



AUGUST GARDEN TIPS

Annuals

- Continue to fertilize on a regular basis – read the manufacturers' instructions.
- Make sure that they have ample water and cut off the dead flowers to make room for more flowers. If you leave the dead flowers on, the plant will turn its energy to seed production instead of flower production. If your petunias are long and straggly, cut them back by about a third and in a couple of weeks they will be putting on strong new growth.

Containers

- By now the roots may have almost filled your containers so continue to fertilize using a water soluble fertilizer.
- It may be necessary to water some containers more than once a day to keep the plants strong and growing. Be particularly watchful of hanging baskets as the sun can dry out the containers.
- Pull out any weeds and deadhead the plants for continued bloom.

Perennials

- Daylilies can be divided and transplanted this month.
- Watch your phlox beds, many phlox seedlings do not come true to the parent and these plants may disrupt your carefully planned garden design.
- Purchase chrysanthemums when they are in bud for a longer lasting show. Don't plan to plant them in the garden; they won't have time to put on sufficient roots for the winter. Enjoy them in their containers.
- If your lilacs and roses suffer from powdery mildew and black spot, maintain a regular spraying program.
- Maintain mulch in your flower beds to a depth of about two inches. Do not allow the mulch to accumulate around trees; this will kill the roots. Stop fertilizing now, so the plants mature, rather than put on new growth that will be killed by early frosts.

Vegetables

- Give your tomatoes an extra dose of nitrogen. As the plant grows it needs the additional support and a boost of nitrogen at this stage helps against early blight.
- Pick your cucumbers and zucchini when they are six to eight inches long.
- Watch for the squash vine borer which is the larvae from a moth that deposits its eggs right on the squash vine. The larvae eat into the vine causing it to collapse. You can usually find the culprit by slitting the stem and you can reach in to grab the grub. If you mound soil over the damaged vine, it will root and the plant will be none the worse.
- If it is necessary to water, do it early in the day so the foliage can dry. Wet foliage at night increases the plant's chance of getting fungal diseases.
- Herbs can sell sow prolifically so cut off the flowers regularly. Garlic chives are invasive so be particularly careful to cut off and dispose of the flower heads.
- Plant peas, lettuce, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale and oriental greens.

Tomato Tips

- Watch your tomatoes for the tomato hornworm. At the first sign of damage, spray with BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) or pick them off by hand.
- Keep tomato moisture constant. With rainfall somewhat reduced and the tomato crop coming in, prevent blossom end rot by keeping the moisture fairly constant. Use a thick layer of mulch and water the plants deeply once a week. Blossom end rot is caused by a calcium deficiency which in turn is caused by uneven watering.
- Give tomatoes an extra dose of nitrogen in August to strengthen the plants' leafy structure and to help ward off early blight.
- Tomatoes will not set fruit when the temperature goes above 90 degrees F.

Lawns

- If we have a drought you can either let the lawn go dormant, in which case it will revive just as soon as the rains come back. If you prefer to water, water once a week to a depth of one inch. Don't water a little bit at a time several times a week because this will only encourage shallow roots.
- Mid August to late September is a very good time to put down grub control. The Japanese beetle adults mate and lay their eggs in the lawn around mid August. The larvae then burrow down and start eating the plant material. Read the manufacture's instructions for the product you are using. Sometimes they call for you to water-in the product well. If you don't do this, the product is lying on top of the lawn and the grubs it is supposed to control are happily munching an inch below the surface.
- Mid August onwards is a good time to seed or repair lawns. Make sure to keep the newly seeded areas most even after the seedlings come up.

General

- Change the water in your bird bath regularly, and keep it filled. Standing water is less healthy for the birds, and may become a breeding ground for mosquito larvae. The best way to keep mosquito numbers down and reduce the risk of West Nile disease is to clean up any areas where mosquitoes can breed. Mosquitoes need water, especially stagnant or still water that's rich in organic matter for mosquito larvae to feed on. You can buy products to add to your water to kill the larvae and they usually last about 30 days before they need renewing.
- Butterflies are easy to please. They like to sunbathe, so a large flat rock exposed to the sun is a must. They also need mud baths, so set up "butterfly puddles" where they can get required salts and minerals. A dish of cut-up, overripe fruit always hits the spot.
- Hummingbirds are migrating through gardens now. Hummingbirds, for example, are attracted to red flowers, such as bee balm, although you also may wish to fill a hummingbird feeder with a sugar-water mixture. The food is available commercially, or you can make your own using one part sugar to four parts water. Use only pure, white sugar and not honey, however, because honey is lethal to these tiny birds.