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## *May & June*

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In these parts, the Victoria Day weekend is the traditional time for planting some early season crops like spinach, peas, brassicas and lettuce; by that time, you should be pretty safe from hard frosts (one way to make sure is to sign up for Environment Canada's free weather warning service; they email you a warning when frost is expected).

In the old days, Nova Scotia growers used to say it was safe to plant the garden when the apples and lilacs bloomed. This rule is still a good one; though city-dwellers may find it difficult to find an apple tree nearby, it's still pretty easy to spot a lilac in town. If you want to warm your soil up a little faster, you can cover your patch with fabric row cover or even black plastic garbage bags for a couple of weeks before planting.



It should be dry enough by now to excavate your compost pile; scoop out what's at the bottom (the older, more finished stuff) and spread it on your patch to be turned into the soil by shovel or tiller when you get the chance. This is the month of wild delicacies: the fiddleheads are here, and you'll sometimes see a shad among the other fish at the store. I look forward especially to the arrival of asparagus: a treat without equal perhaps because, like Christmas, it comes but once a year. Last year, I started a patch of my own asparagus with seed sent me by a fellow Seeds of Diversity member; I'll have to wait a few more years before sampling it, but I know it will be worth the wait.

I feel completely safe planting my warm weather lovelies in early June: tomatoes go in, some of them wearing Cozy-Coats (also known as Wall O' Water!) to provide them with some extra warmth and speed them on their way to greatness. The soil should be warm enough by now for beans, carrots, potatoes, cucumbers, squash, and whatever else you want to plant. Consider mulching your plants with straw, eelgrass (like seaweed), or old leaves. This will help keep weeds down and, if it's a dry summer, will keep the soil around your plant moist.

Don't those home-grown salad greens taste good? Most of them fare badly in the hot summer weather, (lettuce will bolt; arugula and mustard get attacked by flea beetles) so enjoy them now while they're at their best.

