



May is sure to bring us poetry in the form of forget-me-nots and Virginia bluebells and bleeding hearts. Poppies pop and irises trumpet the color purple and peonies make you wonder if the rose really is the queen of the flowers. May apples are unfurling their leafy umbrellas and lilacs are scenting the border along my driveway. The Jacks-in-the-pulpit are singing hosannas under the star magnolia. My pots are brimming with pansies and my garden beds with tulips. And that's just the beginning. It's May and I'm merry, indeed.

~Irene

MAY 2017: In the Garden with Irene Virag

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Surprise a friend with a May Day basket of colorful ranunculus, pansies and other early blooms.	2 Get more peas, lettuce, spinach and arugula in the ground while the soil is cool enough.	3 Pinch back <i>Sedum Autumnn Joy</i> , asters and mums. Do it again at the end of June.	4 Thin leafy greens so plants will have plenty of room – about two inches apart is just right.	5 Hoop peonies before they flop over. And don't fret about the ants – they're nibbling nectar.	6 Grow a steady supply of radishes through July by sowing seeds every 10 days or so.
7 Start weeding. They'll take over if you let down your guard. Think of it as therapy.	8 Gather lilacs in the morning. Choose long branches with half-opened blooms.	9 Check out Farmingdale State's 3-day plant sale to support its teaching garden.	10 Prep seedlings for the real world. Harden them off with a few hours outdoors each day.	11 Divide fall-flowering perennials like bee balm, asters, tansy and goldenrod.	12 Beef up borders with perennials before the soil warms. Cooler soil encourages healthy roots.	13 Tour East End gardens featured in the Garden Conservancy's Open Days program.
14 Celebrate Mother's Day with a stroll through Old Westbury Gardens .	15 Feel the heat. It's the "safe planting date" for heat-lovers like eggplants and petunias.	16 Loosen roots of annuals crammed into cell packs so they spread out and grow strong.	17 Plant sun-loving strawberries in well-amended soil with a pH of 6.2. Mulch with straw.	18 Grow your own salsa. Plant cilantro, chili peppers and tomatillos, a tomato relative.	19 Sow seeds of corn, squash, carrots and cucumbers. Don't forget the beets.	20 Sow bush beans 2 inches apart. Pole beans need a foot between plants – and a trellis to climb.
21 Go on a shopping spree at the LI Hort Society's Plant Sale at Planting Fields, 11 to 3.	22 Snip off faded daffodil blooms. But let the foliage stay to feed the bulb for next year.	23 Plant zinnias in a sunny spot with lots of air circulation to halt powdery mildew.	24 Get the herb garden cooking with parsley, sage, rosemary and thyme – and lots of basil.	25 Plant 1-year-old asparagus roots deep enough to cover crowns. Don't harvest this season.	26 Decorate the koi pond with lotus and water lilies. Avoid water hyacinths – they can take over.	27 Tomato time. Slip bottomless paper cups over the stems at soil level to thwart evil cutworms.
28 Bring on the dahlias. They're divas that need a little support. I use conical wire tomato cages.	29 Celebrate Memorial Day. Plant a perennial poppy. My fave is Cedar Hill, pictured above.	30 Plant pumpkins so they're ready for Halloween. Sow lima beans, onions and sweet potatoes.	31 Sow sunflower seeds about one inch deep in a sunny spot with well-drained soil.			<p>Drop me a line: Email: irene@irenevirag.com</p> <p>1019 Ft Salonga Rd, Suite 10 – #302 Northport, NY 11768</p>

