

Horticulture August 2017

- **Harvest** August is often the big harvest time for tomatoes, peppers, and hot season vegetables. Harvest in the morning or evening when it is cool for best quality.
- **Don't apply pesticides** During the summer heat, avoid applying pesticides, even insecticidal soaps. If you must, apply on a cool evening.
- **Do not feed roses** Fertilizing roses should have stopped by mid July. Fungicidal sprays may be applied as necessary.
- **Feed annuals** Annuals need regular fertilizing for good bloom production, about every 4 weeks. Vegetable crops also still need regular fertilizing until harvest.
- **Feed fall bloomers** Fall blooming perennials such as Aster and mums should be fertilized regularly.
- **Deadhead** Keep deadheading the annuals for good blooming right up to frost.
- **Mulch vegetables** As you begin harvest, you are reducing the shade on the garden bed. Combined with the heat, the beds may be drying out very quickly. You may want to apply mulch around the vegetables not ready for harvest yet.
- **Watch for powdery mildew** Powdery mildew usually appears in late summer. Fungicidal sprays can be applied to susceptible plants before it attacks.
- **Water gardens** The annuals, perennials and vegetables need regular deep watering during this hot month.
- **Fill the birdbath** Fill shallow birdbaths frequently. Deep birdbaths can harbor mosquito larvae, empty the stale water and refill.
- **Prune summer bloomers** Shrubs that bloom in summer may be pruned in August. Do not hard prune as too much new growth will be produced. A light pruning to remove spent blooms and reshape the shrub is best.

- **Check containers and baskets** Container gardens, hanging baskets and window boxes dry out quickly and need frequent watering. They will also need to be fertilized regularly.
- **Lawn repair** When summer starts to cool and the soil is still good and warm, which could be mid August or early September, lawn seed or sod will establish quickly.
- **Divide perennials** Perennials that are done blooming may be divided and/or moved. The roots will have time to reestablish before frost.
- **Fertilize the lawn** Apply a winterizing fertilizer later in the month, a low nitrogen formula such as 18-0-12 ratio, to strengthen the lawn before winter without encouraging fast growth.
- **Stop feeding woody plants** Shrubs, trees and woody perennials should not be fertilized any more. They need to begin the dormancy process.
- **Dethatch** De-thatch the lawn every few years in late August if it is cooling down. September is likely better.
- **Check for grubs** Dead patches of grass may signal grub activity. If the brown patch will pull up like a loose piece of sod, you probably have grubs. If the problem is widespread or severe, treat with non toxic milky spore, or grub control chemicals. Don't worry about a small or limited problem, your lawn should recover with enough water
- **Water** Plants, shrubs, trees will need regular watering right up until frost, and diminished rainfall in autumn isn't enough. Evergreens especially need lots of water to prepare for winter since they keep their needles green all winter. To prevent needle drop and burn, make sure they get plenty of water right up until the ground freezes if you can.
- **Deep water trees** Trees and evergreens should receive a deep soaking in August and September.
- **Pick up wasp spray** Wasps and yellow jackets become a problem this month. Be prepared with sprays, but don't

bother those beneficial yellow jackets if they are not bothering you.

- **Prune climbers** Rambling roses and climbing roses can be pruned when blooming is complete.
- **Plant peonies** Plant peonies between the end of August and October.

- **Water the lawn** Growth is minimal in July and August and cool season grasses are usually dormant. Regular watering should begin again as the cooler weather revives the grass.
- **Plant perennials** The end of August and September is an excellent time to plant perennials. Days are warm and nights are cool, perfect for establishing roots.
- **Prune Oak and Walnut** By end of August through October it is safe to prune Oak and Walnut Trees. Most trees can be pruned from now until the leaves drop.
- **Lower the blade** You can begin lowering the blade on the lawn mower as temperatures cool toward the end of August. Lower slightly next month again too until you wind up mowing quite short the last time or two.
- **Relax in the shade** Fall nursery catalogs should be arriving. Sit in the shade and relax with the pile.
- **Drink water and wear sunscreen!**