

May Garden Guide

- * Grow your own dried flowers. Raise statice, globe amaranth, straw flowers and other everlastings to provide flowers for this year's arrangements.
- * Plant gladioli bulbs in late May.
- * Set out marigold, petunia, ageratum and fibrous begonia transplants. All are good border plants.
- * To grow annuals in containers on the patio, use a light weight soil mixture. Keep the plants well-watered, because the soil dries out fast. Apply a water soluble fertilizer according to package directions every two weeks.
- * Watering roses with soaker hoses or drip irrigation will reduce the spread of black spot disease.
- * Plant ground covers under shade trees that do not allow enough sunlight to grow grass. Vinca minor or English ivy are ground cover plants that grow well in shade.
- * Mulch around newly planted trees and shrubs. This practice reduces weeds, controls fluctuations in soil temperature, retains moisture, prevents damage from lawn mowers and looks attractive.
- * When you visit botanical gardens and arboretums, take your camera and note pad with you. Plan now for changes you will make in your landscape.
- * For maximum landscape interest in a small, vertical space, try annual vines. They can disguise ugly walls and fences. When trellised, they can create shade and privacy while hiding undesirable views. Try morning glory, nasturtium vine and scarlet runner bean.
- * Plan a landscaping project on paper first. Do not over plant. Be sure you know the mature size of each plant and allow for growth.
- * Lawns maintained at the correct height are less likely to have disease and weed infestation. Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue should be mowed at two or three inches in height. Mow frequently, removing no more than one third of the blade at each cutting.
- * Grass clippings can be used as a mulch in flower beds and vegetable gardens if allowed to dry well before use. Never use clippings from a lawn that has been treated with a herbicide.
- * Cabbage loopers and imported cabbage worms are green worms. They leave large holes in the leaves of plants in the cabbage family. For control, caterpillars can be picked off by hand or sprayed with Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), a natural, non-toxic preparation available by various trade names.

* Newly transplanted vegetable plants should be protected from cutworms with collars. Cut strips of cardboard two inches wide by eight inches long, staple them into circles and place them around the plants. Press the collar about one inch into the soil. These collars will fence out the cutworms and protect the stems of the vegetable plants.

* Stay out of the garden when the vegetable plant leaves are wet. Walking through a wet garden spreads disease from one plant to another.

* Four or five layers of newspaper will serve as an effective mulch in the garden. Cover it with grass clippings or straw to prevent it from blowing away.

* Put tools away at the end of the day. Clean them and hang them up so they are ready to use and easy to find when you need them.

* To better evaluate your gardening successes, keep weather records along with garden records. The most important items to report are daily minimum and maximum temperatures, precipitation, cloud cover and frost occurrences.

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