are good companions for greenhouse plants. They also repel greenfly and blackfly outdoors but are more effective indoors where the scent can build up.

Asparagus prevents tomato roots from being attacked by aphids.

Carrots and leeks/onions may make good companions as leeks repel carrot fly and carrots repel onion fly and leek moth.

Nasturtiums (*Tropaeolum*) have a strong smell. They will keep squash bugs away from squash but need a head start as squash plants grow faster. They attract black aphids acting as a trap crop, while repelling other species.

Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) smells strongly and repels a number of insects including ants, cucumber beetles, squash bugs.

Harvest

Radish, asparagus, rhubarb, spinach, peas, lettuce, leek, kale, winter cauliflower, spring cabbage, sprouting broccoli, chard.

PESTICIDE ACTION NETWORK *UK*

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- Eliminate the hazards of pesticides
- Reduce dependence on pesticides
- Promote alternatives to pesticides

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