

## Care for Summer Gardens Before Problems Crop Up

Leimone Waite, Master Gardener, May 18, 2018

**Q:** Now that I have my garden planted and most of my weeds under control, what should I be doing in my garden to prevent problems later in the summer?

**A:** I'm glad you asked this question. There are many preventative measures you can take now to avoid bigger problems later in summer. Master Gardeners practice integrated pest management for pest and weed control. Much of this system requires advanced planning. If you can get control of pest or weeds early you can usually control them easily.

Now is a good time to be setting out traps for pests such as earwigs and whitefly. You can use paper towel rolls for earwigs and slugs; set them out at night and check them early in the morning. Sticky yellow cards work best for whitefly.

Now is also a good time to set out snail bait. Use one that is nontoxic to pets, such as Garden Safe or Sluggo.

If you have fruit trees, thin pit fruits just as the pit starts to harden, and apples and pears when fruit is 1/2 inch in diameter. Consider bagging apples and pears as you thin to prevent codling moth damage to fruit.



Consider bagging apples while thinning to prevent codling moth damage to fruit. (Photo: Laura Christman)

According to the UC IPM site, “bagging should be done about four to six weeks after bloom when the fruit is from 1/2 to 1 inch in diameter. Prepare No.2 paper bags — the standard lunch bag size that measures 7.25 inches by four inches — by cutting a two-inch slit in the bottom fold of each bag. Thin the fruit to one per cluster. Slip the thinned fruit through the two-inch slit so that it forms a seal around the stem and staple the open end shut.”

We've had a very dry spring, so make sure to deep-water all trees and shrubs before the summer heat hits. If your trees are on a slope you may need to build water basins around each tree, but don't allow water to stand against the trunks. During the hot summer you should continue to deep water once every couple of weeks.

For continued bloom of roses and other long-blooming shrubs and perennials, or for plants that re-bloom such as lavender, cut off spent flowers and fertilize.

For early-ripening fruit hang strips of foil or CDs in fruit trees to help deter birds, but don't put these out too early or the birds will get used to the shiny objects.

Once spring-flowering shrubs finish blooming, prune to shape, reduce size and remove old or dead wood.

Fertilize strawberries, young fruit trees, citrus, roses and cool season turf now. Wait to fertilize cane berries until after harvest, and azaleas or rhododendrons until after they bloom. Fertilize vegetables if

well established and then about once a month during growing season. Fertilize corn with nitrogen fertilizer when the corn is knee-high.

If you're just now getting around to thinking about a garden, it's not too late to plant starts or seeds. Beans, corn and radish can be succession planted for a continuous supply of produce all summer.

Mulch around plants to control weeds and conserve water. Be sure to leave a small circle of bare soil around the base of each plant so as not to encourage fungus growth on the stem or trunk.

*The Shasta Master Gardeners Program can be reached by phone at 242-2219 or email [mastergardener@shastacollege.edu](mailto:mastergardener@shastacollege.edu). The gardener office is staffed by volunteers trained by the University of California to answer gardeners' questions using information based on scientific research.*