

Central Virginia Master Gardeners  
May Garden Chores

*Happy is the man, whose wish and care  
A few parental acres bound,  
Content to breathe his native air  
In his own ground...*  
---Pope's Ode to Solitude

Category	Description
Ornamental Plants	<p>Irises, azaleas, rhododendrons and many other perennials and shrubs are in full bloom now. May 15<sup>th</sup> in our area is the start of frost-free days and this is the time to plant non-hardy perennials, annuals and bulbs. Remember to transplant during cloudy days. Don't delay because summer is right around the corner!</p> <p>Also, when transplanting all types of perennials, shrubs, young trees and even the tiniest seedlings you MUST protect the roots against drying while out of the ground. Even the slightest exposure to drying out can severely damage or kill plants. To ensure stocky growth, remove the central bud at the top of annuals when they are 6 inches tall. Calendulas, Ageratums, Snapdragons, Stock, Marigolds, Drummond Phlox, Alyssum and Petunias are types needing such treatment. Poppies, Asters and Nicotania are best left alone.</p> <p>CULTIVATE OFTEN! Don't let the weeds get ahead of you!</p> <p>You should be deadheading your flowering heads daily as this is essential for continued bloom however, some of your flowers may not benefit from deadheading. Many perennials will give a second blooming if the old stocks are removed. It is ok to deadhead your spring bulbs but don't remove the leaves until they have yellowed. The bulbs are storing food for next year and need their foliage in tact until they wither naturally.</p> <p>Thinning of rampant growing plants to keep air in the center of clumps, as well as around the outer edges should be done ALL SEASON. Take advantage of any bouts of cooler, moister weather to divide and move perennials. Water in well, and keep an eye out all season to watch that they don't stress.</p> <p>If tulips bloomed less this year, bulbs may be exhausted. If spent, lift tulips and order new now. Order bulbs this month to take advantage</p>

of industry discounts.

It is not too late to cut back pansies to renew them for later blooming.

Weed killers used on walks and drives, while weeds are young, will prevent a great deal of damage and hard work later.

You can fertilize just about everything and also divide perennials. It is also an ideal time to take cuttings from new growth on lavender and pinks. Consider layering a favorite shrub or perennial.