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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Lunar Planting: the best Lunar Phase and Sign for Increased Vigor

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ABSTRACT:

Moon phase gardening is an idea as old as agriculture, popular in folklore and superstition, but there are scientific ideas to back it up. The Earth is in a large gravitational field, influenced by both the sun and moon. The tides are highest at the time of the new and the full moon, when sun and moon are lined up with earth. Just as the moon pulls the tides in the oceans, it also pulls upon the subtle bodies of water, causing moisture to rise in the earth, which encourages growth. The highest amount of moisture is in the soil at this time, and tests have proven that seeds will absorb the most water at the time of the full moon. Planting by the phases of the moon will keep in rhythm with the alternating gravitational pull. Moon phase gardening considers four phases or quarters lasting about seven days each. The first two quarters are during the waxing or increasing light, from the new moon and growing up to the full moon. The cycles of the moon have influenced gardeners from diverse cultures over many centuries. While science may not fully understand why planting by the moon works, anecdotal evidence suggests that it does. Permaculture co-originator David Holmgren's writes "good design depends on a free and harmonious relationship to nature and people, in which careful observation and thoughtful interaction provide the design inspiration, repertoire and patterns." Observing the cycles of the moon and the way that it affects both people and plants can help to determine when to plant in order to improve our health and yield from our garden activities.

KEYWORDS:

INTRODUCTION:

Why Lunar Planting?

Why lunar planting? Plants sown in the correct combination of the best lunar phase and sign show increased vigor, due to having all the best influences. They are growing at an optimum rate and are not as prone to setbacks that would affect less healthy plants. Harvests are often quicker, larger and crops don't go to seed as fast¹.

What is a Lunar Gardening Calendar Based on?

Isaac Newton established the laws of gravity, which proves the tides are affected by the gravitational pull of the moon. The pull of the moon is stronger than the sun because, even though the sun is larger, the moon is closer to the earth. The strongest effect is felt when the moon and sun pull from the opposite sides of the earth, at the full moon phase, although it also creates high tides when they are on the same side (at the new moon) as well².



Gravitational Effect

“The gravitation of the passing moon pulls the nearest body of water a little away from the solid mass of earth beneath it, and at the same time pulls the earth a little away from the water on the farthest side. In this manner the moon sets up two tidal bulges on opposite sides of the earth.” –Louise Riotte.

These same forces affect the water content of the soil, creating more moisture in the soil at the time of the new and full moon. This increased moisture encourages the seeds to sprout and grow. A lunar gardening calendar that combines the best moon phase and sign together will help you achieve optimum results.

Ute York, in her book “Living by the Moon” says: “*The old-time gardeners say, “With the waxing of the moon, the earth exhales.” Thus, you should do all activities with plants that bear fruit above ground during a waxing moon. With the waning of the moon, the earth inhales. Then, the sap primarily goes down toward the roots. Thus, the waning moon is a good time for pruning, multiplying, fertilizing, watering, harvesting, and controlling parasites and weeds*”³.

Table No. 1 Research on Lunar Planting³⁻⁷

Sr. No.	Name of Scientist	Research Details
1	Dr. Frank Brown of Northwestern University	Performed research over a ten-year period of time, keeping meticulous records of his results. He found that plants absorbed more water at the time of the full moon. He conducted his experiments in a laboratory without direct contact from the moon, yet he found that they were still influenced by gravity.
2	John Jeavons, author of “How to grow more vegetables”	Performed research on the increasing or decreasing moonlight on the growth of plants. When the moon is in its waxing phases the “increasing amount of moonlight stimulates leaf growth”, and “as the moonlight decreases the above ground leaf growth slows down. The root is stimulated again.”
3	Dr. Kolisko and by Maria Thun	They primarily experimented with root crops, showing the effect of lunar phases on seed germination. They found maximum germination on the days before the Full moon. Crop yields were reported by weight. Thun was surprised to discover that the signs of the zodiac played its’ part as well. Thun experimented with a variety of crops: carrots and parsnips represented root crops; lettuce, spinach and corn salad as leaf types; beans, peas, cucumbers and tomatoes as fruit seed types; zinnias, snapdragons and asters were air crops. Crops responded well when planted in the appropriate sign for their type of plant.
4	There were some exceptions	Some plants seemed to favor signs other than what would appear to be logical; for instance the brassica family, (broccoli, cauliflower, etc.) which one might consider flowering types, seemed to favor water signs. Cucumbers sown on leaf days had strong leafy growth, but did not produce many flowers. Their tests also seemed to indicate that responses to lunar planting were heightened when planted in organic soil that had not been treated with chemical fertilizer or pesticides.

Why are some signs fertile and some are barren?

Rudolf Steiner was the founder of the anthroposophical movement, which sees a correlation between science, nature, universal laws and spiritual concerns. Out of this movement the bio-dynamic methods of planting were developed. He established a relationship between the elements of earth, air, fire, or water that corresponded to specific parts of the plants.

Earth corresponds to root, water to leaf growth, fire to seed and fruit production, and air corresponds to flowers. Hence, when planting crops for their fleshy roots, you would plant them in an earth sign, and so forth.

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