**In May:**

* Start planting bedding plants towards the end of the month.
* Look after your finished spring bulbs for next year. Once they’ve gone over, resist the temptation to cut back the foliage. Instead, let them die and break down on their own and add [liquid fertiliser](https://search.thompson-morgan.com/search?w=liquid%20fertiliser) all around the clumps. This will give you an even better display next spring.
* Remember to open greenhouse vents and doors on warm days. You can also damp down your greenhouse on hot days to increase humidity and deter red spider mites.
* Optimise your watering regime - watering early and late to get the most out of your water - and start collecting and recycling water whenever possible.
* Thin out drifts of hardy annuals.
* Harden off more tender plants by leaving them outside during the day and bringing them back under cover at night for 7 to 10 days before planting in the garden.
* Plant Summer hanging baskets adding good quality compost, slow release fertiliser and water retaining crystals to keep them in top condition. Protect them from late frost either by putting them under cover or covering them at night with fleece or similar.
* Harden off dahlias and tender exotics such as canna for planting out sd soon as the risk of frost has gone.
* Continue dividing herbaceous perennials to improve vigour and create new plants.
* Divide hostas as they come into growth.
* Trim back spreading plants such as aubrieta, alyssum and candytuft after they have flowered to encourage fresh new growth and more blooms.
* Lift forget-me-nots to prevent heavy self seeding and reduce spreading unless, like me, you love lots of them in your garden!
* Prune penstemons now. Cut off all the old shoots back to the base, providing there is new growth at the bottom of the plant. If there are no new shoots at the base, cut just above the lowest set of leaves.
* Take cuttings of tender perennials such as fuchsia, argyranthemum and pelargoniums (geraniums). The new shoots of hardy perennials can also be used for cuttings.
* Take softwood cuttings of shrubby herbs such as sage and lemon verbena.
* Prune out overcrowded and dead stems of early flowering clematis **after** flowering.
* Tie in climbing and rambling roses. Laying the stems horizontally will help to produce more flowers.
* Tie in sweet peas with plant support rings to encourage them to climb.
* Prune Spring flowering shrubs after flowering.
* Cut back flowered shoots of choisya to promote a second flush of flowers in Autumn.
* Trim lavender plants, cutting off old flower heads and about 2.5cm(1 inch) of the current year’s growth.
* Feed and water container plants. Give a balanced liquid feed every 2-4 weeks to promote healthy growth.
* Top dress permanent pot plants to refresh the compost.
* Closely inspect plants for pests and diseases as early prevention is much easier than curing an infestation.
* Pick off any larvae of rosemary, viburnum and lily beetle AS SOON AS you spot them!
* Continue to weed beds and borders to prevent competition for water and nutrients.

**And for the vegetable garden:**

* Continue earthing up potatoes.
* Harvest asparagus spears when they are no more than 18cm tall.
* Thin out directly sown vegetables such as spinach, carrot and lettuce seedlings then water the rows well.
* Harden off outdoor tomatoes, courgettes and pumpkins for planting early next month.
* Protect carrots from carrot fly by covering with horticultural fleece
* Pinch out the growing points of broad beans as soon as beans start to appear at the base of the plant to reduce the risk of blackfly.
* Weed around your onions and garlic to reduce competition for nutrients and water.
* Make supports for your runner beans using 8’ (2.4m) Bamboo canes.
* Support pea plants with twiggy sticks or pea netting