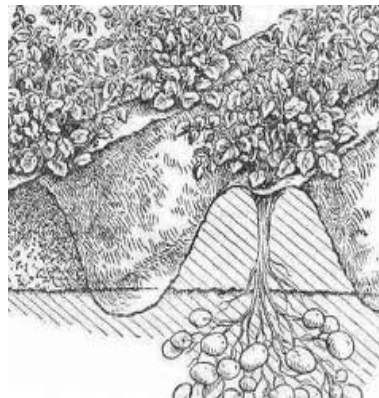


MAY

It's finally getting warmer and about time too! It's been a long winter but we are finally starting to see the joys of spring in the garden. These are just a few things we would be doing in the garden this month.

1. **Earth up potatoes:** Potatoes planted in April will have made a bit of growth now, so to protect them from frost and to avoid any tubers near the surface turning green we need to cover the exposed stems with soil when they are about 20cm high thus leaving the top quarter of the stem uncovered.



2. **Feed Spring Bulbs:** By feeding your spring bulbs with sulphate of potash of tomato feed while they are still in leaf, will guarantee a colourful display next year as they are busy making next year's flowers right now. Also, never cut back the leaves until they have naturally turned yellow as this is also crucial to the bulb's regeneration in making its food. Another misconception is never to tie the leaves in knots to tidy them up. A small sacrifice for a wonderful show next year.



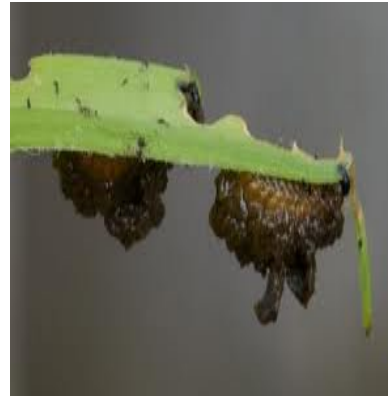
3. **Weeding:** Weeds seeds will have started to grow just as fast as plants so it is essential that the borders are hoed regularly to avoid them taking a hold. Perennial weeds such as Dandelions need digging out to remove the whole root or they will soon return with a vengeance.



4. Pests to watch out for:

Lily Beetle

Look out for the excrement-covered larvae of the Lily Beetle which can quickly destroy lilies and fritillaries. They can be removed by hand or a good insecticide which will last up to six weeks.



Vine Weevil

Adult vine weevil beetles emerge this month. Kill any that you find to reduce the amount of eggs they produce. Watch out for the notches they cut in leaf edges. Once again there are specialist insecticides that can be used. The main victims of this bug are Rhododendrons



Slugs & Snails: These will always be a problem in the garden. Keep using the pellets. However, there is a plant that deters these critters ... Lemon Balm. So try planting some next to your Delphiniums and see what happens.



5. Trim Topiary Specimens: Keep shapes looking sharp by trimming off the fuzz of new growth that begins to cover topiary specimens at this time of the year. Regular snipping is a much easier way to keep them looking neat rather than cutting them harshly one a year.



6. Plant Tender Vegetable: As the danger of frosts subsides, tender vegetables such as tomatoes, French beans and courgettes. Keep an eye out for the weather and if frost is predicted be prepared to cover with fleece.



7. Sow Vegetables outdoors: These are a few crops you can sow outdoors now ...

Beetroot – Carrots – Cauliflower – Cucumbers – Leeks – Lettuce – Pease – Pumpkins – Radish – Spinach – Spring Onions – Sprouting Broccoli – Squash – Sweet corn – Turnip



Sweet Corn: This should be planted in blocks as it is wind pollinated. By spacing them at 35cm apart will give a bigger cob, however, you will get a higher yield if planted at 25cm apart if the space permits.



8. Tie In Climbing Plants: While sweet peas are getting established they will need to be tied to their supports. Soon they will be sending out tendrils which will be wrapping themselves around the supports which will help them climb and then require no further assistance or guidance. Clematis will head straight for the sky if they are allowed to. Ideally they should be tied horizontally on the supports to encourage them to produce flowers lower down which also assists in keeping the plant looking neat and tidy.



I hope this helps with your gardening in May.

Kindest Regards

Salvatore Cala