

young and tender. Grab stalk at the bottom and pull it firmly with a slight twist. Compost the poisonous leaves. Any flowers should be cut off.

□ Watch strawberries and blueberries: protect them from hungry birds with netting. Consider picking off blossoms from newly planted berries in their first year to strengthen the plants.

□ Sow peas, carrots, beets, radishes, spinach and lettuces. If planting starter plants, sow the same seeds beside them to take over when the older one goes to seed. Heat resistant varieties will get you through warmer temps.

□ Direct sow bush beans once soil is finally warm. Sow at two week intervals to keep a steady supply throughout the season. Plant pole beans for a later crop.

□ If your potatoes have sprouted, you can put them into their trenches, giving them a shallow cover. Be prepared to continually cover them as their top growth slowly emerges.

□ By mid-month, plant out brassicas (broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, kale). Underplant with a two-inch square of old milk carton to thwart the cabbage moth from laying its eggs.

□ Wait until the end of May to plant heat lovers: corn, squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cucumbers, melons, and basil. Start indoors so they're ready to go, using cow pots, paper pots or the like to reduce root disturbance at transplant time.

□ Use a kaolin clay barrier product to prevent insects that attack crops from laying eggs (cucumber beetles, Colorado potato beetles, squash bugs).

□ Any starter plants should be hardened off (bring them in and out for a few days) before you set them out.

□ If purchasing transplants, look for short, stocky, healthy plants.

□ Herbs go in by mid-month: sage, rosemary, thyme, parsley, and dill.

□ Wait until a cloudy, drizzly day to set out your transplants. If no clouds, create shade for a few days to reduce transplant shock.

□ Remember to water and feed your garlic for bigger bulbs.

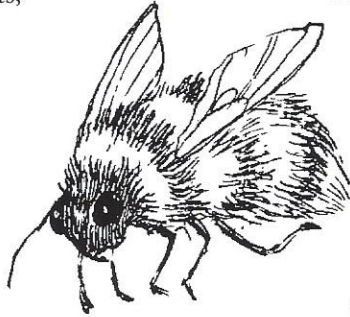
□ Wait till seedlings are up a few inches before mulching. Straw's a great organic

mulch. Chopped leaves can harbor slugs. Black plastic with holes punched through for water and aeration works well and generates lots of heat for heat lovers.

□ Watch for frost or cold weather, be ready with an overnight cover of some sort. Remove cover once the danger has passed or plants will cook in the sun.

□ Turn the compost pile and add water if it's too dry.

□ Use a rain gauge. If you get less than one inch of rain a week, turn on the soaker hose, drip system, etc. Water-stressed veggies turn out bitter and underdeveloped.



June Chores: Edibles

□ Plant tomatoes. Set up your staking system. Interplant with nasturtiums or basil. Pinch suckers, if that's your thing, especially indeterminate varieties, and keep plants off the ground.

□ Last call for eggplant, corn, peppers, potatoes, melons, and squash. Grow winter squash vertically to save room – try using a leftover tomato cage.

□ Get cucumbers in, interplant with radishes to deter cucumber beetles.

□ Thin carrot seedlings to about 2" apart when they are about 3" tall.

□ Peas should be picked regularly to keep them producing.

□ Keep picking greens if they haven't bolted. If bolted, replace with beans and beets.

□ Seed in new lettuces and arugula before it gets too hot. Place where they are shaded from hot afternoon sun.

□ Keep the compost pile turned and check for moisture when rain subsides.

□ If it's been raining, slugs will be out in force. Use organic slug treatments: iron phosphate products, overturned grapefruit, wood boards, beer.

□ If there's little or no rain, water deeply on a regular basis. Spray undersides of your cucurbit and brassica crops with a kaolin clay barrier product like Surround® Crop Protectant to stop insects from laying their eggs that will later attack those same crops. Do the same for eggplant seedlings. Reapply as needed.

□ If you have room in your veggie garden, think about putting in some

“garden worthy” plants as part of your IPM program. For example, bee balm (*monarda*) and hyssop (*agastache*) will attract bees to the garden to help with pollination. Go after tomato hornworms by planting borage to repel them and cabbage worms while also attracting beneficial bees and wasps. Chives will repel Japanese beetles and carrot rust flies, plus their edible flowers add great color to salads and other dishes. If you don't already plant dill for use as an herb or as food for the larvae of swallowtail butterflies, plant it to attract hoverflies and predatory wasps. Tomato hornworms are also attracted to dill, so if you plant it at a distance, you can help draw these destructive insects away from your tomatoes.

□ In late June, hang a red ball or two coated with Tanglefoot on your apple tree to lure the apple maggot fly. They get stuck on the fake apples and die, which will reduce the amount of bad apples. Or, cover your fruit when they are about the size of a walnut with nylon *peds*, using a rubber band to close off the open end. It stretches as the fruit grows and still lets in the sun. Or, spray the fruit with a kaolin clay barrier, reapplying as needed throughout the season.

□ Once your garden's planted and your irrigation system's in place, you can mulch. Straw, black landscape fabric – get something down to control weeds.

□ Toward the end of June, think autumn. Direct sow cauliflower, Brussels sprouts and broccoli for fall harvests.

Refer to the list we published on the back cover of the March/April 2021 issue for great veggie gardening resources.

Take a deep breath, pat yourself on the back, grab a beverage and sit back and enjoy your garden! 🌸

