

## MAY

You should now be seeing the rewards for your efforts during winter, but be aware of nesting birds and all the other wildlife making their homes in your garden. Don't forget to consider the possibility of late frosts.

**SOW** sweetcorn and dwarf beans. Repeat sow salads, broad beans, peas, carrots, beetroot and basil

**PLANT OUT** dahlias, cannas and summer bedding

**PRUNE** clematis montana hard if needed to keep it in shape, as well as forsythia and Chaenomeles after flowering

**PINCH OUT** tips of sunflowers and chrysanthemums and side shoots of tomatoes

**DIVIDE** lift hostas to pot on or plant out. Lift daffodils and other spring bulbs for storage

**CUTTINGS** of fuchsia and pelargoniums

**EARTH UP** potatoes

**THIN OUT** direct-sown annual seedlings

### **GARDEN GUIDANCE**

- Hang pheromone traps in apple and pear trees.
- Remove strawberry runners.
- Clean glass and install shading in greenhouse.
- Check for lily beetle, viburnum beetle, aphids.
- Remove finished forget-me-nots.
- Tie-in climbers and any other plants with lank and spreading habit.
- Mow lawn weekly.
- Feed container plants and other planting weekly.

### **JUNIORS' JOBS FOR MAY**

This is a good month to **make a container pond**. Many of us don't have the space for a big pond but if you make a pond of any size, the wildlife will come and you can grow beautiful flowers in the pond to attract bees, butterflies, moths, dragonflies and lots of other insects.

- Start by finding a container – an old sink, a half-barrel or large tub, or even just a large bowl or baby's bath. Make sure it's watertight – if not, line with thick plastic or pond liner.

- Put it in position – if it's small enough, dig a hole and place the bowl into it so frogs, newts and other creatures can get in and out easily. Make sure it won't be in the sun all day because the water will get too warm and evaporate. Put it in position BEFORE you put anything else into it – it will be too heavy to move later!
- You will also need several bricks or large stones to put in the bottom to give hiding places for creatures that live in it. Get a small plank of wood and cover it with chicken wire. Put the plank into the pond, sloping it upwards to the top so that hedgehogs or any other small creature can climb out if it falls into the water by mistake. This is very important!
- Fill with rainwater, preferably from a butt. If you don't have one, put buckets and containers outside for several weeks for the rain to fill them. Tap water contains too many nutrients and it will cause algae to form that will turn the water green, which is not healthy.
- Go to a garden centre where you can buy small pond plants – not too many because they grow quickly and take over! Get advice but have a mixture of tall upright plants as well as ones that simply float in the water. Make sure you buy native British plants only.
- Keep the water level topped up, especially in warmer weather, remove any dead or falling leaves since they will rot in the water, and scoop out any weed that grows on the pond surface. You might like a small solar fountain in your pond to really help the water stay clear.

Enjoy watching the pond life that comes. Don't accept frogspawn from other ponds though, because it can bring disease from the pond to yours. Just be patient – the frogs, toads and newts will come and lay their eggs next year for you to watch as they grow into adulthood.