















Farmer Fred - MAY GARDEN CHORES FOR THE CENTRAL VALLEY, FOOTHILLS & BAY AREA


-  Don't remove your bulbs from the ground until the foliage is dry and crisp.
-  Apartment dwellers with a patio that gets at least six hours of sun a day can easily grow peppers in containers.
-  Add mulch around trees, shrubs and garden plants. This will reduce the number of weeds as well as conserve moisture.
-  Pinch back petunias and fuchsias to encourage more blooms on a compact plant.
-  Soon, those tomato plants will start to sprawl all over your garden. Stake them now to avoid future entanglements.
-  One of the most aromatic shrubs for our area is currently putting on quite a show for noses. Plant the banana shrub (*Michelia figo*) near a window or doorway in part shade.
-  Keeping your mower set at the highest or next to the highest blade setting will help keep your fescue lawn healthy through the summer.
-  Water your lawn in the morning to discourage fungus diseases.
-  Is nutgrass driving you nuts? There are herbicides available that help control nutgrass (nutsedge) in lawns. Check with your nursery person for more details.
-  Now on the nursery shelf: snail and slug controls products that are reportedly non-toxic to your pets. The active ingredient is iron phosphate.
-  Mid-May is not too late to plant popular summer vegetables such as tomatoes and peppers.


 Crabgrass is beginning to show its ugly heads in area gardens. Hand-pulling is much easier now, before the plant's large, fibrous root system has time to take hold.


 Give your clay and plastic pots a boost on sunny patios. Elevate pots onto boards to lessen the damaging effects on plants from heat radiated off the hot concrete.


 Protect azaleas and rhododendrons from too much light. These shade lovers appreciate a home that only gets morning sun or filtered sunlight.

 For a fall crop of beautiful chrysanthemum flowers, start planting this month.

 Annuals planted recently should be fed on a monthly basis throughout the spring and summer.

 For maximum flavor, don't let zucchini get more than 8-10 inches long.

 Although carrots become sweeter with age, be sure to pick them before they take on a woody appearance.

 Snow peas are ready to be picked when the peas are just beginning to swell in the pods. Snap peas taste best when the pod is plump, but the skin is still shiny, not dull.

 Stake or cage your tomatoes now while they are still of a manageable size.