



MAY IN THE GARDEN

Sources: [Texas Garden Almanac](#), Dr. Doug Welsh, Professor & Horticulturist Texas A&M University "Texas Gardener" Magazine, Chris S. Corby, Editor, Fort Bend County Master Gardeners, Inc.

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DAYLILY BEST OF FRIENDS

GARDEN TASKS



- *Keep up with deadheading perennial flowers to encourage continuous bloom.
- *Apply a high nitrogen fertilizer such as blood meal monthly to flowering plants.
- *Keep flower beds well mulched. Our summer heat and humidity breaks mulch down rapidly.
- *Care for those beautiful roses by fertilizing every 4-6 weeks, removing dead or weak wood and controlling black spot. Prune climbing roses as they complete their bloom season.
- *Camellias and azaleas are setting flowers for next season, so keep them watered and mulched.
- *Keep dead bloom spikes pruned on Crape myrtles to keep the new blooms coming.
- *Keep the vegetable garden fertilized regularly. Organic foliar fertilizers can be applied as often as once a week. The exception is with peas and beans. They do not need additional fertilizer as they produce nitrogen in nodules on their roots. Additional fertilizer would only encourage foliage growth.
- *Be on the look-out for harmful insects in the garden. Hand pick or, if necessary, use the least toxic insecticide to control them. But remember, even organic insecticides will kill beneficial insects. Try growing some plants that attract the beneficial insects. Examples are fern-leaf yarrow, dill or white cosmos to attract lacewings, butterfly weed, Queen Anne's lace or penstemon to attract ladybugs, zinnias, marigolds or parsley to attract parasitic wasps and lemon balm, parsley or thyme to attract the tachinid fly. (Go to farmerfred.com for a more complete list of beneficial insects and the plants that attract them.)

WHAT TO PLANT



- *Time to plant heat-tolerant annuals and perennials. Some good choices are angelonia, blanketflower (gallardia), begonia, bulbine, purslane, rudbeckia (black-eyed Susan), russelia (firecracker plant), salvia, shrimp plant, society garlic, summer plox, zinnia, marigold, cosmos, portulaca (moss rose), gomphrena, sunflowers, fan flower, lantana, morning glory, and geraniums.
- *Plants suitable for the shade that provide colorful flowers or foliage are caladiums, impatiens, coleus, begonias, white butterfly ginger, balsam, torenia (wishbone flower), nicotiana and pentas. Pinch off flowers of caladiums and coleus to encourage foliage growth.
- *Bulb and tubers that can be planted this month include achimenes, cannas, dahlias, daylilies, and rain lilies.
- *It is getting too late this month for planting most warm-season herbs and vegetables. The following are a few that can still be planted in May: basil, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, sweet potatoes, watermelon and cantelope (muskmelon). Peppers may produce a small yield but keep the plants going until the fall when production really picks up.



WATER

The state "weather gurus" are warning of yet another severe drought this summer. As the temperatures rise irrigation systems come on. Instead of running your sprinkler system every day at a set time for a set amount of minutes, watch your garden and let the plants tell you when they are thirsty. You will be surprised at how much less you will need to water. At the very least, water the flowerbeds on a set schedule, but water the lawn manually.

Watering less often, but watering to a depth of six inches is much more effective. Turn the sprinklers on for about five minutes. Turn them off and wait thirty minutes or so for the water to soak in. Then repeat until the soil is wet to six inches. For example: I have eight stations. By the time each station runs for five minutes, the first station has soaked in and it's time to repeat. Depending on how dry the soil is, it takes about 4 cycles to reach six inches. You should only have to water once or twice a week with temperatures in the 90's. Yes, this is more time consuming, but water is fast becoming a precious and limited resource. This is something each of us can do to make a big difference.