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LANDSCAPES FOR A CHANGING WORLD

PLANT WITH THE CYCLES OF THE MOON! (OR NOT.)

By NATE DOWNEY

By shrinking the Moon to the size of a grapefruit, Gru, the evil-but-lovable protagonist in the new movie *Despicable Me*, wants to be the greatest villain ever. In the plot, as in gardening, timing is essential. Today, even though the Moon is in its fourth-quarter “resting phase,” I plan to spend 10 minutes sowing a few fall crops: carrots (Chantenay, 70 days, and Lady Finger, 60 days), radishes (24 days), and a mix of micro greens (25 days).

Some gardeners swear by the positive effects of planting according to the phases of the Moon. I’ve had success with this planting style. Leafy greens (and other crops that produce seed outside of the fruit) are sown and/or transplanted during the new-moon phase, annual crops that grow with their seeds inside the fruit go in during the second quarter, and root crops get planted in the third quarter as the full moon starts to wane.

(More info here <http://www.gardeningbythemoon.com/phases.html>.)

My problem is that even though the carrots themselves can be stored in the ground in the winter, they must go in soon in order to beat the first frost of the season. Since the greens and radishes are shorter lived, they could go in later with a more auspicious moon phase, but for three reasons I’m planting some of my seeds right now:

- 1) I’m planning a little experiment to see if the cycles of the Moon affect yields. Since there are so many other factors that could be at work in the garden, I don’t expect final proof of the effectiveness of moon-cycle planting, but it’s always fun to try.
- 2) We want fresh greens and radishes in late summer, through the fall, and even into the winter, so we figure that we should plant early and often.
- 3) In this day and age, one can never be sure if your schedule will be uprooted and all of your great plans to get stuff done in the garden will fall apart, so if I don’t get out and plant today, I might blow the fall-crop plan completely!

Stay tuned!

