

July Gardening

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As we edge into mid-summer and our rains have seemingly come to a screeching stop, here are some items you might consider to keep your landscape and garden looking their best.

If you have cool-season grasses for your lawn, such as Kentucky bluegrass, they often go dormant when drought occurs. If your lawn starts to brown, don't water it to keep it green unless you will commit to watering it for the rest of the season. Awakening grass from dormancy uses energy reserves and continual watering will be needed to fill the energy reserves back up. If you let your grass go dormant, once cooler weather and fall precipitation comes around it will come back healthier.



Grubs are destructive larval stages of several different beetle species. Their damage is visible as very characteristic irregularly shaped patches of dead grass scattered throughout a lawn area, usually concentrated in some areas but not at all in others. Lawn grub beetles are laying eggs now meaning that the grubs will start feeding later this month. If you or a neighbor had grub problems last year now is a good time to apply grub control.

Most annual flowers benefit from regular removal of spent flowers called dead heading. Dead heading is very repetitive but worth it when new blooms appear. The secret to great looking fall mums is to pinch back about 1" on each growing point several times throughout the growing season. I use the Memorial, Independence, and Labor days as date reminders to pinch back. Pinching forces the plants to double the number of growing points that will eventually flower. So 1 growth point in the spring eventually becomes 8 flowers if you pinch back 3 times making the mum a much more compact and colorful plant come fall.

Similar to mums, tomatoes can benefit from trimming too. It is impressive to grow an 8' tomato plant, but any part of a tomato that grows well past the top of it's cage becomes harder to manage, reduces airflow around the plant creating disease and insect issues, and can even reduce it's overall yield. Cutting the top a little above the cage forces the plant to put more energy into fruit production and not stem and leaf growth.

By now most bulbs have started to decline so before all the leaves are gone mark their locations. Once the leaves are completely brown and if those bulbs have been in the ground for more than a couple of years, it's probably time to dig them up and divide them. Once separated, plant them again giving each bulb space between them and the next bulb. This could be almost touching to 2' apart depending on the type of bulb and the look you're going for. Most bulbs look best if grouped together and slightly crowded giving a nice splash of color in the spring.

What other things could you be doing in July? Well, how about a deviation of what I was told in the Army (if it moves salute it, if it doesn't paint it) - if it's dead trim it, if it's alive mulch it.

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