

August Garden Activities from Your Master Gardener Extension Volunteers

Trees and Shrubs - Prune overgrown blueberries after harvest. Shorten tall central stems to encourage more horizontal branches.

Rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias prefer acidic soils. Discarded coffee grounds and tea leaves added to the soil around these plants can provide a natural means of maintaining soil acidity.

If trees and shrubs need pruning, only lightly prune them early this month so new growth will have time to mature before cold weather arrives.

Remove crape myrtle seedpods as soon as they form to encourage late summer bloom.

Fertilize roses with 10-10-10 fertilizer, 1 tablespoon per foot of height.

Cut faded blooms from your roses so your plant's energy will be directed to producing new flowers instead of seeds.

Vegetables - Summer heat may cause some of the blooms on your vegetable plants to drop. The plants will hold blooms again once the weather is cooler. To reduce some of the effects of the heat, apply a three-inch layer of mulch around the plants and water regularly.

Cucumbers and squash can still be planted. It is too late for corn, lima beans, okra, pole beans, and tomatoes this season because they will not have enough time to mature before cold weather.

Plant garlic In August for harvest early next summer.

Test your soil now and you will have time to improve it, if necessary, before next spring's planting season. Your County Extension Agent has soil testing instructions.

Plan your fall vegetable garden now: collards, kale, mustard, spinach, beets, onions, turnips, broccoli, and radishes. Plant mid-to-late August.

Water plants several hours before applying insecticides so the insecticide will not burn them. When applying insecticides, always follow label directions.

To prevent insect and disease problems in your vegetable garden, remove plants when they have finished bearing.

Harvest squash, okra, and cucumbers regularly so your plants will continue producing. Use a sharp knife with a narrow blade to avoid damaging the plant.

Remove weeds before they make seeds.

Begin propagating outdoor herb plantings for an indoor winter herb garden.

Flowerbeds - Cut back annuals, such as begonias, petunias, impatiens, and geraniums when they get “leggy”. Water them well and lightly fertilize. This will encourage compact growth and more blooms in about three weeks.

If your clematis vine has turned completely brown, do not dig it up. Prune out dead stems and leave them alone and it may sprout new growth next spring.

If your older peony plants had diminished flowers this past spring, dig, separate, and replant them.

Brighten up your hanging baskets by clipping out dead leaves and flowers and fertilizing with a slow-release fertilizer. Water regularly and replace any plants that have died with new plants.

Begin planting fall blooming bulbs.

Remove faded bedding plants from your garden and re-seed with marigolds, cosmos and zinnias to provide color during the fall months.

Fertilize chrysanthemums and fall blooming asters regularly until the buds show color.

Divide and transplant daylilies, Shasta daisies and iris.

Collect Hosta and blackberry lily seeds to save for planting next spring.

Patio plants and window boxes dry out quickly. Check their watering needs daily.

Root 4” cutting of coleus in water. After roots have formed, plant them in a pot and enjoy them indoors for the winter.

Gather wildflowers for drying.

Fertilize annual bedding plants that are in bloom; follow label directions.

Miscellaneous - Place a garden bench in a corner of your garden so you can sit and enjoy the summer evening sounds.

Be on the lookout for poison ivy along the ground and climbing up trees. To control it, spray with a non-selective weed killer, always following label directions.

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