



## WHAT TO DO: THE GARDEN IN JULY

The season is in full swing. The severe early heat this year has had an effect on our gardens. More water is needed, as well as more care and attention. Your flower and vegetable garden can perk up from the oppressive early heat if you take a little care and follow a few easy tips. Don't get frustrated in the hot, mid-summer weather. Enjoy your garden and go with the flow!

### The Flower Garden

- **Water, water water!** Plants take a big hit in the humidity and high heat. Remember to water in the early morning or late afternoon to prevent rapid evaporation. Watering at night just promotes disease in your garden. Try to keep your sprinkler system from soaking plants for a long period of time.
- Hanging baskets, pots and urns lose a lot of water in the heat and summer winds. Check for water everyday by weight and feel. Putting  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the suggested amount of **Miracle Gro Bud and Bloom** in a gallon of water. Every time you water, your potted plants will get nourishment. This will keep the flowers coming and the plant healthy.
- **Replenish** your flowers and fill in holes and blank spots. All flowers take a hit in the heat. Filling in with new annuals and perennials will keep your garden refreshed and up to date with the plants of the season.
- Now is the time to keep on top of **dead-heading** spent flowers. A little effort once or twice a week removing dead flowers and stems will encourage more, fresh growth and keep your plants looking clean and tidy. Don't be afraid to cut back hanging plants. Regrowth will start immediately and the plant will look better than ever in a couple of weeks. Perennials past their bloom period benefit greatly from a good "cut back". Side shoots grow on most perennials and form more flowers.
- Keep an eye out for pests on plants. Summer heat brings on the most voracious of insects. Spraying with a systemic spray like **Bayer 3 in One** will protect flowers and Roses from insects *and* disease.

- **Roses.** Repeat blooming roses suffer a bit in our northeastern summer heat and humidity. Fungus and insects take advantage of this. *Ortho Rose Care* is a good solution for monthly spraying. Removing dead rose blooms helps roses keep on blooming. Remember to keep fertilizing monthly with a good fertilizer such as *Rose Tone*.
- Time to prune. Don't be a wimpy pruner! Plants like **Roses, Wisteria Vines, Viburnum** and other spring blooming perennials respond beautifully to a good mid-summer prune. Pruning back Montauk Daisies, Chrysanthemums, Autumn blooming Clematis and other fall-blooming shrubs and flowers benefit greatly from a prune before July 4.

### The Vegetable Garden

- **Vining vegetables** such as cucumbers, beans, pumpkins, melons and gourds need a good support to climb on by this time. Letting them sprawl on the ground is ok too if there is a good, clean mulch underneath. Twine or netting is good for supporting these vigorous growing vines. Pinching off a few long shoots on your pumpkin and gourd plants helps create bigger and fatter fruit.
- **Tomatoes.** Keep on fertilizing once a month. Pinching back the side suckers (between the main stem and a shoot) helps keep the tomato plant vigorous and the sugars flowing into the fruit where it should be. Keeping your tomato plants consistently moist (no severe dry-outs) will go a long way to preventing bottom end rot.
- **Start pinching herbs back.** **Cilantro** does poorly in the heat, and is happy when planted in part shade and pinched back often. Basil needs to be pinched and USED often to keep it vigorous for the huge tomato crop to come. Start freezing and/or drying your herbs for winter use. A tip from our Sean in the kitchen: Herbs do great frozen in ice cube trays of pure butter. The fat in the butter preserves the flavor. In winter, just pop a few "herb cubes" into a frying pan or pot, and cook what you want!
- Pick your **Beans** often! Letting beans rot on the plant prevents other fresh beans from forming. **Peas, tomatoes, cucumbers and squash** like the same treatment. The more you pick, the more you will get from your plant.
- **Strawberries.** "Peg" (hold against the ground with a large garden staple or wire) the strawberry runners down. They will take root and make new plants for next year.
- **Fruit Trees.** Prune back your **plum, apricot, peach and cherry trees** now. Pruning these fruit trees now will help prevent disease from forming.
- **Weeding.** The weeds are partying hard now in your garden. Keep on top of them. Weeds fight with your flowers and vegetable plants for water and nutrients. A good mulch of **Bumper Crop**, hay, plastic or mown grass goes a long way in preventing weed growth.

- Maximize your **Fig** crop. Pinch off the tips of the side shoots when your fig plant develops 5 leaves.
- **Netting** helps prevent birds and other critters from getting into your garden's bounty. Keep on spraying with **Deer Stopper** and **Rabbit Stopper** regularly. **Epsoma's Blood Meal** has been known to deter animals as well. Scatter some around the edge of your garden to deter hungry rabbits, groundhogs and deer.

For specific problems see the plant experts at Sickles market, your source for  
'Everything Gardening'

**Happy July Gardening!**