



## "From the Potting Shed"

Riverview Garden Club – August Helpful Hints

2021

What to do in the garden this month?

August is the month when many of your garden efforts come to fruition — generally in the form of tomatoes, peppers, melons, eggplant, corn on the cob and other goodies. This is the month when much of your attention is focused on picking, preserving and sharing vegetables. Keeping up with harvesting your vegetables is probably the No.1 August garden chore. Picking vegetables when they are ripe will encourage plants to continue to produce.

### Vegetables

- **Monitor for pests and diseases.** By the end of the month, some of your tomato plants will look horrible. It's not unusual to have blight now. Just keep harvesting and pull and discard the plant when it stops producing.
- **Share the harvest!** You know your neighbor has been looking over the fence at your tomatoes or peppers. Share with friends and family—it's what gardening is all about.
- **Start some fall crops.** If you like to stretch the season, add starting some cool-season crops to your August garden chore list. You can start them indoors to avoid heat stress on young seedlings or outside, maybe in a shady spot. Leaf lettuce, kale, radishes, spinach or other greens can be planted in early August for a September harvest.
- **Water and weed.** Whether you are growing vegetables or ornamental plants, continue to water and weed throughout August. For plants in the ground about an inch of water a week from rain or the hose is best. Water deeply rather than frequently. Container plantings especially need regular (usually daily) watering.

### Ornamentals

Add asters for August and September beauty and the pollinators will thank you!

- **Divide iris and other spring bloomers.** Late summer is a good time to divide iris, peonies, allium and other spring-blooming perennials. Be sure to give newly planted perennials plenty of water.
- **Order bulbs!** While most bulbs aren't planted until early fall, now is a good time to order bulbs if you want particular types. The bulbs will be sent to you in plenty of time to plant in your zone.

- **Give annuals a haircut.** If your annuals are looking a bit scruffy, now is a good time to pinch them back or give them a solid trim. Keep them watered and fertilized, especially if they are in containers, and they will bounce back and keep blooming right up until fall. Also, if you need to replace some tired annuals, many garden centers now offer potted annuals at half-price. With some dead-heading and watering these annuals will continue to bloom in your garden and containers.
- **Buy a fall bloomer.** If your garden looks great in early summer then slumps, perk it up with a mum, aster or other fall plant that will add some color. While most mums sold in nurseries are basically annuals, **asters** can be planted for next year and beyond. The pollinators will thank you!
- **Do some pre-planning.** August and September are good months to think about what you like and don't like about your garden now. Take some pictures so when you are thinking about what to plant next year you'll be able to look back on the garden as it really looked.

### Lawn

- **Sow seed.** Turf is a cool season crop, so early to mid-August is the best time to sow seed if your lawn has bare spots or you have an area where you are planting turf. Pick the right seed mix for our area and follow the directions for seeding.
- **Fertilize.** You won't need to aerate and dethatch every year, but fertilizing in August is a good idea. It will strengthen the roots going into the winter.

Don't spend too much time on your August garden chore list, because enjoying your garden should be a top priority during these last days of summer!