

## July To Do List

By Teresa Spence, University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener of Calaveras County

Water early in the morning to minimize evaporation

If the mulch on your beds is less than 3" deep, add some more to keep plants cool and moist and to prevent weeds from sprouting. Be sure to keep the mulch a few inches away from the trunks of the plants and trees.

Summer prune deciduous fruit trees as soon as they have finished producing. This will help to keep the trees smaller and easier to maintain

Continue to pick your summer vegetables frequently to encourage more production.

If you are thinking about having a winter vegetable garden this year, now is the time to start planning. Generally winter vegetables need enough warm weather to let their roots get a good start. In our area, somewhere around August through September is the time to put the vegetables in the ground. Plan on what you would like to grow and buy seed now or buy vegetable starts nearer to planting time.

Keep like plants together, for instance plant one bed of root crops such as carrots, beets and onions; start another of cole crops such as broccoli, cabbage and Brussels sprouts. Prepare a bed of salad greens such as spinach, lettuce and chard (the salad greens are the one exception to the warm weather rule; they germinate well in cool weather so wait until the temperatures are out of the 80's before seeding or planting starts of these vegetables).

As you clean out your garden from worn out summer crops, make sure to add compost to the empty beds to replenish nutrients in the soil that were depleted. Ensure that your beds drain well in anticipation of heavy winter rains.

Winter vegetables are usually more compact than summer vegetables such as tomatoes, melons or squashes, so less room is needed in your vegetable beds. The crops are less work to maintain since they only need to be watered until the rains start, insects are less active and there are fewer weeds to pull. Winter crops are full of great nutrients and it is a pleasure to harvest fresh vegetables to eat during the winter months.