

How to Grow Your Own Produce: The Workshop Series

Session 4: Warm Season Crops, Edible Flowers, & Attracting Pollinators

People's Food Coop, 3029 SE 21st Ave., Portland, OR

Facilitated by Marisha Auerbach

marisha.permaculturerising@gmail.com, www.permaculturerising.com

What to do in May

Planning Ahead

- Prepare beds for the garden 1 – 3 weeks before planting.
- Watch any weeds for flowering and setting seed. If you are trying to prevent these plants from growing in abundance in your garden, you will need to pull them before their flowers mature.
- Mulch to prevent weeds. Rake back mulch and warm the soil before planting seeds.
- Make sure your watering system is cleaned and ready to be used.
- Compost and collect organic matter for the compost pile.
- Turn your compost when the temperature subsides to encourage rapid decomposition.
- Compost and amend your soil before planting.
- Work cover crops into the soil before they flower.
- Plant summer cover crops such as buckwheat, clover, and alfalfa in preparation for the winter garden.
- Watch for slugs and other insect pests on your plants and trees.
- Protect your plants from deer, squirrels, and other wildlife.
- Ensure good air flow around your plants to prevent fungal disease.
- Build trellises for vining plants.
- Dry herbs for tea. It is the perfect time to dry mints, lemon balm, mugwort, roses, & raspberry leaf. Make tinctures, herbal honeys, salves, and other medicinal preparations when the herbs are at their finest.
- Harvest edible flowers.

In The Vegetable Garden

- Wait until after May 15 or so to plant warm season crops. Watch the soil temperatures and air temperatures for proper timing.
- Direct sow outdoors carrots, caraway, cilantro, dill, parsnip, chives, leeks, green onions, amaranth, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, radishes, oriental greens, beets, orach, spinach, chard, quinoa, lettuce, and beans.
- If you have starts, transplant arugula, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbages, cauliflower, oriental greens, kohlrabi, and lettuces in the garden. Consider your shady microclimates for summer salads and your Cole Crops (Brassicaceae).
- By the end of the month, transplant out squashes (summer & winter), cucumbers, pumpkins, basil, and melons. Squashes, Pumpkins, & Basil can go out earlier than cucumbers and melons.
- Set out tomato plants when the evening temperatures are above 50 degrees. Provide trellises as soon as you plant them out to avoid harming the roots later.
- Harden off seedlings by placing them outdoors 5 days – 1 week before planting. Gradually help them adapt to the potency of the sunlight and the wind. For the first couple days, bring them indoors at night. On the third day or so, keep them out all night.
- Plant eggplant and pepper starts late in the month.

- Use willow tea or kelp tea diluted in water 10:1 to prevent your plants from experiencing transplanting shock.
- Soak your bean seeds in preparation for planting. Coat in legume inoculant before planting.
- Remember your succession crops of Radishes, Lettuce, and Green Onions. Plant about every two weeks.
- Sow corn in late May. Pre-sprout your seeds by soaking in water before planting. If you live in a wet area, you may want to consider transplants.
- Thin carrots, beets, onions, lettuces, parsnips, leeks, and radishes.
- Harvest leafy greens. Remember, the more often you pick, the more you encourage these plants to produce greens for you. Nitrogen is the crucial nutrient for leafy vegetative growth.
- Plant your yacon tubers in the garden.
- Direct sow Sunflowers in the garden
- Design your plantings to provide a living mulch to prevent water loss to evaporation. If you have bare soil, cover with mulch.
- Watch for Cabbage Loopers, Cabbage Maggot, Aphids, and other pests. Feed any insect pests to chickens. Once the temperatures are warm enough, you may want to set out Lacewings or other predatory insects to help.
- Water deep and water often as plants are getting established. Once established, it is better to water deep and infrequently to encourage the roots to grow deeper.

Fruit Trees and Berry Bushes

- Check your trees and shrubs for insect or disease problems. If you see disease, spray with compost tea every other week.
- Thin fruits as needed to maximize size and health.
- Spray fruit trees for fungal diseases such as scab and mildew.
- Mulch your blueberry plants heavily with woodchips to help hold water in the summer.
- Harvest Strawberries! Transplant new strawberries into the garden.
- Divide and transplant raspberries before they flower.
- Control foliar diseases using compost tea on roses, apples, pears, cherry, etc.
- Thin your fruit as needed. Too much fruit can make branches break on your trees.
- Watch for currant worms. Ideally, feed the worms to your chickens. Otherwise, crush the worms and compost them.
- Set out vinegar traps for the Currant Fruit Fly and the Spotted Wing Drosophila

Perennials

- Plant flowers that attract beneficial insects and repel pests such as those in the Asteraceae family or Umbelliferae family. See handout for suggestions.
- Top dress your rhubarb plants with compost or manure to encourage more growth.
- All flower seeds can be sown in the garden.
- Divide and plant dahlias in the garden.
- Remove the foliage from your bulbs once it withers and turns brown. Plant annual flowers to take up the newly available space.
- Move tender perennials outside after there is no danger of frost.
- Label the locations of your bulbs for dividing in the fall.
- Transplant any potted plants into larger containers.
- Prune woody plants after they are done blooming.
- Top dress your potted plants with compost.