



“From the Potting Shed” Riverview Garden Club – Helpful Hints July 2023

July is a busy month in the garden as vegetables are ripening, flowers are blooming and weeds continue to sprout up! As the temperature rises, be sure to keep up with watering especially those plants in containers. Here are some tips to keep your gardens growing through July!

Things to do this month...

in the vegetable garden

- One of the best ways to prevent disease is to keep your garden clean. Clean up diseased leaves and fruit that drop.
- Harvest onions and garlic when the tops turn brown. Onions should be dug when the tops brown and flop over. Dig garlic when the tops have died back by one-third down the stalk.
- Continue to hill potatoes and dig potatoes when the tops die. Plant fall potatoes by the 15th.
- Control corn earworms by applying several drops of vegetable oil every 3 to 7 days when silks appear. Sprays of Btk (*Bacillus thuringiensis var. kurstaki*) are also effective. You can make your oil application more effective by adding Btk or Neem oil to it.
- If you use pesticides in your vegetable garden, some pesticides have a waiting period of several days between the time of the last spray and harvest. Read and follow directions on all labels before applying to your vegetable crops. Wash all produce thoroughly before use.
- Continue to water vegetables regularly; don't let the soil beneath tomatoes or cucumber dry out. Drought conditions will cause bitter fruit in cucumbers and blossom end rot in tomatoes.
- Weed!! Keep an eye on weed growth this time of year. Vegetables don't tolerate competition from weeds.
- Hand-pollinate melons and squash if high temperatures inhibit fruit set. Dab pollen-bearing male flowers with a small paintbrush, then paint the pollen onto female flowers. Female flowers will have a swollen base where the vegetable will form.
- Cover grape clusters loosely with paper sacks to provide some protection from birds.
- Prune out and destroy old fruiting canes of raspberries after harvest is complete.

in the flower garden

- Complete pinching or cutting back of autumn-blooming plants by mid-to-late July. Don't pinch mums after mid-July, or you may delay flowering.
- Dead-leaf plants that bloom in early summer, as needed.
- Deadhead heavy-blooming perennials like tick-seed (*coreopsis*) every few days to keep them looking their best.
- Prune crowded or sprawling perennials to keep them in bounds.
- Cut back any insect-ridden foliage.
- Deadhead perennials as blooms fade. This is particularly important for perennials that tend to spread by self-sowing. Some plants such as delphinium and phlox will offer a second blooming period if cut back now.
- Don't fertilize roses after July 31st.
- Cut back perennials that go dormant early, such as bleeding heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*)
- Deadhead annuals to encourage continued bloom. Shear back tired-looking impatiens and petunias by half to rejuvenate them.
- Check staked perennials to see if they need to be re-secured or tied.
- Remove infected leaves from roses. Pick up fallen leaves and continue fungicidal sprays as needed.
- While spraying roses with fungicides, mix extra and spray hardy phlox to prevent powdery mildew.
- Lavender can be deadheaded in July to promote another flowering period in September.

in your landscape

- Water your established plantings that have been dry for several weeks.
- Perennials that have been heavily pruned back also need to be kept moist.
- Check container plantings twice daily when temperatures exceed 90° (F). Water whenever the top few inches of soil dry out.
- Weed! This is the perfect time to keep weeds from making seeds now. This will mean fewer weeds (and less weeding) next year. Make a pass through each garden bed every week. Don't let weeds get more than two weeks old.
- Water new groundcovers and weed them to encourage spreading.
- If you are away on vacation this month, arrange to have someone water your plants, especially those in containers. If you don't have an automated irrigation system in place, set up a timer with sprinkler or soaker hoses.
- Avoid fertilizing trees and shrubs after July 4th. Late summer fertilizing may cause lush growth that's more prone to winter kill.

- Hot, dry weather is ideal for spider mite development. The best way to prevent them is to keep your plants properly irrigated and avoid using pesticides that kill their natural predators. Control them with a hard stream of water (which will kill many of them) or by using insecticidal soap.
- Prune out water sprouts. These are weak, green, and very fast-growing shoots that grow vertically from branches of fruit trees, redbuds, or other ornamental flowering trees.
- Control mosquitoes by eliminating all sources of stagnant water.
- Re-edge beds to make a clean line and define them.
- Add spent annuals, disease-free early vegetables, and seed-free weeds to your compost pile.

Happy Gardening!