



What to Do in the Garden in August

August is all about the color *Yellow*. Sunflowers have reached their max; Black-eyed Susie's are exploding, and the rusty colors of autumn are around the corner. The first tomatoes of the year are ripening. Zucchini's are probably as big as a baseball bats, and the basil (if you've pinched it well all season) is just in time for the quick mozzarella and tomato on a cracker.

The garden may seem like it's fading, but look closely: There's a whole new season of gardening left in the cool evenings of autumn to come. Here are some of the more important things that you can do:

In The Flower Garden

- ✓ Clean up fading flowers, leaves, and other brush from spent summer plants.
- ✓ Dead-head your garden's flowers for a second life: Cut back and snip off dead flowers of Salvia, Catmint, Lavender, Daylilies, Carpet Roses, and Knock Out Roses; they'll all come back to life with new flowers into the Autumn. Keep Montauk Daisies watered—they will burst into bloom at the end of August.
- ✓ Herbs benefit greatly from a good "crewcut". Basil, Oregano, Marjoram, Thyme, and other leafy herbs will pop back to life in the autumn and give you spices until frost.
- ✓ Prune old rambling roses. (Roses that bloom only once a season). They'll be stronger and bloom better next year.
- ✓ For a fabulous, showy display of Wisteria next spring, start pruning the "whippy" side shoots that come out of the main stem. Wisteria will have the most flowers in the spring when one or two main stems are allowed to grow outward and the side shoots are kept to a minimum.
- ✓ Hydrangeas: Be careful not to cut back the "old" types of hydrangeas. These types like "Nikko Blue" and other Mopheads set their flower buds for next summer now. If you prune, you lose next year's flowers. The newer varieties like the "Forever and Ever" hydrangeas can be pruned anytime. Flowers set on old AND new wood. Tree variety hydrangeas like "Peegee" and other "Paniculatas" can be pruned anytime. A hard pruning in the very early spring to the tree and "Annabelle" hydrangeas also helps develop sturdy growth and keeps the bush "flop-free".

In the Vegetable Garden

- ✓ Look carefully in your garden for fruit hiding in the foliage. Tomatoes are reddening, and cucumbers are getting fat; they tend to get lost and rot in the big, leafy garden.
- ✓ Pull out spent zucchini plants. Pick zucchini often when it's the most tender-: at about 6 inches long.
- ✓ Clean the garden of old bean, pea, and lettuce plants. Rake the old foliage into the beds to nourish it for a quick planting of lettuce, and the last crop of beans and radishes.
- ✓ Start sowing seeds of lettuce directly in the garden for a cool autumn crop. The cooler nights encourage the healthy growth of lettuce as well as arugula, romaine, bibb lettuces, spinach, and the Chinese "Choi" vegetables. Get a head start and put in cool crop seedlings that have been started for you. Cilantro, Parsley, Onions, and Broccoli love the cool weather, and will grow well into the cold, crisp days of autumn.

Keep the Bird Food and Hummingbird Food Coming

Don't worry; your birds won't get dependent on you if you put out food. It just helps them add to their regular diet. Give yourself a daily dose of joy and keep the seed, suet and water available to the birds. You'll come to find that the best assortment of birds will come to YOUR house if you offer them the basics of food and water.

- ✓ Suet hung out in a cage will attract insect-eating birds like Mockingbirds, Woodpeckers, Chickadees and Starlings. Once attracted to your yard, they will forage in the ground for harmful insect larvae like Japanese Beetles.
- ✓ The Hummingbirds will come until their inner clock and the waning light of day cues them in to traveling on back down to Central America. Leave the nectar feeder out. It will give them energy for the long, 2,000-mile hike ahead

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