



02 May 2023

Britain Get Growing: Our green-fingered guide to growing your own in May

May is one of the most exciting months in the garden. Seeds and plants sowed in early spring are flourishing due to the combination of sunny days and April showers, resulting in an abundance of greenery and new life. British Garden Centres' campaign Britain Get Growing campaign aims to get both beginner and experienced gardeners outdoors to embrace the joy of getting dirt in their fingers and growing their own food. Here are our hints on how to keep your garden in tip-top shape, ready for you to enjoy in the summer months!

What to plant now in May

Root vegetables

As the weather turns warmer, you can sow seeds outdoors for beetroot, carrots, radish, and turnips, in your vegetable garden or containers. When sowing, we recommend that they are planted in well-draining yet fertile soil and which will result in good yields from early summer to well into autumn.

For beetroots, we recommend planting your seeds straight into your beds or containers 2.5cm deep, in rows 20cm to 30 cm apart.

We are now in prime carrot sowing season and they can be sown from now into early July. Early varieties are ready in approximately 10 weeks and the main crop is ready to lift in approximately 14-16 weeks. Sow in drills 1cm deep and 20-30 cm apart, remove any stones and cover with soil and water well.

You can continue to sow turnip seeds outdoors and should be planted about 1cm deep and 23cm (9in) apart. Baby turnips can be harvested after 6-7 weeks or allow to grow larger and harvested at 10-11 weeks.

Tomatoes

You can also take your small tomato plants from the inside and start to plant them out. Tomatoes are frost tender and therefore must not be planted out until the risk of frost has disappeared, so May is the perfect time to do this.

They will need to be planted in a sunny but sheltered position. You can plant in the ground, in a grow bag or a container. Once planted, water regularly and use a high potash feed once the first tomatoes start to show for sweet, juicy fruit.



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Peas and Beans

Beans can still be sown from mid-May onwards and now is the month to put up the support like teepees made from bamboo canes, or a bean net strung between poles. If sowing directly into the ground, plant 5cm deep and 15cm apart. Feed them a liquid tomato feed once the pods begin to form. Early peas and beans take between 12 and 14 weeks to reach maturity while maincrop varieties need 16 weeks.

Potatoes

Continue to protect potatoes from any late frosts and cover any developing tubers from sunlight – earthing them up with the soil in containers as the potato plants grow. Once the shoots are about 20cm tall, mound up soil around them, covering the lower part of the stems.

Sweetcorn

Sweetcorn seeds and plants can now also be sown outside. Choose a warm, sheltered location for these, since sweetcorn is relatively sensitive to cultivation. Always plant sweetcorn in clusters of at least 12 plants and we recommend allowing 38-45cm between each plant. Sweetcorn is wind-pollinated, with the pollen from the male flowers at the top of the plant showering the female tassels to be found on the end of each cob to produce fresh corn.

Fruit

Put straw around your strawberry plants if in the ground to deter slugs. If planting strawberry bare root plants, place them in direct sunlight and well-drained soil for the best results. For best results, plant each plant at least 12in deep. Plant 45cm apart with 75cm between each row.

Pot-grown fruit trees, including figs, blueberries, citrus trees, gooseberries, currants, raspberries and blackberries can be planted all year round.

Herbs

If you have a herb garden, take cuttings of sage, thyme and rosemary that have already grown if sown earlier this year. Not only are these herbs ready to enhance your dishes, but taking cuttings will also encourage new growth, prolonging the season.

You can continue to sow seeds for annual herbs such as coriander, basil and parsley little and often now, we recommend every 3-4 weeks to make sure you have a good supply to harvest.



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About the business:

British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group with 62 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by The Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire.

BGC was launched in 1987 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre funded by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018 it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now with 62 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham.

The group has a team of 2,700 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres and Woodthorpe Leisure Park and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

Social Media

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