

TIME TO START PLANTING!

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Thank goodness it's finally time to start planting!

You can start your vegetable garden now with cool-loving crops such as broccoli, cabbage, brussels sprouts, kale, lettuce, spinach, potatoes, and others can be safely planted now.

Hold off on planting tomatoes, peppers, squash and other warm-loving garden plants until the soil warms up in May.

I recommend that you develop a garden plan on paper before you start planting. You think that you have plenty of room but it seems that we always end up buying more seeds and plants than we have space.

If you are planting perennial plants such as rhubarb and asparagus, keep in mind that it will take at least three years before you get a good harvest. Let the roots of these plants develop and establish before harvesting a complete crop.

For instance, don't pick any asparagus the first year it's planted. The second year, pick about half or so of the crop, and the third year you will have a good crop that is established.

When purchasing asparagus, select two-year old roots in order to get a crop a little sooner. You can plant from seed but it takes even longer to harvest.

If you have purchased any bare-root plants such as roses, shrubs, or other perennials (except for summer-blooming bulbs) you should get them in the ground as soon as possible.

The plant roots are packed and protected from drying out but as we get warmer weather, it's harder to keep these roots in good shape.

If you have summer-blooming bulbs such as dahlias, glads, and begonias, don't plant them until the soil is warmer in mid- to late May. Plant them now and there is a really good chance they will rot.

If you want these plants bloom earlier in the season, start them indoors in pots now and transplant outside in May. Be sure to give them plenty of light if they are indoors. Low light will cause them to stretch and become leggy.

Annuals such as pansies and snapdragons can be planted now as they love this cooler weather. And of course, trees and shrubs can go into the ground any time now.

A rule for planting anything – make sure the soil is dried enough before planting. Working in wet soil simply compacts the soil and makes it challenging for roots to grow.

One final note, last week I mentioned boxwood leafminers and had a lot of readers submit pictures and questions. Don't confuse this pest with winter damage. If you aren't sure, search online for photos to help you confirm the type of injury.

Or you can send me a photo but be sure to send good clear pictures (not blurry!) that show the entire plant as well as leaf damage. It's difficult to diagnose the problem with one leaf sample.



Peas can be planted now