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May in the allotment

VEGETABLES

SOW OUTDOORS

- * Runner beans
- * French beans (can be sown until the end of June)
- * Beetroot
- * Broccoli
- * Winter cabbage
- * Savoy cabbage
- * Calabrese
- * Carrots (intermediate or long-rooted varieties)
- * Cauliflower (sow autumn varieties to harvest in Autumn, sow winter varieties to harvest next spring)
- * Chicory (forcing varieties)
- * Kale
- * Kohlrabi
- * Lettuce, endive
- * Courgette, marrow, pumpkin can be sown in late May
- * Peas
- * Radish
- * Spinach (summer varieties e.g. King of Denmark)
- * Spring onions
- * Swede
- * Turnip (early varieties e.g. Purple-top Milan)

SUCCESSIONAL SOWINGS

Many vegetables can be sown at regular intervals to ensure a constant supply of fresh produce. These include beetroot, french beans, carrots, peas, lettuce, endive, radish, spinach and turnip.

SOW UNDER COVER

- * Sweetcorn

PLANT OUT OUTDOORS

- * Brussels sprouts
- * Summer cabbage and red cabbage
- * Celery and celeriac
- * Leeks

PLANT OUT IN GREENHOUSE

- * Aubergine
- * Peppers
- * Tomatoes
- * Cucumber (greenhouse varieties)

HARVEST

Radish, asparagus, rhubarb, spinach, peas, lettuce, leek, kale, winter cauliflower, spring cabbage, sprouting broccoli, chard.

Georgina Downs' legal case goes to European courts

Rural resident and longtime pesticides campaigner Georgina Downs is taking her legal case against the UK government to the European courts.

Ms Downs, whose health deteriorated after she moved to the countryside more than a decade ago, has been highly critical of the UK government's failure to protect rural residents from pesticide spraying. Currently, pesticides can be sprayed right next to buildings including homes and schools and sprayers are under no obligation to warn residents prior to spraying or even to disclose which chemicals they have used.

In November 2008, Georgina won her case in the UK High Court in which she argued that the government had failed to protect the health of rural residents from the risks and adverse effects of pesticide spraying. However, this judgement was overturned in July 2009 when the UK Government's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) appealed against the ruling. Georgina next appealed to the Supreme Court, but her application was refused, leaving her with no option but to turn to the European courts.

In her evidence against Defra Georgina had submitted a number of witness statements, which were instrumental in convincing the High Court judge to rule in her favour. However these statements were not taken into consideration by the Court of Appeal judges, which Georgina described as 'bizarre and inaccurate', as their ruling was then not based on the same evidence that had led to the original High Court victory.

For more information and to read the witness statements go to Georgina's website:
<http://www.pesticidescampaign.co.uk/>

FRUIT

- * Put up codling moth traps to prevent codling moths from mating and laying eggs in your apples
- * Birds love to eat soft fruit so prepare nets or fruit cages to put round fruit bushes
- * Pull out unwanted raspberry shoots to thin them out
- * Strawberries planted late should not be allowed to flower in the first year so pick off any developing flowers

OTHER TASKS

- * Propagate perennial herbs by taking cuttings
- * Horsetail, bindweed, dandelions and other perennial weeds are growing now. Dig out their roots and make sure they do not set seed and spread
- * Keep mowing the grass every week
- * Sow new grass before the weather gets too hot
- * Pinch off tops of broad beans to discourage blackfly which love the succulent tips
- * Cover carrot plantings with fleece to keep carrot root fly away

SLUGS

Digging over the soil in wintertime brings slug eggs to the surface where they are more likely to be killed by frosts. The characteristic pearly white eggs are about 3mm in diameter and found in clusters. They can often be spotted while digging and killed.

In spring the warm showery weather provides good conditions for slugs to grow and multiply. No single method of control will be completely effective. Try several different strategies. Here are a few suggestions

- * Hunt for slugs at dusk or dawn with a flashlight.
- * Encourage slug eating animals such as frogs by building a pond
- * During the day slugs congregate in moist dark places. Create suitable hiding spots and then gather slugs from them. Many people find over-turned grapefruit halves work well.
- * The parasitic nematode *Phasmarhabditis hermaphrodita* specifically attacks slugs. These can be bought from several different suppliers as a powder to be mixed with water and applied with a watering can. The ground must be sufficiently warm and moist as nematodes will quickly dry out and die. The microscopic nematode worms infect slugs and kill them in about a week. Your plot should then remain slug-free for about 6 weeks. The nematodes are relatively expensive and you need to be careful to follow instructions when applying them.
- * Remove debris from your plot. This will reduce suitable slug hiding places.
- * Place beer traps around the edges of beds. These can be hand-made out of yoghurt cartons by cutting 'windows' near the top of cartons for slugs to crawl through. Place sugary beer or milk in the pot, replace the lid and sink into the ground with the 'window' just above ground level.
- * Slugs do not like crawling over copper so pot plants can be protected by placing copper tape around the pots. Make sure the slugs cannot reach your pot plants by crawling up drooping stems or leaves.
- * Raise seedlings indoors and plant out when they are bigger and more able to sustain attack.
- * Slug killing products containing aluminium sulphate and ferrous phosphate are thought to have minimal impact on wildlife. Aluminium sulphate dissolves in water so will not last long in showery weather. Ferrous sulphate will have a longer-lasting effect.



Pesticide Action Network UK (PAN UK) is an independent non-profit organisation working nationally and globally with individuals and organisations who share our concerns. PAN UK projects enable us to work effectively towards specific targets to enable us to:

- ❖ Eliminate the hazards of pesticides
- ❖ Reduce dependence on pesticides
- ❖ Promote alternatives to pesticides

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