

## Gardening Calendar for May

Fertilize your lawn on or about May 1 if the grass did not grow enough in April to justify fertilizing last month. A slow release lawn fertilizer such as a 19-5-9 is recommended. The grass root system should have recovered enough from the winter for the plants to utilize the nutrients provided by the fertilizer. With the 19-5-9, one half of the nitrogen is released when the material is activated by the soil and moisture, and the other 50% is released over the next 3 to 4 months. Lawn mowing heights are important. It is recommended that St Augustine be mowed at 3.5 inches or higher. Mow zoysia at 2 inches and mow Bermuda grass at 1.5 inches or lower. Buffalo grass needs to be treated like a groundcover and mowed at 5.5 inches tall if it is going maintain itself in the competition with weeds.

The tomatoes in the vegetable garden should be near their final height early in the month and starting to set fruit. Keep them well watered and fertilized. Side-dressing with the slow-release lawn fertilizer, 19-5-9 every 4 weeks works well. If early blight or other fungal diseases develop. Spray with daconil (chlorothalonil). The application will usually stop the development of the fungal disease long enough to finish production of the crop. A Bt product works for hornworms if you detect their activity early enough. Sometimes the best tactic is to just collect those you can find by hand. Spraying a solution of 2 tablespoons of seaweed extract in a gallon of water will slow down the development of spider mites. Apply the spray once a week until the mites are evident and then spray twice per week. The most important place to spray is under the leaves.

Sometime in late May your onion tops will probably fall over, indicating that they are ready to be harvested. Potatoes can be harvested when the plants begin to bloom, and you can continue harvest until the tops dieback. Harvest potatoes as you can use them for “new” potato dishes. Peppers will begin production in the May.

Plant okra by seed in early May.

For summer color use caladiums, coleus, semperfloren begonias or pentas in the shade. The “Whopper Begonia” is a Texas Superstar that is showier than the smaller begonias. In the sun, zinnias provide good color, nectar for butterflies, and cut flowers. Moss roses and purslane are excellent color plants for containers. You may also want to try the “New Look” red celosia which is a 2019 Texas Superstar flower. Be patient with your wildflowers. To provide seed for the next spring they must be allowed to mature and distribute their seed. Cosmos make a good summer flower to brighten up the areas where the wildflowers are maturing their seed. Just spread the seed like it was a summer wildflower.