



*It's May – at last – and the world turns into a kaleidoscope. Irises trumpet the color purple and my Japanese cherry tree reigns in pink even as its petals softly fall and blanket the patio. Poppies pop and forget-me-nots and Virginia bluebells sing the blues and peonies rival roses in their white and pink and red beauty. I'm waiting for the lilacs to scent my driveway and counting the days till I can put in the tomatoes. It's May and I'm merry, indeed.*

~Irene

## MAY 2018: In the Garden with Irene Virag

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<b>1</b> Surprise a friend with a May Day basket of spring-time blooms like pansies and ranunculus.	<b>2</b> Plant more lettuce, spinach, arugula and peas while the soil is still cool enough.	<b>3</b> Hoop peonies before they flop over. Don't fret – the ants on the buds are just nibbling nectar.	<b>4</b> Tip-toe through the tulips and while you're at it, cut a bouquet to bring inside.	<b>5</b> Spice up the rose garden with a fiesta of flowers. Try Cinco de Mayo – the rose.
<b>6</b> Divide phlox, coreopsis, coral bells. Pinch back <i>Sedum</i> Autumn Joy, asters, mums.	<b>7</b> Thin leafy greens so plants have plenty of room – about two inches apart is just right.	<b>8</b> Check out Farmingdale State's <a href="#">3-day plant sale</a> to support its teaching garden.	<b>9</b> Beef up borders with perennials before the soil warms. Cooler soil encourages healthy roots.	<b>10</b> Prep seedlings for the real world. Harden them off with a few hours outdoors each day.	<b>11</b> Keep a steady supply of radishes through July by sowing seeds every 10 days or so.	<b>12</b> Snip off faded daffodil flowers. But let the foliage stay to feed the bulb.
<b>13</b> Stop and smell the lilacs. Take a Mother's Day stroll through your favorite public garden.	<b>14</b> Loosen roots of annuals crammed into cell packs so they spread out and grow strong.	<b>15</b> Sow seeds of corn, squash, carrots and cucumbers. Don't forget the beets.	<b>16</b> Feel the heat. It's the "safe planting date" for heat-lovers like eggplants and petunias.	<b>17</b> Plant colorful zinnias in a sunny spot with lots of air circulation to prevent powdery mildew.	<b>18</b> Sow bush beans 2 inches apart. Pole beans need a foot between plants – and a trellis to climb.	<b>19</b> Get the herb garden cooking with parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme – and lots of basil.
<b>20</b> Tomato time. Slip bottomless paper cups over the stems at soil level to thwart evil cutworms.	<b>21</b> Sow sunflower seeds about one inch deep in a sunny spot with well-drained soil.	<b>22</b> Plant pumpkins so they're ready for Halloween. Sow lima beans, onions and sweet potatoes.	<b>23</b> Lucky Penny Day. It's a myth that burying a penny can change the color of a hydrangea.	<b>24</b> Brighten fences and arbors with morning glories at dawn and moonflowers at dusk.	<b>25</b> Plant dahlias. They're divas that need a little support. I use conical wire tomato cages.	<b>26</b> Decorate the koi pond with lotus and waterlilies. Avoid water hyacinths – they take over.
<b>27</b> Go on a shopping spree at the <a href="#">LI Hort Society's Plant Sale</a> at Planting Fields, 11 to 3.	<b>28</b> Celebrate Memorial Day. Plant a perennial poppy. My favorite is Cedar Hill.	<b>29</b> Plant 1-year-old asparagus roots deep enough to cover crowns. Don't harvest this season.	<b>30</b> Mulch broccoli and cauliflower to keep their feet cool and comfy as temperatures rise.	<b>31</b> Snack on sugar snap peas right off the vine – if you sowed the seeds last month, that is.		Drop me a line: Email: <a href="mailto:irenevirag@verizon.net">irenevirag@verizon.net</a>  1019 Ft Salonga Rd. Suite 10 – # 302 Northport, NY 11768