

Tips for the Landscape and Garden

Tips adapted from Bob Westerfield, State Consumer Horticulturist for the University of Georgia Cooperative Extension Service, and Walter Reeves, Retired Extension agent for DeKalb County and Saturday Morning Gardening Show Host on WSB Radio.



Well decomposed compost is an excellent soil amendment. One to three inches of compost applied to the soil surface and incorporated into the top 10 inches will result in a 10 percent to 30 percent increase in organic matter.

If top dressing plants with fresh compost be sure to keep 2-3" back from plant stems to avoid stem rot and vole damage.

When watering roses, avoid using lawn sprinklers or other overhead irrigation devices that wet the foliage and encourage leaf diseases. A soil-soaker hose placed under the mulch is ideal. Drip or trickle irrigation kits are also excellent irrigation systems for rose plantings. At the least, hand water around the base of the plant when needed.

Roses are heavy feeders during the growing season. Feed every 4-6 weeks (read directions) and choosing a plant food with systemic insecticide and fungicide helps reduce black spot and insect damage.

Deadhead roses and other perennials to encourage repeat blooms.

Junipers do not tolerate heavy pruning because new growth will not develop on old wood. Junipers can be tip

pruned and thinned, but not cut back to large limbs. Pruning out old, dead foliage underneath creeping junipers will often contribute to better air circulation and better health of the plant. Feed and mulch to reduce stress in summer.

To achieve a longer season of blooms, choose a variety of daylilies: some begin to bloom in early June, some mid-June, late June, early July, etc. Also look for repeat blooming varieties – feed and water for lots of extra blooms.

Prune overgrown *Hydrangea macrophylla* immediately after flowering.

If spring flowering shrubs require pruning, do so immediately after flowering or by mid-June to avoid cutting off next year's buds which start developing by the end of June.

Under dry conditions, some trees may lose up to 10 percent of their leaves. This helps reduce the amount of water trees lose by transpiration (water vapor loss).

Now is the time to monitor your trees and shrubs for Japanese beetles. Adults lay their eggs in July and August and are common on susceptible hosts (weakened plants). The use of milky spore disease (*Bacillus popilliae*) for Japanese beetle control is most effective in neighborhoods where most residents use it. Otherwise, Japanese beetle larvae hatching in other yards will re-infest your property. Do not add Japanese beetle traps to your yard – you are inviting adult beetles into your area.

If rain is lacking, practice water-wise horticultural techniques. Determine which plants are most important and water them first. Water plants early in the day through drip irrigation or handheld hose with shut-off nozzle. Re-apply mulch to plantings to help

conserve moisture. Allow lawns to go dormant; they will green up again when rain returns.

Continue to remove weeds which compete for water. Continue to stake floppy plants and vines.

Deadhead annuals and perennials to encourage continuous bloom and cut back any rampant growth. Remove any fallen leaves and debris which can harbor insect pests and disease organisms.

Assess areas in the garden which may need additional planting. Prepare a landscape plan for fall planting of trees and shrubs. Continue to take garden notes and / or photographs to plan future plantings. Pots of colorful annuals can fill in blank spots until fall planting time.

Turf: Remove weeds before they set seed. De-thatch and aerate warm season lawns to promote root growth if soil has become compacted.

Continue to turn and moisten compost pile to speed decomposition. Start a second pile so new material will not slow the processes in the current pile.

Lace bugs feed on azaleas, pyracantha, and other woody plants, causing a gray, blanched, or stippled appearance on the upper surface of the leaves. Take steps to control them as soon as you notice the damage. Be sure to get insecticide under the leaves as this is where the bugs are to be found.

Mid-to-late June is an excellent time to take softwood cuttings of shrubs to start new plants. Some shrubs to consider propagating in this manner are spirea, boxwood, and azalea.

Caladiums need generous amounts of water and fertilizer to encourage continuous production of new leaves during the summer. Apply a light, side dressing of 5-10-5 fertilizer every two – three weeks, and water thoroughly to encourage bright-colored foliage.

Collect seeds from foxgloves and other spring flowers that have finished blooming for the season. Scatter and scratch into the soil in areas you would like new plants. Keep watered so this year's seedlings will be next summer's blooms.

This is a good time to set up slug traps: the hollowed-out rind of a melon placed face down near hostas and other plants will provide a hiding place during the heat

of the day. Check every couple of days during mid-day for slugs – scrape them into a bucket of soapy water.

If you planted trees in the fall and staked them, it is time to remove the guy wires and let your tree stand on its own roots. Gentle movements of the trunk in light winds strengthen the whole tree and its root system as it grows.

If you have not already mulched the vegetable garden do it now. Lay 3-4 layers of newspaper or cut up cardboard sheets over the soil and cover with 2-3 inches of mulch. Remember to keep mulch 2-3 inches away from the plant stem. The paper blocks light and prevents weeds from sprouting or growing. The mulch and paper help keep soil moist during the hotter days of summer.

Pick ripening veggies often so the plant will continue to produce. One large ripe fruit will stop the entire plant from blooming.

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