

The Garden Year



MARSHALL
AREA
Garden Club

MAY 2025

The Garden Year is a monthly publication of the Marshall Area Garden Club, Inc (MAGCI), whose objectives are to stimulate the love of gardening, encourage home and community beautification, promote better horticultural practices and encourage all forms of conservation. Member Judy Milton has provided the following information.

May Garden Calendar

May 3 Marshall outdoor Farmers Market opens, 125 W. Green St.

May 15 presentation “Basic Gardening for the Whole Family”, 6:30 – 7:30 pm, Marshall District Library

May 19 – 24 Average last frost date for Marshall

May 20 MAGCI meeting presentation “Outside Ponds”, 7:00 pm, Marshall United Methodist Church

May tasks: Seed grass. Prune spring-flowering shrubs after bloom. Start to harden off potted plants that wintered indoors. Compost vegetable beds. Plant trees & shrubs.

Early: Direct sow beet, carrot, radish, greens, spinach, parsnip, parsley.

Mid: Direct sow peas.

NOTE: Planting dates in the Garden Calendar are based on the following: Average last spring frost date for Marshall May 19-24. Average first fall frost date for Marshall September 24. Planting charts found in [The All New Square Foot Gardening](#) by Mel Bartholomew.

This Month: The ABCs of Crop Rotation. If you grow vegetables you need to know about crop rotation. The concept is pretty easy – each family of plants attracts different soil borne insects and diseases that, if allowed to build up (by planting the same things in the same place year after year), will harm the plants’ health. So we move our plant locations within the garden from year to year to defeat them. We rotate by crop families. How many families (up to seven) and all those Latin names can make your eyes glaze over, so it was great to find an easy system online at “The Seasonal Homestead” website. Only four sections to rotate: Leaf, Fruit, Root and Legume. It goes (mostly) by the part of the plant you eat. So –

Leaf: lettuce, annual herbs, cabbage, greens, spinach, brussels sprout, broccoli, cauliflower, corn.

Fruit: tomato, cucumber, squash, pepper, eggplant, garlic.

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Root: radish, carrot, turnip, beet, parsnip, onion, leek, potato.

Legume: peas, beans.

Divide your garden into four sections that do a slow dance, rotating one step once a year.

Planting Trees & Shrubs. Spring and fall are the times for this, as they give the roots a little mellow time to establish before the heat or cold cranks up. When planting, it's best to remember these are living, sentient beings and be sensitive when you handle them. Being transplanted traumatizes a plant, which you want to minimize. Get the planting hole ready first and plant so the surrounding soil is at the same level on the stem as it was in the pot. Dig the hole bigger than the root ball and backfill with loose soil. If the surrounding soil is hard and compacted, loosen it up a bit so the roots won't have to fight so hard. Mix in some compost if needed to improve the texture of dense soil. Handle roots gently and tease them apart with your fingers to encourage them to spread. If the plant is pot-bound (roots running around inside of pot) you may have to cut some roots to redirect growth outward. Set the plant firmly and backfill the hole gently but firmly, trying not to damage roots. Water as you go but don't drown the plant and compact the soil. Do not fertilize – the plant is in shock and won't eat. Plus, some fertilizers will burn the roots. Plants have to balance their above and below ground selves, so if you had to cut back roots, cut back some of the top growth to balance that loss. Baby it during the first year – don't let it dry out completely while remembering it needs both water and air in the soil. Give it lots of attention and praise and admiration – loving on a plant is good for you and for the plant!

Next Month: What, How Much and When in the Vegetable Garden, Annual VS Perennial Flowers

FEEDBACK: Comments? Suggestions? Would you like to receive "The Garden Year" monthly by email? Email us at marshallareagardenclub@gmail.com Subject "The Garden Year".