

# Ishtar's International Network of Feral Gardens

organized by SAVAC, summer 2020

[Chapter One - May - Christina Battle]

**SLOW DOWN  
SLOW DOWN**

As you get ready to begin--whether your garden is indoors, on a patio, or in a backyard--sit in your space at three different times of the day and take note of how the sun passes.

Plan to spend at least a few minutes with your garden each and every day:

watering, planting, harvesting, or just watching your plants grow.

Think about what the summer was like last year.

Recall last spring, midsummer, and fall.

Imagine the summer to come and how things will look once everything starts growing.

Where will plants that are sensitive to heat and light be well shaded and protected?

Where will taller plants have the most room to grow?

**Note:  
The Smells  
The Tastes  
The Sounds  
The Sights**

Take time to look close up.

If you received seeds from the SAVAC network, here's a bit about how long they take to grow and how long they'll last:

	to harvest	seed life
tomatoes:	60 - 80 days	3 years
peppers:	65 - 95 days	2 years
basil:	75 days	5 years
dill/fennel:	55 - 70 / 100	4 years
flowers:	various	various
pumpkin:	90 - 120 days	3 - 4 years
cilantro:	75 - 100 days	3 - 4 years
mustard:	35 - 65 days	3 years

**A DIVERSE GARDEN IS A RESILIENT GARDEN**

**Planting by the moon**

Plant annuals and above ground crops during the waxing of the moon [from when the moon is new until the day it is full]. Plants will grow leaves and stems as the moonlight increases night by night.

Plant bulbs, and below ground crops during the waning of the moon [from when the moon is full until the day before it is new]. Plants will grow roots and tubers as moonlight decreases night by night.



Here's a rough guide as to when to plant outdoors along with us (based on Toronto's growing season; if you're growing indoors you won't be limited by outdoor temperatures, but you can still follow the moon cycles with us):

**May 7th [full moon]:** basil, cabbage\*, brussels sprouts\*, celery, beets\*, carrots, chives, corn, beans, kale\*, lettuce\*, onions, peas\*.

**May 22 [new moon]:** peppers, cucumbers, eggplant, okra, tomatoes, pumpkin, cantaloupe, squash, watermelon.

\*note that some of these are cold season crops that can be planted earlier (early/mid April), but since our first collective planting is on May 7th, plan to have them in ground on or by this date.

the value of a seed exists as potential, only manifesting when utilized (planted & grown or shared with others to grow)

Growing food for yourself shortens the path from source to table.

In a time of global pandemic, this takes on a whole other meaning.

**Diversify! Plant herbs, grasses and flowers along with your vegetables.**

They can help to attract pollinators, repel pests, suppress weeds and enhance your soil.

Shape a memory of spring to hold onto for next year.

What do you smell?  
How does the light look?  
What does it feel like?

Repeat for summer and fall.

**plants use over 20 senses in order to monitor their environments**

Whether in ground or in pots, plan to maximise your space and improve soil fertility by promoting cooperation in your garden.

Consider *intercropping*: plant two or three crops in the same space at the same time.

Pair plants that support one another: pole beans near corn or sunflowers, which will act like a trellis.

Plant fast growing crops near slower ones: radish, turnips, spinach & lettuce around cabbage and tomatoes, for example.

Choose companion plants that will help to repel pests: try planting tomatoes near basil, and coriander or marigolds near cabbage.

Alternate shallow root crops like lettuce with taproots like turnips.

*Succession* planting can help to maximize a growing space while diversifying harvests across the summer.

The simplest way is to continually plant seeds of quick producing plants every two weeks to stretch out your harvest. It works well with bush beans, salad greens, and radishes.

With a bit more planning, you can increase the number and diversity of crops within your garden. In a space where an early spring crop like radish or lettuce has been harvested (once it gets hot for example), you can replace with beans. Once the beans have finished, you can succeed them with a late summer crop like spinach (or radish & lettuce again!), for a fall harvest.

**GARDENING IS A REVOLUTIONARY ACT**

Over the last century, a staggering 75% of the world's crop diversity has become extinct.

I've lost track of the source of this quote but, the statistic still overwhelms. Consider planting heirloom and local varieties, and contribute to the diversity of plants in and around your neighbourhood (whether on private or public space!).

On the full moon of May 7th, let's perform Yoko Ono's PAINTING FOR THE WIND together.

Cut a hole in a bag filled with seeds of any kind and place the bag where there is wind.

(1961 summer)

As the effects of climate change continue to intensify, growing seasons have become quite unpredictable (at times exacerbated by extreme drought or other erratic weather patterns). From everything I've read so far, both Edmonton (where I'm gardening from), and Toronto, can expect the coming summer to be hotter and wetter than normal. You might consider planting accordingly:

\* tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers all do well in the heat & tolerate wet soil;

\* add more organics to compensate for lost nutrients due to leaching;

\* grow vertically to keep veg/fruit from prolonged contact with wet ground, and;

\* use mulch to avoid water loss on hot days.

Check your local weather forecasts or the Old Farmer's Almanac for predictions re: long-range forecasts in your region.

Taking notes will help keep track of what you planted where and when. There are lots of other ways you might document what grows over time:

photographs, watercolours, sunprints, drawings, text, rubbings, sound recordings, pressed flowers...

**Gardening slows everything down**

for more tips and resources check out these links: pdf of zine with tips and; online resources for Ishtar's network

drawing of foxglove from 1821 ["A Garden of Eden, Taschen] moon phases from: timeanddate.com