

THE RAMBLING GARDENERS



First strawberries off the patch — early thanks to a hot April.

HOWDY FROM THE HOMESTEAD

May just got going, and so far the only word for it is relief. We came out of a stretch of drought, and the last few days have finally brought rain — a real lift for the crops that aren't on drip. April ran unseasonably hot, so things are running ahead of schedule, including a huge first strawberry pull. We're heads-down getting the new beds in and watching the garden catch its breath.

THIS MONTH IN THE GARDEN

BEDS & SOIL

Added three new raised beds and a trellis. Planted onions, cucumbers, carrots, sunflowers, beets, corn, and radishes.

DRIP IRRIGATION

Extended the dripline out to cover the three new beds so the new plantings aren't waiting on the sky.

COOP & FLOCK

Saved this month's eggshells from the flock — dried and crushed them into a calcium powder for the chickens and the garden.

KITCHEN & PANTRY

Made jelly from a huge first strawberry harvest that came in early. Cooked our first potato-leek soup and braised leeks (new veggie for us).



WHAT WE'RE GROWING NOW

We're full on with tomatoes and peppers—those beds are the priority right now. The new bed plantings (onions, carrots, beets, radishes, corn, cucumbers, sunflowers) are settling in, and the strawberry patch is still pushing fruit after that big first flush.



TIP OF THE MONTH

Herbs Belong in Your Bouquets

We used chives and parsley in a rose flower arrangement this month — first time mixing edibles with cut flowers, and it looked great. Don't sleep on the kitchen garden as a flower source; soft herbs hold up surprisingly well in a vase.

COMING UP NEXT MONTH

Plant Melons & Luffa

Direct-sow once soil is warm and stable.

Get Sweet Potatoes In

Set out slips before the heat really sets in.

Beans & Peanuts

Direct-sow green beans and peanuts between now and June.

LESSONS LEARNED

Found early blight on the potatoes this week. We're pulling affected leaves, improving airflow around the plants, and taking drastic measures to keep it from spreading down the row. Lesson: scout the potato patch weekly once warm rain hits — not just when you happen to walk by.



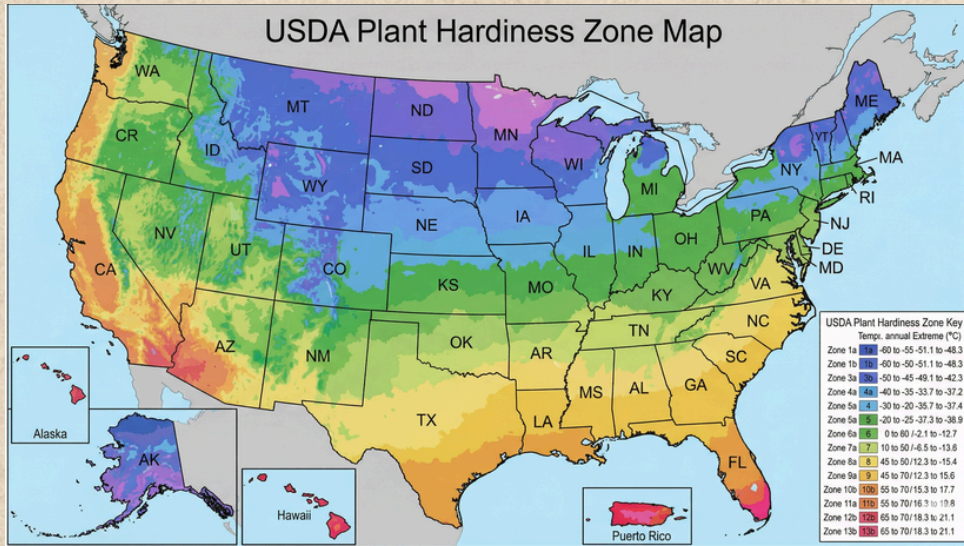
Potato-Leek Soup (and Braised Leeks)

FROM THE KITCHEN

Leeks are new to us this year, and they earned their keep fast. Slowly sweat sliced leeks in butter until soft and sweet, add diced potatoes and stock, simmer until tender, then blend smooth and finish with a splash of cream and salt. We also braised some leeks on the side — turns out they're worth growing on purpose. Bonus from the flock: we dried and ground a batch of eggshells into a homemade calcium supplement powder.

KNOW YOUR ZONE

What to plant in May — zone by zone.



Source: USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map — planthardiness.ars.usda.gov

MAY PLANTING — BY ZONE

ZONE 5 -20 to -10°F

INDOORS: Last call for melon and cucumber starts.

OUTSIDE: After your last frost — direct-sow beans, corn, squash, radishes. Transplant tomatoes and peppers once soil holds 60°F.

ZONE 6 -10 to 0°F

INDOORS: Finish any melon or cucumber starts.

OUTSIDE: Direct-sow beans, corn, squash, cucumbers, melons. Transplant tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant. Set out sweet potato slips late month.

ZONE 7 0 to 10°F

OUTSIDE: Direct-sow okra, southern peas, sweet corn, melons, luffa, sweet potatoes, and peanuts. Transplant any remaining warm-season starts and mulch them in.

ZONE 8 10 to 20°F

OUTSIDE: Last call for warm-season transplants. Direct-sow okra, southern peas, sweet potatoes, peanuts, and melons. Mulch heavy before the heat sets in.

NOT SURE OF YOUR ZONE?
 Look it up by ZIP at planthardiness.ars.usda.gov—and always pair your zone with your local frost dates.

Watch, follow, and grow with us.
 YouTube: [@theramblinggardeners](https://www.youtube.com/@theramblinggardeners) theramblinggardeners@gmail.com theramblinggardeners.com