

July

- Mulch herbs during hot weather to protect the plant roots and keep them healthy.
- July is an excellent month to take root cuttings of house plants such as coleus, fuchsia, geranium, poinsettia, shrimp plant, Swedish ivy, wandering jew, wax plant and others with succulent (non-woody) stems.
- During hot July weather, mow your lawn to the appropriate height. This reduces water loss and helps lower soil temperatures. Leave clippings on the lawn to decompose.
- Proper watering means deep soaking. Light sprinkling is often harmful. Wet the soil to the bottom of the roots (5"-6" deep)
- Begin to cut and dry herbs and flowers.
- Organic mulch materials decompose rapidly in hot, moist weather. Add mulch where needed.
- Pull and compost spent crops. Turn the compost pile and wet it down to hasten decomposition. Leave the pile with a depression in the middle to catch rainwater.
- Hot, dry weather brings out red spider mites. Inspect roses, evergreens and marigolds for pale-green coloration. Hold a white sheet of paper underneath a leaf and briskly tap it. Tiny, crawling mites will drop onto the paper if they are present on the leaf. If the infestation is light, discourage mites with a forceful, direct spray of water from the hose. Severely infested annual plants should be removed and destroyed. Mild infestations can be controlled with pesticides. Consult your extension office for current recommendations.
- A non-toxic approach to Japanese Beetles: remove all flower blossoms as soon as they begin to fade and all fruit as soon as it is ripe. Go into your garden daily and knock the insects into a wide-mouthed jar of soapy water.
- Check the soil moisture of container-grown vegetables and flowers daily. As the temperature rises, some plants may need to be watered twice a day.
- Continue attracting insect-eating birds to the garden by providing them a fresh water supply.
- Dry flowers now for use in arrangements next winter. Early season blooms are better for this purpose than those that develop in late summer. Flowers for drying should be cut during midday, in the late-bud or early bloom stage.

- If you can't water during hot, dry spells, the "do nothing. Don't prune or apply fertilizers or pest controls. Plants compensate for stress by relative inactivity. Cultural practices that encourage growth can induce further stress.
- If you have been pinching back your mums this summer, mid-July is the time to stop so they will be able to develop flower buds for the fall.
- Snapdragons should be pinched back after blooming to promote a second flush of bloom.
- Cut back and fertilize delphinium and phlox to encourage a second show of bloom.
- Sow seeds of hollyhocks, English daisies, foxgloves, violas, Canterbury bells and sweet William now for next year's blooms.
- Geranium cuttings should be made in late July to start plants for winter and spring indoor bloom. To make cuttings, use the tips of branches about 4" long. Cut off the bottom leaves and stick the cuttings about one third their length in a moist, sand-peat mixture. Roots will develop rapidly, and new plants should be ready for potting in about 4 weeks.
- Chrysanthemums should be lightly fertilized every two weeks with a water soluble fertilizer. If you have been pinching them back, mid-July is the time to stop so they will be able to develop flower buds for the fall.
- Flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*) is commonly affected by a number of diseases, including the fatal dogwood anthracnose. Protecting your dogwoods from drought stress can go a long way toward keeping them healthy. Make sure they have been mulched in a wide ring with organic material, about 3" deep. Do not use dogwood leaves or wood as mulch and pull the mulch away from the trunk.
- To plant roses now, purchase plants in containers. Sprouted, packaged plants are difficult to handle and grow poorly if stored foods are exhausted.
- Start cuttings of trees and shrubs during July and August. The most common rooting medium is washed builder's sand. Other materials include peat moss, mixture of equal parts peat and sand, vermiculite or perlite. The exact medium is not important as it is well aerated and drains well, yet holds adequate moisture for the cuttings.
- Prune Bigleaf or French Hydrangeas (*H. macrophylla*) immediately after blooming.
- Root holly, azalea and camellia cuttings in sand and peat moss mixture set in a cool, shady location.
- Ivy and periwinkle can be rooted now to fill in any bare spots in your beds. Don't allow your cuttings to dry out.
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