



“From the Potting Shed”

Riverview Garden Club - Helpful Hints August 2025

In August, focus on maintaining your current garden while also preparing for fall planting. Key tasks include watering, weeding, deadheading and harvesting. Additionally, consider planting fall crops and saving seeds.

Things to do this month...

In the Flower Garden

- Deadhead perennials to encourage a second bloom later in the season.
- Cut spent flowers back to a lateral bud or leaf.
- Deadheading perennials gives the garden a cleaner look. Perennials that typically benefit from deadheading include daylily, iris, Hosta, Shasta daisy, coreopsis and dianthus.
- Remove weeds before they set seed
- Continue to aerate and moisten compost pile to speed decomposition
- Check for insect pests and treat accordingly
- Remove any fallen leaves and debris which can harbor insect pests and disease organisms
- Continue to apply deer repellent
- Check moisture and water hanging baskets and container plantings daily.
- Order spring-flowering bulbs for fall planting
- Assess areas in the garden that may need additional planting
- Continue to take garden notes and/or photographs to plan future plantings
- Divide bearded iris and dispose of any borer-damaged parts
- Plant late-season annuals like ornamental kale and cabbage for fall color

Lawn Care

- Allow lawns to go dormant; they will green up again when rain returns
- Taller grass is more resilient against insect feeding, weed invasion and drought.
- Mowing high promotes the establishment of a larger and deeper root system, which is more drought tolerant.
- A larger root mass also makes grass more tolerant of grub feeding, reducing the need for insecticide applications. Taller grass also helps provide broadleaf weed and crabgrass control by shading and cooling the soil surface, equating to less herbicide use.
- Spot seed to renovate existing lawn between August 15 and September 15

Divide Perennials

- Water the plant you want to divide and its future home the day before you dig.
- Before digging, cut the foliage back by half: This way a smaller root system won't have to support lots of foliage in the heat later.
- Shear plants whose leaves go all the way to the base, such as daylilies (*Hemerocallis* spp. and hybrids), to within a few inches of the soil line.
- For plants like Coral bells (*Heuchera* spp. and hybrids), you'll need to cut individual leaves in half.
- Dig up the plant & divide by slicing 4 to 6 inches out from the edge of the crown.
- Plant quickly! Get your new plant in the hole quickly so the roots don't dry out. Once the plant is in place, fill the hole halfway with soil and water well. That way the water soaks in and doesn't evaporate or roll off the soil's surface.
- Apply an organic liquid fertilizer when you water to help get plants off to a good start.

In the Vegetable Garden

- Plant out seedlings of cool-weather vegetable plants for fall harvest
- Sow seeds of late-harvest vegetables such as beets, carrots and turnips
- Have a second harvest with these 13 veggie picks for fall weather:
Arugula, Bok choy, Broccoli, Bush beans, Cabbage, Carrots, Cauliflower, Kale, Leaf lettuce, Radishes, Rutabaga, Spinach, Swiss chard
- When planting seeds that prefer cooler temps to germinate, sow a little deeper in order to mimic a cool environment.
- Be sure the soil is in good condition, so the sprout doesn't have to struggle to break through a layer of summer-hardened top crust. It's even more important to water the seeds and continue to do so regularly.
- Propagate herbs from new growth and transplant into pots for winter use
- Harvest onions and garlic as the tops dry and fall over. Braid garlic tops and hang in a cool, dry place. Cut onion tops back to 1" and dry thoroughly before storing. Use any damaged produce immediately.
- Pick summer squash and zucchini every day or two to keep the plants producing.
- Remove old plants which have stopped producing to eliminate a shelter for insects and disease organisms.
- Dig potatoes after vines have died.
- Harvest cantaloupe when the stem separates from the fruit with gentle prodding.
- Save seeds of strong producing crops for next year's planting.
- Sow fall cover crop if using.

Fertilizing

- Fertilize roses to encourage last new growth and harden off before frost
- Continue to fertilize annuals and container plants each month
- Fertilize chrysanthemums weekly until buds show color

Stop Pruning Trees and Shrubs

- Avoid pruning trees and shrubs since doing so this late in the season can stimulate new growth that will not harden off in time for the cold winter weather ahead. Delay pruning until the end of the dormant season early next spring.

Happy Gardening!

Sources:

“A Way to Garden: August Garden Chores for the Northeast” by Margaret Roach, July, 2021.

“Dividing Plants in Summer” by Sherri Ribbey, Garden Gate Newsletter, July 13, 2023.

“Summer Gardening Chores: August” New York Botanical Garden Plant and Research Guides, May 24, 2024.