



"From the Potting Shed"

Riverview Garden Club – July Helpful Hints

2021

In the garden this month, it's time to ...

Deadhead Perennial Flowers

If you haven't done so already, remove the faded blooms from your spring perennial flowers such as peonies, bearded iris, and Asiatic lilies. When you remove the dead flowers, you make plants look better and you prevent them from going to seed which can sap the plant's energy. Removing faded perennial flowers encourages the plant to send energy to its roots so it will bloom better next year. Some perennial flowers, such as salvia, will often bloom again later in the season if you clip away the faded blooms now. Trim them back by one third of their height.

Harvest Daily

As summer heats up, vegetable and fruit crops go into overdrive. Check your garden and harvest daily. Vegetables such as cucumbers, green beans, zucchini, eggplants taste better when harvested young. Strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries also benefit from daily picks; harvest at peak flavor.

Cover berries or other prized produce with netting to protect them from hungry birds or rodents.

Maintain and Replenish Container Plants

Containers and hanging baskets dry out faster than plants in the ground and sometimes need daily watering as plants grow larger and if the weather is hot and windy. Frequent watering to the point where water runs out of the drain holes in containers will leach out fertilizer. It's a good idea to use a water-soluble fertilizer at ½ the label rate every week to keep container gardens and hanging basket plants growing and healthy.

By midsummer, cool-weather annual flowers such as pansies and snapdragons have stopped blooming. Remove them and replace with heat-loving container plants such as lantana and zinnia. If your cool-weather annuals were growing in a mixed container, tease them out of the pot trying not to disturb the neighboring plants. Then add a bit of fresh soil, tuck in a blooming refill, and water thoroughly. Some heat-loving annuals, such as petunias and calibrachoa, respond well to a midsummer haircut. Trim back established plants to encourage new growth.

Water Wisely

Water early in the day to reduce water loss from evaporation. Adjust sprinklers to avoid wasting water on driveways and sidewalks. In the garden beds, water deeply to encourage stronger root growth. Use mulch to retain water and keep roots cooler. Lawns need 1" to 1 1/2" of water per week to stay green. It's time to water when the lawn color turns to a green-bronze and grass blades don't spring back in your footsteps as you walk across the lawn.

Treat Powdery Mildew

Hot, humid weather causes powdery mildew on leaves and stems of some plants. Apply fungicides as soon as the white spots are identified. Better yet, apply a fungicide just the start of hot, humid weather. Affected areas of leaves will not be cleaned of the white mildew, but it stops the spread of the disease, and kills the existing mildew. Regular treatment with fungicide is recommended. Powdery Mildew grows on both the top and undersides of leaves, as well as the stem or vine. Apply fungicide to all parts of the plant.

Care for Trees and Shrub

July is a good month to prune maples and birch and other trees that bleed when pruned in late winter. Both evergreen and deciduous shrubs may be shaped or informally sheared to keep plants full to the center and stay within available space.

Take a Tour!

Summer is a great time to gather new ideas from other gardens. Take advantage of local garden tours, public gardens, arboreta, or parks to discover tips and tricks you can use in your own backyard gardens. And, if you take a summer vacation, do some research before you go and find out if there are any public gardens nearby that you can add to your itinerary. And be sure to take photos to document what you see. Make note of interesting garden bed ideas, plant combinations, or techniques that you see as you tour.