

JULY IN THE GARDEN : Hort Report by Connie Nichols

We've had a good amount of rainfall this year, but if that changes watering priorities should be... first, valuable new plants and trees, then vegetables followed by annuals and end with watering the lawn.

Water before plants show signs of wilting. Wilting weakens overall plant health.

Water in early morning versus evening....never water at midday.

Water deeply, weekly. Shallow watering will not encourage deep root growth.

Test soil around plants..if dry 2 to 3 inches down, water deeply.

Container plants must be watered daily and sometimes more than once.

Keep after weeds...pull them before they go to seed and you'll have a lot less next season.

MULCH, MULCH, MULCH...trees, shrubs, vegetables, flowers and herbs.

Aerate compost and water if too dry.

Mow lawns high...2 1/2 to 3 inches...and often....leave the clippings!! Make sure mower blades are sharp...and DO NOT fertilize. !

Use No chemicals when temps are over 80 degrees F.

Check houseplants for insects and repot if they are rootbound.

Also check yourself and your pets. PA leads the nation in confirmed cases of tick borne diseases. When detected early these diseases can be treated. Left untreated,they can cause a whole host of problems. Early diagnoses is important in preventing long term complications. For info on tick removal, symptoms and tick testing go to www.pikepa.org/tick.html

Begin cutting flowers and herbs for drying, arranging and eating.

Prune climbing roses after flowering to promote new growth.

Fertilize roses and container grown annuals.

Stake floppy plants and vines.

Deadhead annuals and perennials to encourage continuous bloom and cut back any rampant growth.

After bloom, divide crowded ,early flowering, perennials such as oriental poppies and bearded iris.

Dig , divide and replant peony, bleeding heart, and daylilly.

Harvest crops at peak or earlier. (Not all have to reach maturity.) You can start to harvest many when half grown ; beets,carrots,cabbage, celery, chard, cukes, eggplant,endive, kale, leeks, lettuce , onions, parsnips, peppers, radishes, spinach, summer squash. Young veggies are delicious.

Continue succession planting of bush beans, peas and summer spinach.

Start seeds of broccoli,cabbage,carrots and beets for fall harvest. Thin carrots and beets to at least 1/2 inch between each plant.

Fertilize asparagus.

Hill soil around potato plants.

Tie tomato plants to stakes...remove side shoots when fruits are still small.....plants are easier to manage and more energy goes into fruit production.

Watch for black spot, boxelder bug, japanese beetle, powdery mildew, and web worm nests. Call the cooperative extension for specific recommendations.

Stop pinching hardy chrysanthemums and asters so flower buds are ready for fall.

Prune wisteria now.

Give dahlias plenty of water...they don't bloom well once exposed to drought.

Order spring flowering bulbs for fall planting.

Wear a hat to keep wasps from getting entangled in hair. And don't forget sunscreen.

Keep hummingbird feeders clean. Fill them weekly and keep them in shade...the hummingbirds will love you.

Relax.... one night .turn on outdoor lights and watch all the cool flying insects...maybe even a bat. Summer is finally here, it only comes once a year ,so sit back, take a deep breath and ENJOY !!!!!