



## May in the Garden

### *This month in your garden:*

- **Prune** Pinch tips of coleus to prevent flowering and encourage bushier, fuller plants. Remove spent blooms on spring and summer annuals to promote new blooms.
- **Birds** - Spring migration continues into mid-May. Clean birdbaths often and keep feeders full, and clean them after rainstorms to prevent soggy spoiled seed. Even non-birders can keep fresh water and food out at this time (and also during fall migration) to help our feathered friends.
- **Feed** Fertilize flower beds and vegetable gardens with slow-release organic fertilizers
- **Weeds** - Be vigilant about pulling weeds early, make sure areas are mulched properly to prevent future weeds from germinating and help to retain moisture.
- **Pests** - Keep an eye out for pests as well as beneficial insects in your vegetable garden. Pick off pests by hand, check for slugs and snails early in the morning or in the evenings when they are active. (sprinkle crushed eggshells around base of plants to deter them).
- **Water** - Deep root watering on trees, lawns, and shrubs is best. It encourages roots to move down into the soil where they will be less susceptible to moisture changes. Avoid short periods of shallow watering, use a tree gator or soaker hose to aid in slow, deep watering.
- **Plant** - summer blooming perennials and annuals. Choose heat-tolerant plants like purslane and bougainvillea for hanging baskets in full sun
- **Plant** - okra, cucumbers, pumpkins, basil, garlic chives, peppers, long beans, eggplant, sweet potatoes, arugula, anise hyssop, garlic chives, ginger, lemon verbena, lemon grass, pineapple salvia, rosemary, and turmeric. Container veggie transplants from the nursery in larger pots are okay to plant during May
- **Lawn** - Continue to water between rain events, apply molasses or compost to ensure healthy soil for healthy turf roots.

**Save The Date\*** All our meetings and field trips are on the NFWC calendar

**May –**

**Meeting – Thursday, May 11<sup>th</sup>**

**Rebekah Bostick's garden 1:00**

**guest speaker- Sarah Bentley**

Houston Orchid Society

All About Orchids

**Field Trip – Thursday, May 18?**

**Neal's Berry Farm**

? – Pick Your Own **Blackberries & Peaches**

**June –**

**Garden Party, May 31<sup>st</sup>**

**Michelle Higgin's garden** evening event

Food and drinks from the garden potluck

“Present” exchange – something that has meaning to you

**Garden Happenings This Month–**



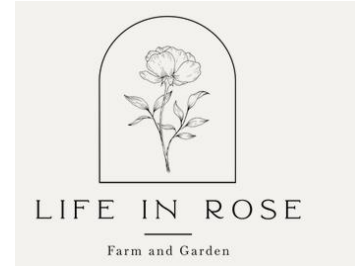
## Mother's Day Floral Arranging Workshop

Join us Sunday May 7th 10:30am-11:30am for a Mother's Day Floral Arranging Workshop with our favorite florist's, Ponderosa Blooms!

Create your own beautiful floral arrangement with mom and enjoy a morning full of blooms, conversation and community!

[Purchase Tickets Here!](#)

- **SAT., MAY 13: BRAZOSPORT DAYLILY SOCIETY FLOWER SHOW & DAYLILY SALE**, 1-4pm, St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, 200 Oyster Creek Dr., Lake Jackson. 832-922-573
- **SAT., MAY 13; HOUSTON HEMEROCALLIS SOCIETY DAYLILY SALE**, 8am-12pm; 5705 Pinemont Dr, Free. [ofts.com/hhs/plantsales.html](https://ofts.com/hhs/plantsales.html)
- **SAT., MAY 20: LONE STAR DAYLILY SOCIETY ANNUAL FLOWER SHOW & PLANT SALE**, Sale: 10am-4pm; Show: 1-4pm, Epiphany Lutheran Church, 5515 Broadway, Pearland. [lonestardaylilysociety.org](https://lonestardaylilysociety.org)



## Mother's Day Tea & Flower Bar

Sunday May 7 from 10:30 am - 1:30 pm

<https://www.lifeinrosefarm.com/pages/bare-root-roses>

### Green Thumb Lecture Series



Second Monday, 10:00 A.M. – 11:30 A.M.  
Houston Community College  
Register in advance to receive the link:  
[hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops](https://hccs.edu/community-learning-workshops)  
Second Monday of each month

Third Tuesday, 11:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.  
Harris County Public Library Facebook Live  
No reservation required. Watch on Facebook –  
[facebook.com/harriscountyp1/live](https://facebook.com/harriscountyp1/live)  
Third Tuesday of each month

May 8 – Gardening with Less Water

May 16 – Gardening with Less Water

**LONE STAR CHAPTER AHS**

## Hibiscus Show and Plant SALE

- Exotic varieties on sale
- Specialty fertilizer available
- Admire show blooms
- Ask the experts
- Become a member
- Free Raffles

**Saturday May 13th, 2023**  
**Free Admission 1-4 PM**

Sugarland Knights of Columbus St Basil Hall  
702 Burney Road, Sugarland, TX 77498

JOIN our Facebook  
[www.Facebook.com/LoneStarHibiscusSociety](https://www.Facebook.com/LoneStarHibiscusSociety)





**LOW VOLUME IRRIGATION**  
**SAT. 5/20/2023 @ 9:30 AM - 11:30 AM**  
**LIVE ZOOM CLASS**  
**PRESENTER: ANGELA CHANDLER**

[https://www.urbanharvest.org/stec\\_event/low-volume-irrigation-5/](https://www.urbanharvest.org/stec_event/low-volume-irrigation-5/)



Online Learning

**INSECTARY GARDENS: NATURE'S PEST CONTROL**  
**SAT. 6/17/2023 @ 9:30 AM - 11:30AM**  
**ZOOM LIVE CLASS**

[https://www.urbanharvest.org/stec\\_event/insectary-gardens-natures-pest-control/](https://www.urbanharvest.org/stec_event/insectary-gardens-natures-pest-control/)



**Mycellium, Fungi, and Mushrooms,**  
**Oh My!**  
**Exploring Nature's Networks:**  
**Introduction to Mushrooms**

**Saturday, May 20, 2023**  
**12:00 — 1:30 pm**

<https://hbg.org/events/mycellium-fungi-and-mushrooms-oh-my-2023-05-20-12-00/>



**Herbs for Health**  
**Why You Should Eat Your Veggies**  
**Saturday, May 20, 2023**

**2:00 — 4:00 pm**

<https://hbg.org/events/herbs-for-health-2023-05-20-14-00/>

## Garden to Kitchen –

It is blueberry season in Houston. Why not put some of those berries to use for some spring cocktails? Here are two suggestions from Chris Grow -

# Boozy Blueberry Basil Smash



1.5 oz. vodka (infused with basil,  
blueberry, and green tea)  
2.5 oz. blueberry/basil simple syrup  
1/2 oz. blue curacao  
1/2 oz. limoncello  
1/2 oz. blueberry liqueur  
1 oz. lemon juice  
Soda of choice to top  
blueberry & basil garnish

# BLUEBERRY

- 1/4 CUP FRESH BLUEBERRIES
- 1 OUNCE (2 TABLESPOONS) FRESH LIME JUICE
- 4 OUNCES (1/2 CUP) REPOSADO OR AÑEJO TEQUILA
- 1 1/2 OUNCES (3 TABLESPOONS) SIMPLE SYRUP
- FEW DASHES ORANGE BITTERS
- KOSHER OR SEA SALT FOR RIMMING THE GLASS



IN A COCKTAIL SHAKER MUDDLE THE BLUEBERRIES AND LIME JUICE UNTIL THE BLUEBERRIES ARE PULVERIZED. ADD THE TEQUILA, SIMPLE SYRUP, BITTERS AND A HANDFUL OF ICE TO THE SHAKER. ADD A LEFT OVER RIND OR TWO FROM THE LIMES. SHAKE VIGOROUSLY FOR 15 SECONDS, AND THEN STRAIN INTO THE SALTED GLASSES.

# MARGARITA

## **GARDEN CREATIONS** - *Homemade “spices”*

This time of year for those with an herb garden it may be overwhelming. There may be so many herbs and the question is “what can I do with all these herbs?” Pesto is often the first choice, but before everything starts to flower, why not try making kitchen spices?

This is a great way to make use of a bumper crop, and these little items make great gifts! Once dried and stored in airtight containers, herbs will retain good flavor for up to one year.



Drying is the easiest method of preserving herbs. Simply expose the leaves, flowers or seeds to warm, dry air. Leave the herbs in a well ventilated area until the moisture evaporates. Sun drying is not recommended because the herbs can lose flavor and color.

The best time to harvest most herbs for drying is just before the flowers first open when they are in the bursting bud stage. Gather the herbs in the early morning after the dew has evaporated to minimize wilting. Avoid bruising the leaves. They should not lie in the sun or unattended after harvesting

### **How Long Does It Take To Dry Herbs?**

Every type of herb dries differently (thicker ones take longer), and the humidity level is also a factor. Depending on the method you choose to use, it may take a few minutes (drying in the microwave, for example) to a week or so (hang drying, for example).

If you want to dry them faster, then try using the microwave, a dehydrator, or your oven. However, below you'll find details the easiest and traditional method – Air Drying

Air drying is not only the easiest and least expensive way to dry fresh herbs, but this slow drying process can also help retain the essential oils of the herbs, which helps to maintain their flavor.

### **How To Wash Herbs Before Drying**

Even if they look clean, give your herbs a good rinse under the sink to get rid of any bugs or dirt.

**Step 1:** Rinse the leaves and stems by placing them into a bowl and filling it with cold water. You can rinse them under a faucet, but I've found that it's harder to tell when they are truly clean that way.

**Step 2:** Gently swish them around in the bowl and dump out the water when you're done. Repeat until the water in the bowl is clear after swishing.

**Step 3:** Once they're clean, gently pat them with a towel, or spin them dry using a salad spinner. It's very important that there's no water left on them. Otherwise, it will take much longer for them to dry, and they'll have a higher risk for molding.

## How to Dry Fresh Herbs

Remove the lower leaves along the bottom inch or so of the stem. You can use these leaves fresh or dry them separately. Remove any dry or diseased leaves from the cut herbs during this time. Yellowed leaves and leaves spotted by disease are not worth drying. Their flavor has already been diminished by the stress of the season.

Bundle four to six stems together and tie them as a bunch. You can either use a string or a rubber band. The bundles will shrink as they dry and the rubber band will loosen, so check periodically to make sure that the bundle is not slipping. If you are trying to dry herbs that have high water content, make small bundles so they get air flowing between the branches and do not rot.



### Add the Herbs to Paper Bags (Optional)

Though this step isn't completely necessary, some find that paper bags aid in drying out the herbs more quickly and thoroughly, and avoids dust getting on them. Punch or cut holes in a paper bag, and place the bundled herbs inside, upside down. Secure the bag by gathering the end around the bundle and tying it closed. Make sure the herbs are not crowded inside the bag. Label the bag with the name of the herb you are drying.







### Hang the Herbs Upside Down

The oldest way to dry herbs is to take a bunch, hang it upside down in a warm, airy room and let nature do the work.

### How to Store Herbs

#### Once you've completed the drying process:

Before storing them, you need to make sure the herbs are completely dry. You'll know they're ready when they crumble to touch.

You can store dried herbs as they are, or crumble them into pieces using an [herb grinder](#). If you decide to crumble them, you should remove the stems.

Label jars and store in a cool dark place.

Dried herbs are usually 3 to 4 times stronger than fresh herbs. To substitute dried herbs in a recipe that calls for fresh herbs, use 1/4 to 1/3 of the amount listed in the recipe.



For more info:

<https://getbusygardening.com/drying-herbs/>

<https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-dry-and-store-herbs-1403397>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fHT8HRUMq18>

## Plant of the Month – *Salvia*

The Salvias are a large family of resilient, vigorous plants that bring a jolt of color to most any sunny spot in the landscape. Pollinators love them, deer and rodents tend to avoid their fragrant leaves, and they are very low maintenance once established.



### About Salvia

Part of the mint family (*Lamiaceae*), salvias provide colorful spikes of densely-packed flowers with tubular blossoms atop square stems and velvety leaves. Their flowers come in a range of colors, including purple, blue, red, pink, and white.

“Salvia” and “sage” are often used interchangeably; we tend to use “salvia” for the ornamental plant and “sage” for the culinary herb. However, [garden sage](#) has a few attractive ornamental varieties itself.

Salvia are heat- and drought-tolerant, making them survivors in the summer garden. They grow 18 inches to 5 feet tall, depending on the variety. Salvias of all types can be grown in containers, too.

### Wit and Wisdom

- The ancient Greeks and Romans used salvia as a memory enhancer.
- The name *Salvia* comes from the Latin word *salvere*, which means “to heal.” Salvia has been used for its herbal and medicinal qualities since ancient times.

Below are some varieties you might want to try to brighten up your landscape all summer long – either in garden beds or in pots – they keep the pollinators happy, which helps the veggies!

### Rockin' Blue Suede Shoes'

The crisp indigo blue flowers with dark black calyx stand 30-40 inches tall. The wide open flowers create a perfect invite for the hummingbirds. This long blooming salvia has deep green foliage that compliments the tall blue flower spikes. Best in part shade – does not like all day Texan sun!

Rockin® Blue Suede Shoes™ is easy to grow once established. A great thriller for containers, which allows for moving to a protected place in case of a freeze.. Rockin® Blue Suede Shoes™ is a sterile Salvia which means no energy goes into producing seeds, its only job is to send out more flowers all summer long.. Trimming will encourage additional branching and more flowers to enjoy.

**Exposure:**

Part Sun to Sun

**Height:**

30-40"

**Spacing:**

18-24"

**Hardy Temp:**

25°F (-4°C)

**Hardiness Zones:**

9a, 9b, 10a, 10b, 11a, 11b



### Salvia 'Love and Wishes'

Noted for its long blooming season, Salvia 'Love And Wishes' (Sage) is an upright perennial featuring showy spikes of bold reddish-purple flowers, emerging from papery, dark burgundy bracts. Blooming from late spring to frost, the blossoms rise along dark stems, well above the foliage of mid to deep green, glossy leaves. Easy and fast-growing, this plant is a favorite of butterflies and hummingbirds. An excellent plant for a container or in border plantings. Does not require pruning or deadheading.

- ★ Tender, this plant is hardy to zone 9 and is generally treated as an annual in cooler areas.
- ★ Grows with a slightly open habit, up to 3-4 feet tall (90-120 cm) and 3 ft. wide (90 cm).
- ★ Enjoys **full sun** in **average, medium moisture, well-drained soils**. Tolerates some shade in hot climates.
- ★ **Deer resistant, heat and drought tolerant.**
- ★ No pruning required, but removing faded flower stems will prolong flowering

**Exposure:**

Part Sun to Sun

**Height:**

30-40"

**Spacing:**

36"

**Hardiness Zones:**

9 -11

**Soil Drainage**

Moist but Well-Drained





### Salvia 'Skyscraper Orange'

Large deep orange tubular flowers emerge from dense spikes composed of bronze and orange tinged calyxes beginning in spring and continuing until frost and are sure to draw in hummingbirds and other pollinators. Skyscraper™ Orange Salvia is a mid-size well-branched and exceptionally free flowering Sage perfectly suited for use in medium-sized containers as well as in sunny garden and landscape settings. Planting in a container makes it easier to move in the event of a severe freeze.

**Exposure:**

Part Sun to Sun

**Height:**

18-24"

**Spacing:**

12"

**Hardiness Zones:**

10,11

### Salvia splendens 'Dancing Flames'

A definite attention getter in the landscape whether in or out of bloom! The foliage sports dramatic patterns of variegation combining bright lemon-lime green. From spring to fall, the impact of the plant is increased due to the fire red bloom spikes, Cut back the winter foliage in early spring and trim in warm months to keep compact. Hummingbirds love the flowers.

**Exposure:**

Some shade in summer sun

**Height:**

24 – 36 "

**Width:**

2 ½ ft

**Hardiness Zones:**

Root hardy to zone 8

**Hardy Temp:**

25°F (-4°C)



## Salvia 'Mystic Spires



**Exposure:**

Some shade in summer sun

**Height:**

24 – 36 “

**Width:**

2 - 3 ft

**Hardiness Zones:**

Root hardy to zone 7

**Water needs**

Average

Everblooming from **early summer to frost**, Salvia 'Mystic Spires Blue' is an excellent compact selection from the highly popular Salvia 'Indigo Spires'. Well-branched and very free-flowering, 'Mystic Spires Blue' produces masses of sturdy, purple-blue flower stalks that are of great aesthetic appeal in beds, borders, or containers and attract scores of **butterflies, hummingbirds, and beneficial insects**.

- ★ **Easy to grow, fairly pest and disease-free**, and requiring **low care**, this semi-evergreen perennial is also **heat-tolerant and deer resistant**. In short, the perfect perennial!
- ★ **Reliable**, this erect, herbaceous perennial forms a mound of shiny, deep green leaves less than 12 in. high (30 cm), topped by 12-18 in. (30-45 cm) long flowering stems of dark purple-blue flowers in violet-purple calyces. Grows up to 24-30 in. high and wide (60-75 cm).
- ★ Pair it with hot-colored annuals or perennials to cool down their saturated colors, or use it as a dramatic, misty blue background behind low-growing orange or yellow flowers such as [Marigolds](#) or [Zinnias](#). It also looks incredible when planted in mass or used as an upright accent plant in containers.

## Salvia Farinacea - 'Mealy cup Sage'

Salvia farinacea, also known as Mealy cup Sage, is a flowering perennial plant **native** to parts of the United States and Mexico. It is a member of the Lamiaceae family (mint family) which is known for its showy, long-lasting flowers and ease of care.

'Mealy cup sage' has elongated spikes of tubular flowers with a powdery or 'mealy' appearance. The leaves are medium to dark green in color. It typically blooms from late spring to early fall, and does even better when spent blooms are deadheaded.

This is an excellent plant for attracting bees, butterflies, and hummingbirds. Salvia farinacea is often used in mixed borders, rock gardens, or wildflower gardens. It is a great cut flower.

**Exposure:**

Some shade in summer sun

**Height:**

12 – 24”

**Hardiness Zones:**

8 - 10

**Width:**

1 – 2 ft.



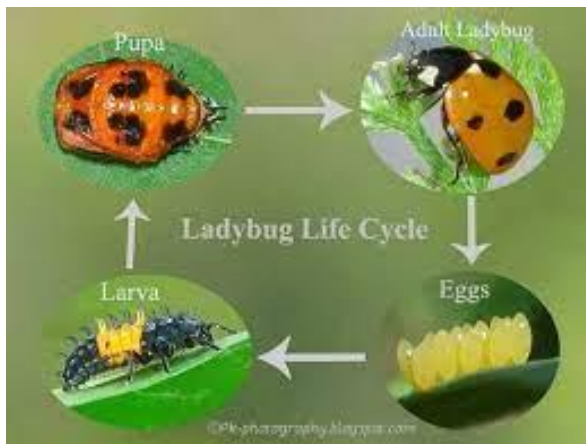
## The Good the Bad and the Ugly – insects in the garden - Ladybugs

Despite their delightful name and appearance, ladybugs are ferocious predators! They are considered beneficial insects for the garden – they are one of “*the good*”.

Most people like ladybugs because they are pretty, graceful, and harmless to humans. But farmers and gardeners love them because they eat aphids and other plant-eating pests. One ladybug can eat up to 5,000 insects in its lifetime! Most ladybugs have oval, dome-shaped bodies with six short legs.



Ladybugs are colorful for a reason. The red color is a warning to predators. When threatened, the bugs will secrete an oily, foul-tasting fluid from joints in their legs.



Ladybugs lay their eggs in clusters or rows on the underside of a leaf, usually where aphids have gathered. Larvae, which vary in shape and color based on species, emerge in a few days. Seven-spotted ladybug larvae are long, black, and spiky-looking with orange or yellow spots. Some say they look like tiny alligators.

Did you know that a ladybug larva can eat up to 40 aphids an hour? It is good to know what they look like as they really help keep aphids under control – you do not want to kill them!

Larvae grow quickly and shed their skin

several times. When they reach full size, they attach to a leaf by their tail, and a pupa is formed. Within a week or two, the pupa becomes an adult ladybug.

### **LIFE SPAN**

Up to 1 year

### **YOUNG**

Number of eggs laid: 3 to 300, depending on species

Incubation period: 5 to 8 days

Age of maturity: 3 to 7 weeks



Want to see more? Check out this video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ws\\_D5nXOAJg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ws_D5nXOAJg)

## *These Are a Few of My Favorite Things*

*Betsy Barton is passionate about COLEUS!*

### **I love coleus!**

There are so many vibrant colors and leaf shapes, you can always find one that complements other plants in your garden or pot. A collection of different coleus looks wonderful too. They do well in shade, or partial sun (just not the hottest afternoon sun).



Clippings do great in a vase indoors, and will last indefinitely with light from a window or even an undercabinet light. This is a great way to save your favorites over the winter. The clipping will produce roots easily, and voila!, free new plants!



Sometimes I just stick a cutting in some soil like I did in the pic above. Seems to be happy living with my old poinsettia!

Pinch back the flowers to keep the plant compact and healthy. And when they get leggy, cut back, stick in water, and give to your friends!

***Some Videos of Note for May:***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tJ2WyRLmyw> How to Kill Fire Ants Organically

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePcN\\_oxSHe0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePcN_oxSHe0) How to Make Infused Water: Cucumber and Basil Recipe with Chef Chris

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtvuMNVLISo> How to Grow Microgreens from Start to Finish (COMPLETE GUIDE)

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=547884729993873> Sun loving options for Houston summer sun. Lots of options.

***Some Articles of Note for the Month of MAY:***

**Master Gardener – Zinnia – A Beginner’s Guide**

<https://www.yourconroenews.com/neighborhood/moco/events/article/Master-Gardener-Zinnia-a-beginner-s-guide-to-16319953.php>

**Award Winning Zinnias will Color a Summer Garden**

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/article/Award-winning-zinnias-will-color-a-summer-garden-4525739.php>

**How to trim Basil**

<https://savvygardening.com/how-to-trim-basil/>

**Garden Basil Has Many Uses**




<https://www.chron.com/z-archived-entertainment/article/Garden-basil-has-many-uses-15238015.php>

**Mallows are a Summer Staple in the Houston Garden**

<https://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/gardening/article/Mallows-are-a-summer-staple-in-the-Houston-garden-15301847.php>



# PLANTING TIME!

 <b>Vegetable Garden Planting Dates</b> for Harris County		<b>FACT SHEET</b>											
Texas A&M System		Marginal Planting Time  Ideal Planting Time 											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	
ASPARAGUS, Crowns													
BEANS, Lima & Snap Bush													
BEANS, Lima & Snap Pole													
BEETS													
BROCCOLI, Plants													
CABBAGE, Plants													
CAULIFLOWER, Plants													
CARROTS													
CHARD, Swiss													
CHINESE CABBAGE													
COLLARDS													
CORN													
CUCUMBER													
EGGPLANTS, Plants													
KOHLRABI, Plants													
LETTUCE													
MUSKMELON, Cantalope													
MUSTARD													
OKRA													
ONION, Bulb-type sets													
ONION, Transplant for scallions													
ONION, Multipliers													
PARSLEY													
PEAS, English & Snap													
PEAS, Southern													
PEPPER, Plants													
POTATO, Irish													
POTATO, Sweet													
PUMPKIN													
RADISH													
SPINACH													
SQUASH, Summer													
SQUASH, Winter													
TOMATO, Plants													
TURNIP													
WATERMELON													

## May

Transplant Veggies	Seeds - Direct Sow	Transplant Herbs
eggplant	arugula	basil
melon	black eyed pea	chives
mustard	suyo cucumber	lemon balm
okra	luffa	mint
peppers	southern peas	oregano
pumpkin	zucchini	rosemary
southern peas	sunflowers	sage
squash	gomphrena	thyme
	zinnia	
	cosmos	



**On a Lighter Note...**

