

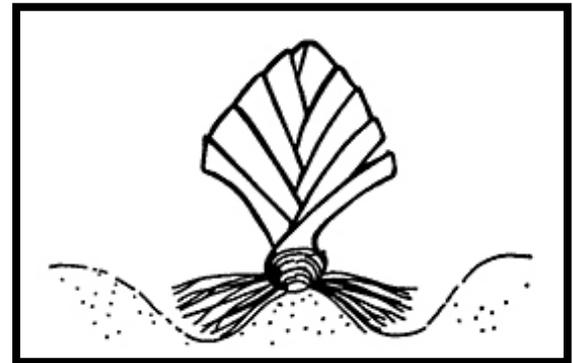


Garden Tips for August 2015

by Thea Fiskin, UC Master Gardener

The best garden tip for August is to sit back in the shade with a tall glass of iced tea and enjoy watching the birds, bees and butterflies in the garden. However, if you are restless and have a compulsion to get out there and play in your garden, be sure to work in the early morning or after dinner, take lots of breaks and drink plenty of water.

WATER WISELY: Your primary concern for August is watering. Follow drought restrictions on watering, but be sure to water trees and shrubs deeply at least once per month. Deep watering will induce roots to grow deeper in the soil where they are less likely to dry out. Light watering actually wastes water because it doesn't reach the root zone. The best way to check is to take a trowel or shovel and dig down six to eight inches and check the soil moisture. Of course, if you have drought resistant trees and shrubs in your garden, you won't have to water as often but the principle of deep watering still applies.



Planting iris

WHAT TO PLANT: The fall seed catalogs have started arriving so it's time to plant a winter veggie garden. While you are relaxing from the heat, check out those catalogs or look online for seeds that can be started now. Seeds of cole crops like bok choy, broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower are usually seeded in small pots and later transplanted into the garden. Root crops such as beets, carrots, parsnips, and turnips are seeded directly into planting beds. Some seeds, such as carrots, come in seed tapes which makes it much easier to get the proper spacing.

Because of the heat and the drought, it is a poor time to do any other planting. Wait until September or October.

MAINTENANCE: Prune hybrid tea roses in late August to promote a new flush of blooms in October. This is not the severe pruning of winter. Remove spent flowers, lanky growth and any suckers from the base.

Rejuvenate your summer-blooming annuals and perennials. Remove faded blooms, pinch back any leggy growth, then lightly fertilize and water. This works wonders on geraniums, marigolds, salvias, verbenas and zinnias.



Rose pruning cuts

August is also the month to divide German iris. Lift the entire clump with a spading fork or shovel and discard the oldest, bloomed-out rhizomes. Remove any

disfigured leaves and rotted portions. Then trim leaves to about six inches. Set the exposed sections in the sun to dry and form a callus over any cut sections. Prepare the area you are going to replant with extra compost and fertilizer. Plant the rhizomes just below the surface, water well and mulch.

FRUIT TREES: Support heavily laden fruit branches to keep them from breaking. Dispose of any fallen fruit that could harbor pests. Apricots and olives should be pruned now rather than in winter to prevent fungal disease problems.

WEEDS: Control of weeds is very important. Weeds in the garden rob your plants of water and nutrients, harbor insects and sometimes grow tall enough to shade your flowers and shrubs. Be diligent about keeping them under control, especially before summer weeds mature and have seeds.

Finally, remember to keep harvesting your summer veggies. There's always something to make with zucchini.



Starting seeds indoors

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