

MAY

SOWING GUIDE ACCORDING TO CLIMATE

WARM/HOT	MILD/TEMPERATE	COOL
Some Beans	Some Artichokes	Some Broad Beans
Beetroot	Broad beans	Chives
Broad beans	Lettuce	Elephant garlic
Broccoli	Onion	Lentils
Cabbage	Peanut	Lettuce
Capotum	Radish	Onion
Carrot	Shallot	Peanut
Chicory	Sprout	Radish
Endive		Shallot
Herb		Sprout
Kidney		
Lark		
Lettuce		
Onion		
Peanut		
Peanut		
Peanut		
Radish		
Shallot		
Sprout		
Swede		
Turnip		
Turnip		

*Tolerant seedlings



ELEPHANT GARLIC has a mild flavour. It must be divided and replanted before the onset of winter.

MAY NOTES

Seeds planted in cold soil from now on are in danger of being eaten before or after germination, by soil-borne pests. Minimize their loss by sowing on or near the soil surface, and covering seeds with a little beach sand taken from below the high water line, as it is salty. If autumn leaves can be mowed-slashed with grass cuttings, they will settle down as garden mulch despite strong winds. Wet the mulch down immediately and keep it moist. Fungal mycelium will soon spread to glue it together.

If you use only animal manures for garden nutrients, your plants may eventually show deficiencies of phosphoric acid because horses, cows, sheep, etc. use enormous amounts of phosphorus in their metabolism for bone formation. So dust garden beds with rock phosphate or bone meal, or add either to compost heaps. Poorly drained soil can be greatly improved during the growth period with a cover crop of ryegrass, oats or barley, which will transport most of the excess moisture into the atmosphere. This is the last month for planting bulbs.

Save seeds from more than one plant of a variety so that you maintain a broader genetic base. This is especially true of corn, where approximately 100 plants are needed to prevent the seed from deteriorating. Phoenix Seeds list 3 only open-pollinated corn cultivars. Cultivars available elsewhere are almost all hybrids. There are 2 exceptions: self-pollinated plants such as peas and beans are bred by nature, and first, all seeds could be saved from one plant without fear of deterioration. Other exceptions are pumpkins and squashes.

Once your seeds have been dried for storage — on screens for several days under the warm sun — they should be kept as moist as possible. Sealed cans and jars are best, but only when seed is good and dry. Store them with a hygroscopic medium (such as charcoal pieces from the fireplace). Onion seed, usually considered to be short lived, has been kept up to 12 years when dry and well sealed, but it decays in a few months when stored at high temperatures in a damp area. Peas and beans are best stored in bags rather than airtight containers. Store seeds in a cool dry place at between 4 deg C and 15 deg C. A refrigerator is acceptable. Commercial seed companies often dry most seeds at 36 deg C to reduce seed moisture to a low 5-8%. The fact that their marketing is in foil packages and gives them a long shelf life.

WINDBREAKS

A windbreak can raise the soil temperature and air temperature of a plot by several degrees. It's wise to let some of the prevailing wind through to avoid turbulence (hence the expression 'windbreak', not 'windblock'). A low fence is an ideal semi-permeable windbreak for a suburban garden. Some air movement is necessary around plants to blow away frost, mildew spores and other fungi. Aphids, thrips etc. are easily disrupted by too much wind.

The height of a windbreak determines how large a garden area it will protect. Multiply the height by 8 for an idea of the length of protection. The speed of the wind determines the chill factor. For instance air kept relatively still by a windbreak at 20 degrees, can be reduced to 15 degrees by a 40 kph wind. For many upright crops, from staked tomatoes to maturing hulk roses, shelter from cold winds is more important than atmospheric temperature. Fifty percent shade cloth makes an excellent windbreak where a living