

ANXIOUS TO START GARDENING?

#HOMEGROWN



MARK AND BEN CULLEN
 Column

Many Canadian gardeners wait until the long May 2-4 weekend (which was named after Queen Victoria decreed the official size of a case of beer) to plant and sow their garden. There is no need. Fact is, you can be out there this weekend frolicking on the lawn and digging in the garden with just a little bit of knowledge.

HARDY 101

The tipping point for many plants is 0 degrees Celsius. Which is not to suggest that you should plant your tomatoes if the next few weeks are frost free. The soil at this time of year is cold and plants that prefer warm soil don't like it one little bit. Wait until the long May weekend, at the earliest, to plant out frost ten-

der plants. Conversely there are plants that thrive in cool soil and cool air temperatures.

WHAT YOU CAN PLANT.

Veggies: sow directly in the ground seeds of carrots, onions, leeks, lettuce, cabbage (all "cole crops" like broccoli, cabbage, kale, cauliflower), beets, peas and Swiss chard.

Vegetable plants are available at some essential garden retailers now and we encourage you to plant them out. All the plants mentioned above will grow nicely, except the root crops mentioned, which should be sown from seed direct into the soil. Plus, raspberries, strawberries, rhubarb and all shrub bearing fruits including currants and blackberries, are safe to plant out now.

Speaking of edibles, many herbs can be planted out but only after you harden them off by introducing them to mid day sun and cold evening temperatures, expanding their time out of doors by an hour or two a day. As the plant becomes used to the

lower temperatures and direct sun, it acclimatizes to the out of doors. After about 10 days, they are safe to plant out.

Ornamentals are ready for planting now also. All flowering shrubs, trees (including fruit trees), evergreens, roses and most perennials are suitable for early May planting. The exceptions are the ones that have been force-grown in a greenhouse.

Flowering plants that will tempt you and are perfectly hardy, ready to plant today, include pansies, violas, ranunculus, mums and all flowering bulbs including crocus, daffodils, hyacinths and tulips.

WHAT NOT TO PLANT/SOW

There are many plants that are sensitive to frost and cold soil that should not be planted until late in May or early June.

Veggies include tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, squash, beans, cucumbers, melons and corn. When soil temperatures rise above 15 degrees Celsius you can plant or sow these crops.

You will also need to wait to



Mark Cullen photo

You don't always have to wait until the May holiday weekend to start gardening, says expert Mark Cullen.

plant annual flowering plants including, but not limited to, petunias, impatiens, geraniums, snapdragons and ... you get the idea.

They are called "annuals" as they complete their life cycle in one growing season.

Mark Cullen is an expert

gardener, author, broadcaster, tree advocate and Member of the Order of Canada. His son Ben is a fourth-generation urban gardener and graduate of University of Guelph and Dalhousie University in Halifax. Follow them at markcullen.com, [@markcullengardening](https://www.facebook.com/markcullengardening), and on Facebook.

Mountainview Residence Of Georgetown
 Retirement living can be the best of times when you live in an atmosphere of comfort and family caring.

Seniors enjoy an independent lifestyle with comfortable accommodations, personal care and other supportive services.

FULL-SERVICE RETIREMENT HOME
 905-877-1800
 222 Mountainview Road North, Georgetown
www.mountainviewresidence.com

Style and service with North America's #1 choice.

Drapery

Cellular Shades

Faux Wood Blinds

Shutters

We're Budget Blinds, and we're North America's #1 provider of custom window coverings. We do it all for you; design, measure and install — because we think everyone, at every budget, deserves style, service, and the peace-of-mind of the best warranty in the business.

Call now for your free in-home consultation!

905-874-8478 | www.budgetblinds.com/milton-on

Buy More Save More, 25% - 50% off.
 Blinds • Shutters • Shades • Drapes
 Home Automation

Style and service for every budget.®

©2018 Budget Blinds, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Budget Blinds is a trademark of Budget Blinds, LLC and a Home Franchise Concepts Brand. Each franchise independently owned and operated.