

LUNAR PLANTING AND GARDENING CALENDAR 2006

The influence of the **Sun** and the weather it creates are the most important factors affecting conditions for plants and grower. The gravitational effect of the **Moon** is equal to that of the Sun. It is strong enough to create the tides in the ocean. This also governs behaviour in plants, animals and soils. The Moon affects plants differently according to which sector of the celestial, night sky (Astrological **Sign**) it is passing through, promoting and enhancing specific types of growth process. The 12 Signs correspond to the four **Elements** [**Air, Water, Fire and Earth**] in three sequential cycles each month, which are related to four main categories of **Growth** [**Flower, Leaf, Fruit and Root**]. Depending on what part of the plant you want as a **crop**, sow, cultivate and work with those plants on days ruled by the relevant Sign / Element.

- Sow seeds as many days **before** Full Moon as they take to germinate, in the first, **Waxing** half.
- Sow on the nearest most suitable astrological **Sign** day for type of **Crop** you want at maturity. (☼ 0 b 3)
- Harvest mature crops **after** Full Moon, when the growth cycle is complete and they will store better and for longer.
- Take cuttings, transplant seedlings and plant out when the moon is **Waning**, before Dark Moon, to enhance rooting.

THE SUN The Sun is the most important factor deciding what plant growth is possible at different times of the month and year. Solar activity dictates the availability of necessities such as **heat, light** and drives the **weather** cycles. Sunlight can be unpredictable, even in summer, but the Sun also has cycles of increased activity, such as the occurrence of sunspots and emissions of particles from its reactions. The influence of the Sun and the weather generally are the most important factors affecting conditions for both plants and grower, although it sometimes seems that the influences of the Sun and the Moon are synchronised, as when a drought breaks just before a Full Moon.

THE MOON 1. **THE SYNODIC MONTH** From an earthbound perspective, the visible Moon takes **29.5** days to complete the cycle through its phases from New to Full and back to New. It is this cycle which governs and is synchronised with the behaviour of **water** around the world, causing it to rise and fall twice daily. On the macroscopic level, the gravitational pull of the Moon on the oceans directly controls the pattern and extent of tides. The same force which causes oceans to move also influences the behaviour of the liquid magma beneath tectonic plates and consequent volcanic activity. It also influences water and all liquids on microscopic and molecular levels. Behaviour patterns of both plants [dormancy / fertilisation] and animals [e.g. hibernation or estivation / reproduction] are timed to coincide with the Moon's cycles, as are menstrual cycles.

Just as the Moon is capable of producing two high and low tides a day, so water rises and falls within the soil. These **land-tides** are most extreme at Full and Dark Moons. When the Sun and Moon are opposite each other [Full], water in soil rises strongly twice, twelve hours apart, feeding plant roots and then encouraging them to travel into the soil as the water drops. When they pull together in conjunction [Dark], they produce one larger, combined pull every 24 hours, causing roots to search deeper for water.

2. **THE ANOMALISTIC MONTH** Represents the Moon's proximity to (☾ **near**) or distance from (☉ **far**) the Earth. The Moon's disc is larger when it is closest (**perigee**) and smaller when it is furthest away (**apogee**), and its gravitational effect is proportionately stronger or weaker. This cycle is just over **27.5** days long and the Moon is **40,000 Km / 16,000 miles** closer at perigee than at apogee. Sow seed before perigee, seed sown at apogee will be more likely to bolt, which could be useful if you want seed.

3. **THE TROPICAL MONTH** Shows how high the Moon is in the sky, its elevation, when it is furthest North in the sky (^ **high**) and its declination or lowest point South (v **low**). Days when the Moon is ascending are suitable for grafting: when descending for sowing roots, transplanting and pruning.

4. **THE SIDERIC MONTH** The Moon takes **27.5** days to cross the celestial sky and return to its starting point. The sky can be understood to be a **Zodiac** made up of 12 approximately equal longitudinal sections [Astrological **Signs**], each occupying approximately 30° of the 360° of a complete circuit. It takes the Moon 2-3 days to pass through each section. The effect of the Moon on plants is different according to which Sign it is passing through.

The Signs correspond to the four **Elements** [**Air, Water, Fire and Earth**] in three sequential cycles each month. When the moon is in a certain Sign, specific types of growth process are promoted and enhanced. These are identified by relating the four Elements to four main categories of growth [**Flower, Leaf, Fruit and Root**]. Depending on what part of the plant is required as a **crop**, harvest or end-product activities can be carried out on days ruled by the relevant Sign and Element.

For example: Varieties within the Cabbage family have been bred to yield crops with characteristics which correlate to the four elemental characteristics. Hence, the biodynamic cultivator can sow turnips or swedes when the moon is in an Earth sign, to maximise root growth: broccoli or cauliflower on Air-flower days: kale or spring cabbage on Water-leaf days: and for a seed crop like mustard on Fire-fruit days.

THE MOON AND THE STARS Lunar and Cosmic influences can combine and re-inforce each other. For instance, a transplant or cutting carried out just before Dark Moon and during an Earth Sign [Rooting] would be receiving doubly helpful influences. Even subtler systems of attribution assert that individual plant species have affinities with specific astrological signs or planets.



Sheffield Organic Food Initiative promotes the benefits of
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