



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Garden Tips for July 2021 (June 26, 2021)

By Peyton Ellas, UCCE Master Gardener

Be easy on yourself and on your garden this month. Do everything you can to conserve water. Enjoy the harvest of the summer garden.



PLANTING: Don't plant ornamental plants in July. Instead use your water to keep the vegetable garden, orchard, and existing plants (especially trees) healthy. Edibles to plant include tomato, basil, and artichoke from well-developed seedlings. From seed, plant corn, winter and summer squash, radish, peas, bulb and green onion. Late in the month, you can start seeds for fall-harvested vegetables like broccoli, cauliflower, chard, kale, and cabbage. Plant in the ground or start seeds in containers for transplanting in September.

MAINTAINING: Monitor and test your irrigation system at least once during summer, especially if you will be gone more than a few days. It's tempting to over-water, but not only is it a waste, but many disease and insect problems are encouraged by too much moisture during hot months. Let the first inch or more of soil dry out between watering. If a heatwave is predicted, water a day or two in advance, and then not again until the soil dries out a little. Established ornamental trees and shrubs should be deep watered, but on a less-frequent schedule than smaller perennials and new transplants. Consistency is important for the edible garden, including fruit trees. Lawn diseases and pest insects are almost guaranteed in over-watered summer lawns. Water will not cool turf grass, it only replaces what moisture the plant transpires during the day. Plants don't sweat the way mammals do. Use a moisture monitor or poke your fingers down into the crown of your lawn to check if it's lacking moisture. Fescue lawns can suffer heat stress, sunburn, and warm-season diseases, and all of them may look like you need to water more. Our University of California system has a website devoted to lawn care:



<http://ipm.ucanr.edu/TOOLS/TURF/>. Check it out for research-based ways to care for your lawn.

On the other hand, if lawn removal is your goal, July is an excellent month for solarization or mechanically removing the sod and allowing the summer heat and lack of moisture to kill any remaining bits. Remember to cover your bare soil with mulch, cardboard or weed cloth or spray with herbicide until fall planting time to avoid opportunistic weeds becoming the lawn replacement "garden"!

Continue dead-heading roses and daylilies. Remove spent flower heads and the entire flowering stem from hydrangea, leaving only a few buds per stem for next year. You can begin to divide bearded iris in July or wait another month if they still look lush and green. If you decide to divide, lift the entire clump. Trim leaves to about six inches. Set exposed sections in the sun to dry for a few days to callus over any cut sections. Plant the rhizomes (that big gnarly root-like mass) just below the soil surface, water well and mulch. Prune spent berry canes to the ground after harvesting. Trellis new canes as they emerge. Pinch new growth on chrysanthemums. Lightly prune bougainvillea to promote more flowers. Wait until the weather cools for major pruning unless it's for safety. You can lightly prune in the cool morning or evening hours, but not if a heat wave is predicted in the next few days.

Do not fertilize anything during July with high-nitrogen products, including lawns. Fertilizing itself is stressful to plants. July is a good month to let the garden rest.

Weeds are a year-round challenge, so keep up with those heat-loving weeds. Monitor and control rodents and insect pests. For insects, hose off plants as a first treatment. Insecticidal soap sprayed in the evening is the second treatment. We are all busy and would rather do a one-time-and-done style of pest management, but gardening is like caring for other living beings: steady observation and small corrections are the key to a garden full of beneficial wildlife, happy plants and happy humans.

CONSERVING: Native bees and wasps are active in the summer months. Most of these tiny insects are hardly noticed because European honeybees are also active. Leave flowering ("bolting") plants like radish, onion, and carrots for beneficial insects, and if you can, leave a little bare dirt here and there for ground-nesting solitary bees. Reduce or eliminate strong, non-specific insecticides to avoid harming beneficial insects. Maybe this is the year you decide to get your garden growing in balance and save money and time fighting everything?



As you begin to enjoy the active outward life again, continue to make some time for the garden. There are few things more rewarding than harvesting from your own backyard garden and few things that are better therapy than spending time at the end of the day working in the garden. A little weeding, insect management or observation, and harvesting daily is part of a great life. At least I think so! Happy Gardening!

The Master Gardeners will be available to answer your questions at a few select locations in the next few months!

Ace Hardware, Visalia - 1st Sat./every month, 10 am-1 pm

Luis Nursery, Visalia - 2nd Sat./every month, 10 am-2 pm

Hanford Farmer's Market - 4th Thurs, May - Sept., 5-8 pm, 7th ST. and Irwin Downtown Hanford

Questions? Call us:

Master Gardeners in Tulare County: (559) 684-3325, Tues & Thurs, 9:30-11:30

Visit our website to search past articles, find links to UC gardening information, or to email us with your questions:

http://ucanr.edu/sites/UC_Master_Gardeners/