



*It's time to dance around the Maypole but not for too long. May is the month when everything happens in the garden – when you can really get your hands dirty. Poppies pop and peonies make you wonder if the rose is indeed the queen of the flowers. The Japanese cherry tree in the backyard has already bloomed but pink petals still carpet my patio and the giant purple rhododendron in the front of the house will have to wait a little longer to reign over the azaleas. And I'm planting another crop of peas and lettuce and counting the days till I can put in my dahlias. ~Irene*

## MAY 2012: In the Garden with Irene Virag

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p><b>Visit my Lowe's blog.</b> <a href="#">Click here.</a></p>		<p><b>1</b> Surprise a friend with a May Day basket of spring-time blooms like pansies and ranunculus.</p>	<p><b>2</b> Get more peas, lettuce, spinach and arugula in the ground while the soil is cool enough.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Hoop peonies before they flop over. And don't fret about the ants – they're nibbling nectar.</p>	<p><b>4</b> Snip off faded daffodil blooms. But let the foliage stay to feed the bulb for next year.</p>	<p><b>5</b> Spice up the rose garden with a fiesta of flowers. Try Cinco de Mayo – the rose.</p>
<p><b>6</b> Thin leafy greens so plants have plenty of room – about two inches apart is just right.</p>	<p><b>7</b> Grow a steady supply of radishes through July by sowing seeds every 10 days or so.</p>	<p><b>8</b> Check out Farmingdale State's 3-day plant sale to support its teaching garden.</p>	<p><b>9</b> Farmingdale's plant sale continues today and tomorrow, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. <a href="#">Click here.</a></p>	<p><b>10</b> Beef up borders with perennials before the soil warms. Cooler soil encourages healthy roots.</p>	<p><b>11</b> Plant sun-loving strawberries in well-amended soil with a pH of 6.2. Mulch with straw.</p>	<p><b>12</b> Prep seedlings for the real world. Harden them off with a few hours outdoors each day.</p>
<p><b>13</b> Take mom on a Mother's Day shopping spree at her favorite nursery. Then do the planting.</p>	<p><b>14</b> Sow bush beans 2 inches apart. Pole beans need a foot between plants – and a trellis to climb.</p>	<p><b>15</b> Feel the heat. It's the "safe planting date" for heat-lovers like eggplants and impatiens.</p>	<p><b>16</b> Loosen roots of annuals crammed into cell packs so they spread out and grow strong.</p>	<p><b>17</b> Plant colorful zinnias in a sunny spot with lots of air circulation to prevent powdery mildew.</p>	<p><b>18</b> Pinch back <i>Sedum Autumn Joy</i>, asters and mums. Do it again at the end of June.</p>	<p><b>19</b> Grow your own salsa. Plant cilantro, chili peppers and tomatillos, a tomato relative.</p>
<p><b>20</b> Tomato time. Slip bottomless paper cups over the stems at soil level to thwart evil cutworms.</p>	<p><b>21</b> Get the herb garden cooking with parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme – and lots of basil.</p>	<p><b>22</b> Plant pumpkins so they're ready for Halloween. Sow lima beans, onions and sweet potatoes.</p>	<p><b>23</b> Sow sunflower seeds about one inch deep in a sunny spot with well-drained soil.</p>	<p><b>24</b> Mulch broccoli and cauliflower to keep their feet cool and comfy as temperatures rise.</p>	<p><b>25</b> Sow seeds of corn, squash, carrots and cucumbers. Don't forget the beets.</p>	<p><b>26</b> Divide fall-flowering perennials like bee balm, asters, tansy and goldenrod.</p>
<p><b>27</b> Decorate the koi pond with lotus and water lilies. Avoid water hyacinths – they take over.</p>	<p><b>28</b> Celebrate Memorial Day. Plant a perennial poppy. I like Cedar Hill, pictured above.</p>	<p><b>29</b> Snack on sugar snap peas right off the vine – if you sowed the seeds last month, that is.</p>	<p><b>30</b> Bring on the dahlias. They're divas that need a little support. I use conical wire tomato cages.</p>	<p><b>31</b> Plant 1-year-old asparagus roots deep enough to cover crowns. Don't harvest this season.</p>		<p><b>Drop me a line:</b>  Email: <a href="mailto:irene@irenevirag.com">irene@irenevirag.com</a>  1019 Ft Salonga Rd, Suite 10-# 302 Northport, NY 11768</p>