



Garden Tips for June 2018

by Thea Fiskin, UC Master Gardener

The beginning of June is your last chance to plant heat-tolerant plants before the heat really sets in for the summer. Maintain container plants, and harvest herbs, fruits and vegetables on a regular basis. To avoid overexposure to the sun, wear a large brimmed hat and long sleeves, use sunscreen and drink plenty of water. Don't forget Dad on Father's day! Buy him a great new plant in a colorful pot or a shiny new garden tool.

WHAT TO PLANT

Annual color: There are plenty of flowers that can take the heat of our summer. Try ageratum, bedding begonias, coleus, cosmos, gerbera daisy, impatiens, marigolds, petunias, salvias, sunflowers, verbena and zinnias.

Vegetables: Beans, corn, cucumber, gourds, melons and squash can be planted as seeds. Eggplant, peppers and tomatoes should be planted using seedlings. Don't forget late June is the time to plant pumpkins if you want to harvest them for Halloween.

LAWNS

All lawns should be watered deeply and infrequently to promote deeper root growth and to prevent crabgrass. When mowing the lawn, try not to mow in the same direction all the time; vary your path so you don't form ruts.

Warm season lawns like Bermuda, St. Augustine and zoysia grass will benefit from fertilizer in June, July and August. You can also plant, patch and reseed these heat lovers all summer long. Fertilize cool season lawns like tall fescue and perennial rye in June (unless the heat comes early), then don't fertilize again until September.

CRITTER CONTROL

- **Spider mites** - Signs of these tiny little critters are mottled leaves and ultra-fine webs. Plants along dusty roads are particularly susceptible. Wash off with plain water and use insecticidal soap if necessary.
- **Stink bugs** - Shield-shaped bugs with a triangle on their back. Most are brown or green with red, pink or yellow markings. They attack fruit and vegetables, leaving blemishes or dimples on the fruit. Insecticides are not recommended--handpick or let parasites and predators control them.
- **Tomato worms** - These big green guys can strip a tomato plant of leaves in no time at all. Tell-tale signs besides the chewed off leaves are their deposit of large black droppings. Hand pick or use BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*), sometimes called Caterpillar Killer.



- **Tobacco budworm** - If your geraniums, petunias or roses have stopped blooming, the culprit may be the tobacco budworm. The flying moth lays its eggs in the flower buds and the hatching larva feeds on the bud, then travels down the stem. Try spraying BT or a rose systemic. Do not use rose systemic near any plants you plan to eat.

GARDEN CHORES

- Check your irrigation system for damaged sprinkler heads or clogged emitters.
- Deep-water ground covers, lawns, shrubs and trees. Deep-watering your stone fruit trees now will prevent co-joined fruit next year.
- Divide bearded iris. First carefully dig up plants and discard old rhizomes and any diseased or rotted sections. Replant the healthy rhizomes, making sure to plant shallowly. Just barely cover the rhizome with soil, then water.
- Harvest vegetables regularly to keep them producing.
- After harvest, it's time to clean up those berry vines. Cut this year's fruiting canes back to the crown and then tie up the new green canes to take their place. It's also a good time to spread some compost or fertilizer in the bed, then deep water.
- Prune apricot trees in the summer. Beware of pruning too much, since bark that has previously been in the shade can be extra-sensitive to sunburn.
- Pinch asters, chrysanthemums and sedum Autumn Joy to encourage branching and more blooms in the fall.
- Lightly cut back any perennials that are becoming too leggy.
- Snip spent flowers from summer blooming annuals and perennials to keep them blooming.
- Wisteria can be pruned aggressively now. Cut back to two nodes on the new branches, as this will keep the plant from unrestrained growth, while giving it time to put on a spectacular display of blooms next year.

WEED CONTROL

- **Crabgrass** - This annual weed thrives in lawns that are watered too often in the summer. Mowing your lawn a little higher and watering less often will discourage seed germination. It is more effective to apply a preemergence herbicide in the winter than to selectively try to remove crabgrass from the lawn with a postemergence herbicide. IF you use an herbicide, be sure to follow the directions carefully; don't just throw it on by handful. Be mindful of the possibility of groundwater contamination.
- **Nutsedge** - Wet, waterlogged conditions favor the growth of nutsedge, so improve drainage and keep the area as dry as possible. Nutsedge is one tough weed to get rid of, so be diligent with hand pulling, hoeing and spraying to remove it before it takes control of your garden or lawn.
- **Spurge** - This is the flat creeping weed with a red spot on the leaves. When you pull it, sticky white sap gets on your hands. Ants love it. Hand pull or hoe spurge plants before they set seeds and remove them from the site. In flowerbeds, spot treat with Roundup and add a thick layer of mulch to prevent weed germination. You can also apply a preemergent herbicide in established beds, but be aware it will also harm newly-planted transplants. To discourage infestations in lawns, mow fescue at least 3 inches high to shade out seeds, and fertilize Bermuda grass to keep it actively growing.

When going on vacation, include an arboretum or public garden in your vacation schedule. Have a great summer!

June 2, 2018