

How the Moon influences the growth of plants

The Phases of the Moon

There are two types of influences that the moon has on planting. The first is the phase, increasing or decreasing in light, which controls the amount of moisture in the soil. Just as the moon pulls the ocean tides, it also pulls the smaller bodies of water, causing moisture to rise closer to the surface. The earth is in a large gravitational field, pulled by both the sun and the moon. The tides are highest at the time of the new and full moon, when the sun and moon are lined up with earth.

Seeds absorb the most water at the time of the full moon, so it is best to plant at this time to take advantage of the tidal forces. Generally you should try to avoid planting exactly on a new moon or full moon day, because the influences are somewhat confused as the tides turn.

During the increasing moon, from the new moon to the full moon, plant annual crops that bear above ground. The first quarter is best for plants that produce seed outside the fruit (lettuce), the second quarter is best for plants that produce seeds inside (pepper, tomatoes, cukes), although you can plant in either the first or second quarter. When the moon is decreasing, especially in the week just after the full moon, plant root crops, bulbs, perennials and biennials.

The Signs of the Zodiac

The second factor is the astrological sign the moon is traveling through, which changes every few days. Different signs are associated with the elements of earth, air, fire, and water. In general, the fertile water signs are preferred by many plants; root crops like earth signs, and flowers especially like the air sign of Libra. The fire signs are barren, good for harvesting, cultivating and destroying pests.

By Caren Catterall © 2010

In between signs the moon is “void of course”, which is a good time for no action. Take a break and enjoy the fruits (and vegetables!) of your labors.

Plants sown in the correct combination of the best phase and sign show increased vigor, due to the preferred timing and influences. They sprout more quickly, grow at an optimum rate, and are not as prone to setbacks that would affect less healthy plants. Harvests are larger, and crops don't go to seed as fast.

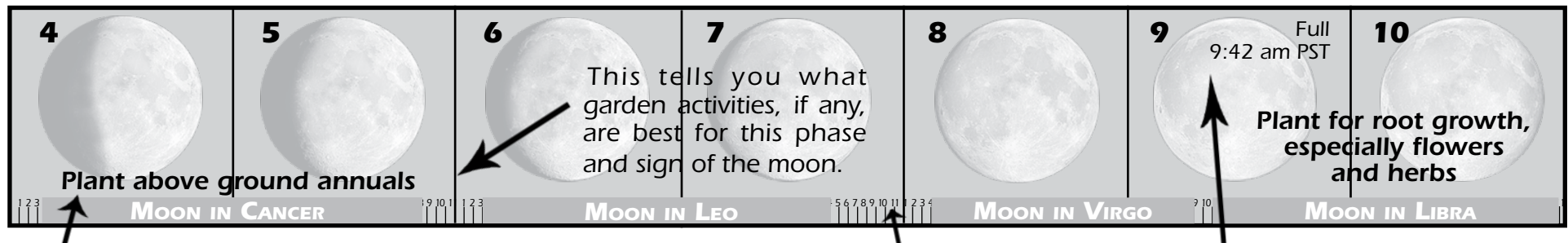
Other Considerations

Stay attuned to the seasons. This guide has been set up to recommend planting when the best phase and sign are together, geared to your own frost dates. Don't be afraid to plant beyond the usual times if it looks mild, or to use row covers and cold frames to extend the season. The planting lists are general recommendations only, and may not be appropriate for your local microclimates, or the weather may indicate that you should wait. The symbol ❄️ is used to indicate that you should plant hardy plants suitable to your winter, or with frost protection. You can start seeds inside under lights or in a greenhouse in late winter and have them ready to go in the ground when springtime temperatures are right.

Sometimes you just can't plant at the perfect time. It may be more important to plant before a storm comes, before it is too late in the season, or the maturity of the plant. Please use your own best judgement, considering all the factors.

All normal gardening practices, such as soil quality and the temperature preferences of specific plants still apply, and in fact are probably more important. It has been noted that lunar gardening works better in non-chemically treated soil, so feed your soil well, and in return it will feed you.

Work with the forces of nature to get the most from your garden!



The gray bar shows what sign the moon is in, and approximately what time of day the transit takes place. Black vertical lines mark one hour, reading like a time line (with a.m. to the left and p.m. to the right). In this example the moon enters Cancer at 3:35

Moon Void-of-Course.
Take a break. Enjoy the fruits (and vegetables!) of your labor.

Shows the daily phases of the moon, including the time of the new and full moon.

For more information go to www.gardeningbythemoon.com