

South Dakota State University

## Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange

---

Extension Circulars

SDSU Extension

---

1-1922

# May Garden Activities

A. Ford

Follow this and additional works at: [http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension\\_circ](http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ)



Part of the [Agriculture Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Ford, A., "May Garden Activities" (1922). *Extension Circulars*. Paper 74.  
[http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension\\_circ/74](http://openprairie.sdstate.edu/extension_circ/74)

This Circular is brought to you for free and open access by the SDSU Extension at Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Extension Circulars by an authorized administrator of Open PRAIRIE: Open Public Research Access Institutional Repository and Information Exchange. For more information, please contact [michael.biondo@sdstate.edu](mailto:michael.biondo@sdstate.edu).

## MAY GARDEN ACTIVITIES

by

A. L. Ford,  
Specialist in Entomology and Horticulture.

### CULTIVATION

Garden crops should be cultivated for three reasons: (1) To destroy the weeds that shade the vegetables and rob them of valuable plant food, (2) to put the surface of the soil into a condition to resist drought, and (3) to make more plant food in the soil available for the growing plants by letting in water, heat, and air.

Never let the weeds get a head start of your crop. Before planting a certain piece of ground always thoroughly cultivate the land first. This will at least give the crop an even start with the weeds, then by persistent cultivation later, the weeds can easily be checked. Remember that the work of weeding is small where the weeds are young but is often very serious to both garden and club member if the weeds are allowed to become well rooted.

It is a well established fact that water will evaporate much more rapidly from soil with a hard, compact, crusted surface than from one with a surface consisting of a mulch of finely broken-up soil. For this reason gardens should never be left to crust after rains. Just as soon as the soil is dry enough to work after every rain, the crust on every square yard of your garden should be broken and thoroughly pulverised. This can be done on the small scale with the rake or hoe, but in the larger gardens a wheel hoe or one horse cultivator is better. During the months of July and August, South Dakota gardens usually become badly in need of water and this is why you should preserve the moisture which falls in the spring by keeping a fine mulch on your garden at all times.

Did you know that all plant food in the soil may not be in a form which plants can use? That is absolutely true. The plants can use only that part of the plant food which is soluble, that is, which can be dissolved. It has been learned that a larger percentage of the plant food becomes soluble in soil that is kept cultivated because of the fact that the water, air and heat are let in.

### WEEDS

Gardening might be called a continual warfare on weeds. If you don't get them they will get your garden. It is no disgrace to have weeds start in your garden but it is a disgrace to leave them after they have gotten started. Work at these weeds and work hard.

We are sending you with this month's literature a sheet containing a lot of good information about weeds. Study this carefully and we are sure you can tell your father some things about weeds that he never knew before.

### GROUP III.

Last month we planted the early vegetables belonging to Groups I and II. This month is the time for planting Groups III and IV. Remember Group III consisted of sweet corn, potatoes, snap and pole beans and tomato plants transplanted from the indoor seed boxes. Get out your garden plan again and learn where these varieties are to go. Also turn to Page 5 of "The Balanced Garden" for depth and rate of seeding. This group should be planted at about the time the apple blossoms have fallen from the trees.

### GROUP IV.

Group IV is the last group. Put these varieties in about two weeks after Group III. Cucumbers, watermelons, muskmelons, squashes, lima beans, and pumpkins make up this group. If the spring is backward the planting of this group will not come until after June first. Before putting these out again consult your garden plan and page 6 of "The Balanced Garden."

### KEEP THE GROUND WORKING

As soon as one crop is off or partly off the ground plant it to something else. Keep every row producing until fall. The club member that does this will show a production record at the end of the year that will be surprising. By this time part or all of your radishes and spinach which were planted early will be gone. Get these rows immediately into something else. In determining what variety to put in after an early maturing variety all that you have to look out for is whether or not that crop will mature before frost. Before that can be determined you must know the number of days that it takes the different varieties to mature. You can find this on page 6 of Government Circular #48, "The Club Members Garden," which we sent you last month.

### TOMATOES

Tomato transplanting comes during the latter part of this month, or during the first part of June, depending upon the season. There is probably no other crop grown in South Dakota gardens that produces as much real food as a patch of tomatoes. Because of this we feel that the tomato should be given special consideration.

The tomatoes which you planted in the seed boxes about the middle of March now (about June first) should be ready to set in open ground. Before putting in open ground it is a good idea to harden off the plants by first subjecting them to outside temperatures for short intervals and by allowing them to dry out enough to check their growth. Plants hardened off in this manner as a rule do better in open ground than do plants not receiving this treatment.



The tomato is a crop that will do well on almost any well drained land.

In setting out the plants in the club members garden the rows should be about three feet apart. If the plants are to be pruned and trained to stakes they can be put as close as 18 inches apart in the rows but if they are to be left to spread naturally they should not be closer than 3 or 4 feet apart in the row. For the club garden we believe the pruning and training system is the best because you can produce more and better tomatoes per unit area than without the training.

Soon after the plants are set a strong stake about three or four feet long should be driven firmly into the ground near the base of each plant. The plant then should be loosely tied to the stake with a soft cord or piece of rag. As the plants grow it is often advisable to nail a short cross piece to the upright stake under the plant in order to give it more support. Early in August it is a good plan to cut off about a foot of the ends of all growing shoots. By doing this more of the strength of the plant will go to ripen the fruit. Where plants have developed fruit low down it is well to put a thin layer of dry straw or hay on the ground around the plant in order to keep the fruit off the wet soil. As soon as a plant has set a goodly quantity of fruit all further blossoms should be kept pinched off. By doing this you will get a higher percentage of good tomatoes and a smaller percentage of culls.

Every garden club member should have plenty of tomatoes in the garden because they are probably the best paying crop a South Dakota garden can produce.

#### REPORT CARD NO. I.

Your garden should be nearly planted by this time and we want to know something about it. We are sending you a card to fill out and return to your County Agent or Club Leader. This card does not need any stamp. Just address it and drop it in the mail box.

We are sending you Farmers' Bulletin #937 entitled "The Farm Garden in the North." It is a regular handbook on all sorts of subjects pertaining to the garden.

Next month we will take up insect pests and plant diseases of the garden and also something about succession of crops in the garden.

Enclosures:

The Farm Garden in the North - Farmers' Bulletin #937  
Garden Club Report Card #1