Planting By Moon Phase: Fact or Fiction?

By Heather Rhoades

Farmer’s Almanacs and old wives tales are filled with advice about planting by phases of the moon. According to this advice on planting by moon cycles, a gardener should plant things in the following way:

- **First quarter moon cycle (new moon to half full)** – Things that are leafy, like [lettuce](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[1], [cabbage](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[2] and [spinach](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[3], should be planted.
- **Second quarter moon cycle (half full to full moon)** – Planting time for things that have seeds inside, like [tomatoes](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[4], [beans](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[5] and [peppers](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[6].
- **Third quarter moon cycle (full moon to half full)** – Things that grow underground or plants that are [perennials](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[7], like [potatoes](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[8], [garlic](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[9] and [raspberries](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[10], can be planted.
- **Fourth quarter moon cycle (half full to new moon)** – Do not plant. [Weed](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[11], mow and [kill pests](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[12] instead.

The question is, is there anything to planting by phases of the moon? Will planting before a full moon really make that much more difference than planting after a full moon?

There is no denying that the phases of the moon affect all sorts of things, like the ocean and even the land. So it would make logical sense that the moon phases would also affect the water and land that a plant was growing in.

There has been some research done on the topic of planting by moon phase. [Maria Thun](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com)[13], a biodynamic farmer, has tested planting by the moon cycles for years and claims that it does improve planting yield. Many farmers and scientists have repeated her tests on planting by phases of the moon and found the same thing.

The study of planting by phases of the moon does not stop there. Even respected universities like Northwestern University, Wichita State University and Tulane University have also found that the phase of the moon could affect plants and seeds.

So there is some evidence that planting by moon cycles can affect your garden.

Unfortunately, it is just evidence, not proven fact. Other than a few cursory studies done at a few universities, there has not been a study done that can definitively say that planting by moon phase will help the plants in your garden.

But the evidence on planting by the moon cycles is encouraging and it certainly can’t hurt to try. What do you have to lose? Maybe planting before a full moon and planting by phases of the moon really does make a difference and it can’t hurt to try.

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