



GROWING GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH EASTERN ALBERTA



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Sunday, July 13!

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for SE Alberta

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About our organization

CFCA's Growing Gardeners Newsletter aims to support gardeners of all experience levels in Medicine Hat and area. To sign up for our mailing list, email CFCAGarden@gmail.com.



Bug Curious

Learn about some of the insects that may be visiting the garden at different times of the year

LEAFMINERS

One of the earliest, and easiest, crops to harvest from the garden is greens, like spinach and Swiss chard. But we are not the only ones eager to munch on these tender leaves; leafminers are likely eyeing these plants as you read this! If you've ever wondered what the yellow or brown trails meandering across a leaf's surface were from, this article is for you. Leafminers are not one species of insect, like a striped flea beetle (*Phyllotreta striolata*). The name refers to a number of insects that cause similar damage to leaves. They can be from several groups of insects, including moths, sawflies and flies. We will be addressing the two species of most concern for gardeners: the spinach leafminer and the vegetable leafminer.

Both the spinach leafminer (*Pegomya hyoscyami*) and the vegetable leafminer (*Liomyza sativae*) are small flies (6mm and 1.5mm respectively). They both lay eggs on the underside of leaves, though they have different preferences. These eggs are usually in rows or groupings, and are tiny white, cylindrical, and rice-like in appearance. Upon hatching, the larvae chew their way in between the upper and lower leaf surfaces, creating tunnels or mines as they go.

As with all pests in the garden, **the action we take should be balanced** with the severity of the problem and should **consider effects on the broader ecosystem**.

Some things to consider:

- Leafminer damage is unsightly, but **rarely causes serious harm** or kills a plant.
- They live only 2-3 weeks, limiting the extent of their damage.
- Spraying with insecticide is unlikely to be effective because the larvae are between the layers of the leaf, and thus protected.

With this in mind, the best strategy is a simple one:

- Regularly **monitor** susceptible plants for eggs and leafminer damage.
- Remove and destroy damaged leaves (in case there are still eggs or larvae inside of them).
- **Control weeds** that are also host plants for leafminers, like lambsquarter.
- Consider covering vulnerable crops with insect netting.



If leafminers are a recurring problem, rotate where their target crops are being grown in the garden and **cover with insect netting** as early as possible. This will hopefully exclude pupae that may be overwintering in the soil where these crops were last grown.



Intro to Ground Cover

Protect and promote healthy soil, prevent erosion and outcompete weeds by incorporating a ground cover in the garden.

Responsible gardeners are **stewards of the soil**, striving to create a healthy, balanced ecosystem underground to support plant growth. One way to accomplish this is ground cover, a perennial species (or combinations of species) that creates a **living layer of protection**. These low-growing plants (less than 30 cm) typically spread slowly on their own either underground or above-ground via stolons, rhizomes, etc.. Unlike bare soil or turfgrass, they can be **beautiful, fragrant, produce edible leaves/fruit, support pollinators**, and more. When properly planted and maintained, ground covers should grow densely enough to **out compete weeds** while preventing erosion from wind and rain.

Whether the intention is to find an alternative to lawn, fill out a perennial bed or frame a pathway with a little more green, we want to **consider the site** when deciding which ground cover will work best. The **amount of sun** an area receives throughout the day will determine which ground cover plants are best suited to the area. Most ground covers will not do well with any significant foot traffic, so avoid planting in areas where people will be walking or playing regularly, or consider making a path of stepping stones/tiles to minimize damage.

Remove any existing weeds by pulling/digging. No ground cover will out compete invasive species like Creeping Bellflower (*Campanula rapunculoides*), which requires a serious intervention for eradication. **Amend the soil** with a couple of inches of organic matter like compost or aged manure. Starting with plugs (small seedlings) can reduce the time it takes for slow-growing ground cover species to fill in. Others can be started from direct seeding into the soil.

One of my favorite low-maintenance ground covers is **wild strawberry** (*Fragaria virginiana*). They do produce edible fruit, though these are smaller than what we are used to finding at the grocery store. The lovely white flowers support pollinators and plants spread easily season after season without becoming invasive. Other top choices would be **creeping thyme** (*Thymus serpyllum*) which produces lovely purple flowers and smells great, or hens & chicks (*Sempervivum* spp) or stonecrop (*Sedum* spp) for drier/xeriscaped areas. There are some great native species that can be used as ground cover as well, including **kinnikinnik** (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) for slopes and shadier areas, **creeping juniper** (*Juniperus horizontalis*) so a low-growing evergreen or pussy toes (*Antennaria* spp) for their beautiful blue-grey foliage and pinkish flowers.

The City of Calgary has some great recommendations for converting lawn to alternative ground covers. Check out their website at <https://www.calgary.ca/water/programs/lawn-alternatives-and-groundcovers.html>.

EVENTS



MEDICINE HAT & DISTRICT
**HORTICULTURAL
ASSOCIATION**

Annual Garden Tour

Sunday, July 13 , 2025

featuring local gardens

12 noon to 5:00 pm

Tickets \$10 each (cash only)

Now on Sale at:

**Blondie's Gift & Garden
Windmill Garden Centre
Tourist Information Centre
Redcliff Public Library**

**Visit www.medhathort.ca or
@MedHatHort on FB for more info**

GARDEN PLANNER



2025 ZONE 3/4

Vegetable	Method	Indoor Start		Transplant Out		Direct Sow		Min. Soil	Days to	
		Dates		Dates		Dates		Temp	Maturity	
		Earliest	Latest	max	min	max	min	(Celsius)	min	max
Beans (bush)	DS	x	x	x	x	May 20	July 1	15	50	60
Beans (pole)	DS	x	x	x	x	May 20	July 1	15	60	70
Beans (drying)	DS	x	x	x	x	May 20	July 1	15	90	100
Beets	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	June 24	5	50	70
Broccoli	Trans	March 11	March 25	April 29	May 6	x	x	5	60	100
Brussels Sprouts	Trans	April 8	April 22	April 29	May 6	x	x	5	100	180
Cabbage	Trans	March 11	March 25	April 22	April 22	x	x	5	70	100
Carrot	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	June 24	10	60	80
Cauliflower	Trans	March 25	April 8	May 6	June 3	x	x	5	60	120
Celery (stalks)	Trans	February 26	March 11	May 13	June 3	x	x	5	130	140
Celery (root)	Trans	March 11	March 25	May 13	June 3	x	x	5	100	150
Corn	DS	x	x	x	x	May 27	June 24	15	70	105
Cucumber (pckl)	Trans+DS	April 22	April 29	May 27	June 3	May 27	June 17	15	55	65
Cucumber (slice)	Trans+DS	April 22	April 29	May 27	June 3	May 27	June 17	15	55	65
Eggplant	Trans	March 25	April 8	June 3	June 10	x	x	15	100	140
Kale / Collards	Trans+DS	April 8	April 22	April 22	May 13	April 22	July 29	5	55	75
Kohlrabi	Trans	April 8	April 22	April 29	May 13	x	x	5	55	70
Leeks	Trans	March 11	March 25	April 22	June 3	x	x	5	120	150
Lettuce (head)	Trans+DS	April 1	April 15	April 22	May 20	April 22	April 29	10	40	80
Lettuce (leaf)	Trans+DS	April 1	April 15	April 22	May 20	April 22	April 29	10	40	80
Melon	Trans	April 22	April 29	June 3	June 10	x	x	20	70	130
Okra	Trans	April 15	April 29	June 10	May 20	x	x	15	50	65
Onion (dry)	Trans	March 11	March 25	June 17	May 13	x	x	10	100	120
Onion (green)	Trans+DS	April 8	May 6	May 6	June 3	May 6	July 1	10	40	60
Parsnip	DS	x	x	x	x	May 6	June 3	10	110	130
Peas	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	May 27	5	55	85
Peppers (hot)	Trans	March 11	March 25	June 3	June 17	x	x	15	80	100
Peppers (sweet)	Trans	March 11	March 25	June 3	June 17	x	x	15	60	90
Potato	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	May 13	10	90	130
Radish	DS	x	x	x	x	April 8	June 3	5	45	70
Shallot	Trans	March 11	March 25	April 22	May 13	x	x	10	90	120
Spinach	DS	x	x	x	x	April 8	May 27	5	45	60
Squash / Pumpkin	Trans+DS	April 22	April 29	May 13	June 3	May 13	June 10	15	85	120
Swiss Chard	Trans+DS	April 8	April 22	May 20	June 3	April 22	June 24	5	50	75
Tomatillo	Trans	March 25	April 8	June 3	June 10	x	x	15	75	100
Tomato (cherry)	Trans	March 25	April 8	May 20	June 10	x	x	15	65	75
Tomato (paste)	Trans	March 25	April 8	May 20	June 10	x	x	15	70	90
Tomato (slicing)	Trans	March 25	April 8	May 20	June 10	x	x	15	80	95
Turnip	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	June 3	5	45	70
Zucchini	Trans+DS	April 29	May 6	May 13	June 3	May 13	June 24	15	50	70

DS = Direct Sow

Trans = Transplant (start indoors or buy seedlings)

x = does not apply

ABOUT CFCA AND GARDEN CLUB

2025 will be our 4th year offering Growing Gardeners Education Program, CFCA's free garden club. We are excited to continue to provide ecologically-responsible advice and the opportunity for gardeners of all experience levels to learn from one another in Medicine Hat. We are tremendously grateful to be able to host garden club at the Root Cellar Food & Wellness Hub, where we help to maintain the community access garden located behind the building. Follow us on social media (FB + IG) for updates about Growing Gardeners and other CFCA programs. To sign-up for our mailing list, and have this newsletter delivered straight to your inbox, email CFCAgarden@gmail.com.



Growing Gardener's is a **free, hands-on garden club** hosted by CFCA from April to September. Join us as we cover different topics for growing health, delicious food in our climate. Registration is not required. Children are welcome if accompanied by an adult.



**WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 9,
23, 30 @ 7:00 PM**

**BEHIND THE ROOT CELLAR,
440 MAPLE AVE. SE**



ABOUT COMMUNITY FOOD CONNECTIONS ASSOCIATION (CFCA)

Community Food Connections Association is a non-profit organization based in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Launched in 2003, we have been working to support food security in the community through education, programming, partnerships and policy support for improvements in food, nutrition, health and local agriculture.



[@COMMUNITYFOODCONNECTIONS](https://www.facebook.com/COMMUNITYFOODCONNECTIONS)



Our programs include the Good Food Club, Community Kitchens, the Local Food & Producers Directory, Medicine Hat Community Gardens, and Growing Gardeners Education Program. To find out more, head over to our website, FoodConnections.ca, or social media accounts:

[@CFCA MH](https://www.instagram.com/CFCA_MH)

