

MAY - Jobs to Do

Flower/Shrub Garden:

- Dead-head **Daffodils** and **Tulips** and give them a balanced or high potash liquid feed, such as Maxicrop, to promote good flowering next year and help prevent daffodil blindness;
  Tidy up last year's growth on **Penstemons**, cutting off last year's stems to ground level and apply a general-purpose fertiliser;
- Trim **Arabis, Aubretia** and **Yellow Alyssum** after flowering so they don't become leggy;
- Harden off **annual** seedlings raised inside;
- Plant **summer bulbs/corms/tubers** such as **Dahlias, Cannas** and **Gladioli**;
- Put **supports** in place for **herbaceous** plants before they are too tall, or for those - like **Peonies** - that produce heavy blooms;
- Sow **biennials**, such as **Canterbury Bells, Sweet Williams** and **Wallflowers** for next year;
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs such as **Forsythia**, **Flowering Currant (Ribes), Camellia, Chaeonomeles (Quince), evergreen Berberis** and **Kerria Japonica** once they have finished flowering, cutting back a third of the stems to just above ground level, if not done last month;
- Prune **Clematis Montana** after it has finished flowering, which can take hard cutting back very well;
- Prune wall-trained **Pyracanthas**, removing any shoots coming out from the wall, and shortening other new growth to about 8cm (3in). This encourages spur formation, and increased flowering relative to green growth;
- Deadhead **Hydrangeas**, if you haven't already done this;
- Tie in climbing and rambling **Roses** as near to horizontal as possible, as this will restrict sap flow causing more side-shoots to grow along the length of stem, so more flowers will be produced;
- Twining climbers (such as **Honeysuckle** and **Clematis**) need regular tying in and twining around their supports;
- Divide **Primula** (primroses) after flowering, planting them in a nursery bed until they are ready for planting out again in the autumn, for a display the following spring;
- Take cuttings from new shoots of **Surfinias, Fuchsias, Pelargoniums, Petunias** and other tender perennials;
- Continue to keep a look out for **red lily beetle** on Lilies and Fritillarias and either remove by hand or spray with Provado Ultimate Bug Killer (available from the Trading Centre);
- Look out for **Vine Weevil** larvae, which can be a serious pest of containerised plants, and become active this month. Tip out the rootball of suspect plants, and inspect for the creamy, orange-headed maggots, which tend to curl up into a 'C' shape. Provado Vine Weevil Killer is available in the Trading Centre (for use with flowers, not veg, as it's systemic);
- **Viburnum beetle** grubs start nibbling holes in the leaves this month, giving plants a tattered appearance. Inspect V. tinus and V. opulus regularly and spray or pick off the grubs by hand.

Vegetable Garden:

- Sow in a heated greenhouse: **Pumpkin, Squash, Sweetcorn, Cucumber, Courgettes** and **Marrows**;
- Sow in a coldframe or unheated greenhouse: **Basil, Calabrese, summer Cauliflowers, Kale, Parsley, Runner Beans** and **Sprouting Broccoli**.
- Sow in the ground: **Beetroot, Winter Cabbages, maincrop Carrots, Coriander, French Beans, Leeks, Lettuce, Peas, Radishes, Spinach, Spring Onions, Swedes** and **Turnips**;
- Continue earthing up **Potatoes**;
- Cover with a fine mesh **Cabbages** and **Kale** to protect them from pests such as pigeons and cabbage white butterflies;
- Protect carrots from **carrot root fly** by covering with horticultural fleece (available from the Trading Centre), placing a barrier of polythene around the crop at least 60cm (2 feet) high and/or mulching the ground with grass mowings to make it more difficult for the flies to lay eggs;
- Don't be tempted to plant out **tender** crops, such as Tomatoes and Runner Beans just yet, as there is still a danger of frost during at least the earlier part of this month.

Fruit:

- Surround **Strawberries** with straw to protect fruit and net them to keep birds off them; Foliar Feed them with Tomato feed (Maxicrop with Potash);
- Hang Pheromone traps in **Apple trees** to help prevent Codling moth caterpillars damaging the fruit.

Lawn:

- Mow regularly and use the mowings (provided your lawn hasn't been "treated") as a mulch to retain the moisture in the soil;
- Time to start treating your lawn to a "**weed and feed**", using a high nitrogen fertiliser.