

MAY

Let's Grow Together



LESSON PLAN #3

Welcome to the third lesson of the Junior Garden Club!

This month we will learn about the last frost and how to plan your garden around it. We will also learn how to track the growth of our plants.

Check Your Seedlings

Check in on your seedlings! What have you planted so far? Do they look different from when you first planted them? They should be sprouted by now. Take a picture of your seedlings and send it in on our website to be featured on our social media!

<https://www.agricultureforlife.ca/juniorgardenclub>

If you missed the March and April lesson plans, it is not too late to start! Both lesson plans can be downloaded off of our website.



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The last frost and transplanting seedlings:

The last frost date is the expected date of the last freeze in the spring. After the last frost date, the temperatures should be warm enough to put your plants outside in your garden.

In Calgary, the last frost date is between May 11–20. You can check the last frost date for your area by looking on the internet! You can use this link from the Old Farmer's Almanac to find your last frost date: <https://www.almanac.com/gardening/frostdates>

The process of putting your seedlings outside into the garden is called “transplanting.” However, before the seedlings are completely transplanted, they first need to get used to being outside. This is done by a process called “hardening off.” This means that you gradually bring the seedlings from the nice, warm inside environment, to the harsher conditions of the garden outside. It takes a few days to successfully harden off your seedlings.



How to harden off your seedlings:

1. Take your seedlings outside and place them in a partially shaded location for a couple of hours. Seedlings can get sunburnt just like you, so it is important to shelter them from direct sunlight while they adjust. They need to be sheltered from wind too, though gradual exposure to a light breeze will help to strengthen their stem. Do this for a couple of days.
2. Start to place the seedlings in a location with more sunlight. This time you can leave them outside for a few more hours.
3. Slowly expose your seedlings to more sunlight for longer amounts of time.
4. After 3-5 days, leave the seedlings outside overnight. Place them in a protected area.
5. After a couple of nights outside, your seedlings should be strong enough on their own to go into the garden!

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How to transplant your seedlings:

1. Choose an area that gets a lot of sunlight to plant your seedlings.
2. Carefully get your seedlings out of the container they are in.
3. Make sure the soil is loose. Dig a hole the same size as the soil mass underneath the seedling.
4. Put the seedling into the soil and gently firm down the soil with your hands.
5. If necessary, provide protection from pests. Cover seedlings if there are strong winds so they don't get damaged.

Watch this video on how to transplant your seeds to bigger pots:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOADo_ak0Mc

Watch this video for tips on how to avoid mistakes when transplanting your seedlings:

<https://youtu.be/cFSrVhV1vf4?t=318>

Activity: Garden Markers

As you transplant your seedlings, don't forget to mark what you're growing with some garden markers! Use popsicle sticks, rocks, or anything else that you might have lying around to mark what you are growing in your garden. Use a sharpie to write or draw what you are planting.

Garden marker inspiration: <https://www.agricultureforlife.ca/post/diy-garden-markers>

To download the March and April lesson plans and to register for future lessons, make sure to sign up for the Junior Garden Club on our website: <https://www.agricultureforlife.ca/juniorgardenclub>.

In June, you will start receiving weekly updates on how to grow and take care of your plants!

Find more information on our Junior Garden Club [HERE](#).

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References:

Veseys—Canada Hardiness Zones <https://www.veseys.com/ca/canada-hardiness-zones-frost-dates>

The Old Farmer's Almanac—Frost Dates for Calgary, AB
<https://www.almanac.com/gardening/frostdates/AB/Calgary>

West Coast Seeds—Hardening off Seedlings, 2018
<https://www.westcoastseeds.com/blogs/garden-wisdom/hardening-off-seedlings>

The Spruce—How to Harden off Plants, 2021
<https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-harden-off-plants-1402554>

Natria—Harden-off Seedlings Before Planting
<https://www.natria.com/learn/edible-gardening/harden-seedlings-planting>

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