



Riverview Garden Club Helpful Hints



July 2020

How should we deal with heat, sun, humidity, and lack of rain when it comes to our gardens? July traditionally is the hottest, driest month of the year. There are ways we can handle these problems. Let's talk about them.

To reduce evaporation, you should water vegetable and flower gardens in the early morning. Water the soil rather than leaves to reduce disease. Water deeply and infrequently to encourage root growth. You can mulch with paper, plastic, sawdust, etc. to conserve soil moisture.

Pay careful attention to watering and feeding hanging baskets of flowers or vegetable plantings during extended periods of hot weather. To keep your hanging baskets and flower pots growing evenly, turn the containers a quarter of a turn every few days to allow an equal shot of sunlight so you don't end up with lush, dense growth on just one side.

Deep water established trees and shrubs about once per month during the heat of summer. Pay particular attention to plants planted this spring. If there's no rain, apply one inch of water each week to gardens and lawns.

Spider mites can become a problem on ornamental plants, vegetables, and fruit plants during the hot dry weather. Watch for dusty-looking foliage, loss of color, and presence of tiny mites. Test by shaking leaves over a white piece of paper. If the small specs move, you have mites. Wash infested areas with water or spray with insecticidal soap which are "softer" solutions than chemicals.

If tomatoes are not producing, one common reason could be due to hot weather (95 degrees F and above) which causes flower abortion. Harvest early planted vegetables as they are ready, such as potatoes, cabbage, onions, leeks and beets. Immediately replant with crops that grow in summer's heat and will mature before frost, such as beans, cucumbers, zucchini, melons and more beets.

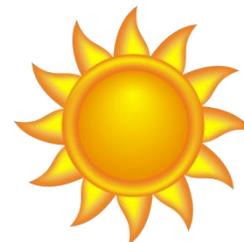
The best time to water your lawn is the early morning because the sun will help dry the grass. Nighttime watering can result in prolonged moisture on the blades, which can open the door for some diseases. It's better to water less often but for prolonged periods. Just wetting down the grass isn't sufficient. You need to soak the lawn so the soil is moist several inches

down. Test by setting an empty can next to your lawn sprinkler. When there is about a 1/2 inch of water in the can, it's time to turn off the sprinkler.

Don't fertilize dormant grass (drought can cause grass to go dormant in the heat of the summer) because it can't take in nutrients. If you put too much nitrogen on your lawn, you'll burn it. Read the label and follow the application directions. If it's dry, stop mowing the lawn, or, if possible, raise the height of cut. Brown patches in hot spells are inevitable but the lawn will quickly recover, so there's no need to water.

You can water at dusk to reduce evaporation versus watering in the early morning, and use mulch to retain moisture around plants. Avoid watering during the hottest part of the day. Terracotta pots are prone to evaporation, so dampen the pot down to keep roots inside cool and damp. You should water fruit and vegetable crops daily in warm weather to ensure that they're consistently moist. Clear weeds regularly, as they compete with your crops for nutrients and water. Don't forget to mulch around plants to keep roots cool and moist.

With these tips, hopefully your gardens and lawn will survive July's dry, hot weather and your gardens will continue to flourish until frost.



---Sandy