

Bluestem Breezes  
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## **May Garden Checklist**

In our household, April is an extremely hectic month. It seems like each year April 1<sup>st</sup> arrives and it immediately becomes a “hold on to your hats” month until May 1<sup>st</sup>. And then, we breathe. Oh sure, I know every household is different. But for me, May 1<sup>st</sup> means I’ll be spending more time in my flower beds and vegetable garden.

If you are also anticipating the arrival of May, let’s start a checklist before the new month hits and we overlook critical items to accomplish. Here is a list to assist in your brainstorming:

### **Vegetables and Fruits**

- Plant tomato, pepper, and eggplant transplants in early May
- Seed sweet corn, cucumbers, squash, beans, and other warm season vegetables
- Lightly cultivate soil with a hoe to control weed growth
- Mound soil around potato plants to encourage tuber formation
- Harvest fresh asparagus until the spear size decreases
- Remove rhubarb seed stalks to encourage leaf growth
- Plant kitchen herbs for summer use in dishes or food preservation
- Treat fruit trees with needed pesticides to control insects and disease
- Thin heavy fruit set on apples to increase fruit size and next year’s crop

### **Flowers**

- Plant annual flowers for summer color
- Continue to plant and divide perennials
- Mulch perennial and annual gardens for weed control and moisture retention
- Begin pinching chrysanthemums for bushier plants
- Do not remove foliage from spring bulbs until it dies down naturally, this develops stronger blooms for next year
- Plant container gardens and hanging baskets using a good quality potting mix
- Keep a garden journal for permanent reference

### **Lawns**

- Reduce thatch layers from zoysia by verticutting or core aerating
- Sod or sprig zoysia lawns to fill in bare areas
- Fertilize zoysia lawns with high nitrogen to promote green up and summer growth
- Mow zoysia at 1 to 2 inches tall
- Apply slow release nitrogen fertilizer to bluegrass and tall fescue to promote summer growth if watering during the summer. Lower maintenance lawns skip this application
- Mow bluegrass and tall fescue at 3 inches
- Spot treat broadleaf weeds
- Withhold early summer watering until needed to promote more drought tolerant lawns

## **Trees and Shrubs**

- Plant new trees and shrubs
- Prune spring flowering shrubs after bloom to shape plant and encourage flowers next year
- Mulch around young trees and shrubs to conserve moisture and control weed growth
- Water young ornamentals as needed
- Remove tree wraps for summer growth
- Remove tree stakes that have been in place more than one growing season
- Fertilize trees to help increase growth rates
- Caution, use line trimmers around trees and shrubs so as not to damage tender bark

## **Houseplants**

- Move plants outdoors for summer by gradually increasing the exposure to sunlight
- Fertilize plants to promote summer development
- Rotate plants to develop a well-rounded plant
- Wash dusty leaves in the shower under room temperature water
- Four to six inch cuttings are a great way to start new plants, root in potting mix under low light
- Repot plants into a one inch larger pot
- Check for insects

To access each month's Garden Calendar, visit:

<http://www.johnson.ksu.edu/DesktopDefault.aspx?tabid=118>.

For additional information, visit the Extension Office (215 Kansas, Courthouse, Alma; [kamayer@ksu.edu](mailto:kamayer@ksu.edu); 765-3821). For Bluestem Breezes archives, check out [wabaunsee.ksu.edu](http://wabaunsee.ksu.edu).