



Vegetables

There are quite a lot of garden chores in June when you're growing your own food! Here are some helpful tips and reminders.

Note: Most vegetables prefer a soil pH of 6 to 7.

Stop cutting asparagus when the spears appear to be slowing down either in production or size. Stop cutting rhubarb as well. Both need to grow for the rest of the season, gathering energy for next year's growth. You can now cover the growing area with compost.

Start any of the warm weather vegetables (Corn, Beans, Peppers, Egg Plant, Tomatoes, Squash, melons, Pumpkins, etc.) as soon as possible. You can now sow directly into the ground.

Start seedlings of broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage now so they can be transplanted in the fall.

Thin seedlings. If you got your garden in early, this month you can thin your lettuce, carrots, beets, and radishes, herbs and start second plantings of beans, sweet corn, and salad crops. This is important for providing good air circulation around plants. Water after thinning to keep plants left in the ground happy.

Store left over vegetable and flower seeds either in a bag in the refrigerator or in any cool and dry spot, such as the basement. They can be used next year.

Re-Sow some cold weather crops. The weather may allow for another harvest of quick growing lettuce, radishes or spinach. If you do this, do so right away.

Plant leggy (falling over) tomato plants deeper in the soil. Buried stems will form their own roots.

Plant herbs in a sunny location. Herbs depend on a full day of sun to grow just like vegetables.

Watering Tips. We never let up on the watering advice, do we? After your vegetable garden is well established, it is best to water it thoroughly once or twice a week rather than giving it a light watering everyday. This results in a deeper root system, which will later help plants tolerate dry weather.

Lettuce. Keep a close eye on your spring crops. Once lettuce is exposed to hot weather it will "bolt", making it bitter and inedible.

When picking herbs, the best time to do so is just before they flower. At this point the plant has built up a lot of essential oils so the taste will be at its most expressive.

Mound the soil up around your potato plants. Covering stems is fine, the importance being in covering the potatoes themselves. Sun hitting the potatoes at the surface will turn green and not taste good.

Support tomatoes with stakes or cages keeping fruit off the ground. Keeping leaves off the ground is important too as fungal spores exist in the soil.

Watch for Tomato Blight. There are 3 different fungal diseases associated with blight, but the treatment is pretty easy. [Learn more about Tomato Blight here.](#)

Weeds. Mulching keeps weeds down and moisture in the soil. Use mulch, straw or leaves now. Waiting means you'll have a lot of weeding to do before mulching.

Check basil plants for flowering. As soon as you see any, remove them immediately. Flowering causes the plant to put energy there instead into the leaves where you want it. They will also stay nice and bushy if you take off the flowers.

Feed tomatoes, squash and cucumbers now. Espoma's organic Garden-Tone makes this an easy task, and is made specifically for vegetable gardening.

Watch for Blossom End Rot. You'll notice soft areas that darken on the blossom end (opposite the stem) of tomatoes, peppers, squash and melons. Caused by a calcium deficiency, Blossom End Rot needs attention as soon as you see it begin.

Watch for Cabbage Loopers. Loopers can show up on cabbage, broccoli, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, kale, lettuce, spinach, beans, peas, celery, parsley, parsnips, radishes, potatoes, and tomatoes

Watch for insect pests such as aphids. If you're vigilant and catch insects when they first show up, you may be able to save your plants from damage by hosing them off or picking insects off by hand.

Fruits & Berries

Fruit Trees

"June drop" happens this month. Fruit trees can easily bear more fruit than they can support. Young fruit will begin to drop, but this situation benefits from a helping hand...and a ladder. Pick the smallest fruit on apple, plum and peach trees, so you have one nice fruit every 6 to 12 inches. If you have clusters of fruit, leave the nicest one of the bunch. If you thin fruit trees correctly, the fruit that matures will be sweeter.

Strawberries can develop some mold. Get rid of moldy berries and put straw around under your plants. The ground is where these spores live, so reduce contact between your plants and the ground. Harvest berries frequently to keep the plant healthy! Remove runners so the plants can put energy into fruit production.

Blueberries benefit from removal of the newly formed fruits for the first three years they're in the ground to promote good plant growth.