

## NOTES FOR MAY 2013

### May 2013 Notes

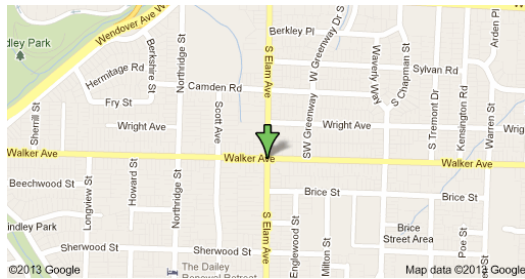
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336.543.4144

[www.elamgardens.com](http://www.elamgardens.com)

[stephen@elamgardens.com](mailto:stephen@elamgardens.com)

### A Wet April

They say April showers bring May flowers. We should be in line for HUGE flowers this month, but the cool and wet start to May also makes growing difficult. My own experimentation has shown that the soil is still a little too cold in much of my garden. I have been much more aggressive in using a ground/compost thermometer to see if I should be planting. For some plants I have no options (they are outgrowing their pots), so in the ground they go. They might take a while to get over the shock.

### Planting in shade

Folks have asked me about what they can do in a garden with many trees. For many of us, trees and fruits/vegetables don't normally mix. However, many plants can grow with 3 to 4 hours of sun a day, as long as they are not competing for nutrients and water with the trees. Tree roots are the biggest issue and you may need more supplemental feeding and water. It will also mean your beds will be invaded by the tree. You will have to be aggressive with pulling out the tree's new roots in your beds.

Marnie and I are having an "interesting" discussion about the big red maple in our backyard, and the shade it provides on areas that are ideal for intensive market beds.

You can remove some of the lower limbs of trees to let in more sunlight. You can also plant vegetables and accept lower yields, and a slightly longer growing season, mostly because soil temperatures will be lower in the shade.

Pests like slugs and snails can be more of an issue, so be prepared to deal with these critters (beer traps work wonders).

### Vegetable Options for Shade

#### *2-hours of sun*

- Asian greens such as bok choy, komatasuna, and others will grow well under these conditions.
- Mesclun is ideal, and if you leave the roots in the ground (cut them off about just above ground), you should be able to get 3 to 4 harvests before you need to replant them.

#### *3 hours of sun*

- Scallions, or bunching onions, work very well under these conditions.
- Mustard greens will do well if grown for baby greens.
- Most culinary herbs such as chives, cilantro, lemon balm, mints, oregano, parsley, will usually do well.

#### *3 to 4 hours of sun*

- Arugula, lettuce, and spinach, are ideal for these spots. It will protect them from bolting and buy you additional harvest time.
- Swiss chard can be grown in these locations if you want to use the baby leaves rather than the full stems.
- Kale will produce a little less.

#### *4 to 5 hours of sun*

- Root vegetables such as beets, carrots, potatoes, radishes, and others will need some additional time to mature, or you can harvest them as baby versions.
- Peas and beans will take a little longer, and bush varieties will likely work better.

#### *5 hours of sun*

Swiss chard if you want the big, crisp stalks.

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