



Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints



August 2020

August is hot and humid, so consider working outside in the early morning. Water early and often with a hose or sprinkling can if you don't have an irrigation system.

SHRUBS--Mid-August through September is a good time to transplant any shrubs that you've purchased with root balls wrapped in burlap. Make sure you get them in the ground two to three days after purchase. Do not fertilize until the second year when the feeding roots have become established.

LAWNS--The optimal time for establishing a new lawn is August through mid-September. Lawns or bare spots reseeded now will have a chance to get established before winter sets in. Water often and mulch with hay until seedlings sprout. During these warmer months, raise the mowing height to 2.5 to 3 inches. If you want your lawn to stay green, you'll have to water frequently during periods of heat and drought stress. Contrary to popular belief, a brown lawn isn't necessarily a dead lawn. Grasses go dormant in times of drought, but will quickly return to life with the fall rains.

BULBS-- Two or three leaves should be left when cutting gladiolus, so that the bulbs can ripen. Plant fall-flowering bulbs now. Hardy lily bulbs may be planted in the ground and left to overwinter outdoors. You can order spring-blooming bulbs at the end of the month for fall planting from a reputable distributor. You get what you pay for.

PERENNIALS--Cut back the flower stalks of perennials that have finished blooming. Cut delphinium flower stalks to the ground and a new, though smaller flower stalk will develop. The flower will survive the coming cold days and even light frosts. If you notice a gap in your perennial bed between spring and fall blooms, visit a local nursery to see what's in bloom there and ask the experts for advice on what to plant. Spring flowering perennials can be divided and transplanted this month. Be sure to do this during the coolest part of the day and water the plants thoroughly after transplanting.

CORMS--Lift, divide, and replant Japanese and Siberian irises soon after bloom. Transplant them to places where they will have "wet feet, but dry knees."

VEGETABLES--The vegetable garden is likely to require daily harvesting now. Cucumbers, squash, tomatoes, eggplant, and peppers should be picked as soon as the fruits are ready. This not only captures the best flavor, but it also makes way for new fruits. Ripen tomatoes on the vine, not the windowsill and put fallen green tomatoes in a brown paper bag with an apple. Handpick the tomato hornworms and drown in soapy water. There is still time to plant fall crops of beans, beets, broccoli, carrots, Chinese

cabbage, kale, lettuce, and peas. Fertilize cucumbers, summer squash, and broccoli to maintain production while you continue harvesting. Check leafy vegetables for caterpillars and pick them off as they appear.

HERBS--Maximum flavor of herbs for drying is achieved by cutting them just before their flowers open.

HOUSEPLANTS--Be sure to regularly water your houseplants and potted plants. Use a water-soluble fertilizer so that the plants do not lose vital nutrients. Later this month Poinsettias and Christmas cactus should be brought back indoors and you should begin preparing them for Christmas flowering.

GENERAL--This is a great time to plant new perennials, shrubs, and trees, especially evergreens. They have a better chance to establish themselves during the milder fall months than those planted in the spring. Remove any old plants that have stopped producing to help eliminate insects and diseases from your garden. Keep the weeds pulled before they have a chance to flower and go to seed again. Otherwise, you will be fighting newly germinated weed seed for the next several years. Weeds in the garden are harmful because they rob your plants of water and nutrients, harbor insects and diseases, and, on occasion grow tall enough to shade your flowers and plants. Change the water in your bird bath regularly, and keep it filled. Standing water is less healthy for the birds, and may become a breeding ground for mosquito larvae.



Tomato Hornworm, pretty but destructive!

Sandy