



NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

Garden Tips for June 2019 (June 1, 2019)

by Peyton Ellas, UCCE Master Gardener

June in the garden is a month of transition. The days are hot, but most nights will be cool. Spring flowers continue for at least part of the month and most plants are still growing vigorously. Summer and fall-blooming plants may even show some early flowers. We can still work comfortably outdoors most of the day, but we are definitely beginning to prefer early mornings and evenings for any big chores.



PLANTING: For quick seasonal color in summer, consider ageratum, bedding begonias, coleus, cosmos, gerbera daisy, impatiens, marigolds, petunias, salvias, sunflowers, verbena and zinnias. Don't be fooled early in the month to purchase the last of the cool-season annuals like pansies or primroses and expect those flowers to last very long.

In the edible garden, this is a great month to plant seeds of heat-lovers like beans, corn, okra, cucumber, gourds, melons and squash, including pumpkins for Halloween. You can still plant seedlings of eggplant, peppers and tomatoes. Plant basil from seeds or, better, seedlings, throughout the heat to keep a fresh supply. If you have the garden planted and still have a space or an extra container, consider trying a variety of herb or vegetable you haven't grown before, such as Lemon Spice Jalapeno, Atomic Orange Corn, or Yuxi Jiang Bing Gua Squash.

You can still plant most perennials and shrubs early in the month, as long as your irrigation system is set to go, and you're prepared to supplement with hand-watering if the days grow too hot before the roots have had a chance to grow. Choose plants that can tolerate summer watering well. That means hold off planting manzanita, ceanothus, lavender, and bush lupine. But go ahead and plant sage, yarrow, pelargonium (geranium), bougainvillea, buddleia (butterfly bush), plumbago and crape myrtle, among others.



MAINTAINING: 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. As the weather warms, mow more frequently so you only remove a third or less with each mowing. Mowing too short during the summer can stress the lawn and encourage weeds. If you have a lawn substitute ground cover like yarrow, June is a good month to mow it to four inches tall.

Fertilize warm season lawns: Bermuda, St. Augustine and zoysia. You can also patch and reseed this month. Do not fertilize Fescue and perennial rye until the weather cools again this fall.

Unfortunately, the heat brings out the bugs. But remember it is bringing out the beneficial insects along with the pests. We may notice the pests first but look closely and you may find fairy-like delicate looking lacewings, plus lady bugs, pirate bugs and spiders of all colors and sizes. The first step is to monitor populations of pest insects and see if the beneficials, including birds, can keep the numbers manageable. If some help is needed, follow the "least toxic first" method of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practice before you reach for the kills-everything insecticide. Some of the biggest pest insects to watch for are:

- **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, especially squash, 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.

June is a busy maintenance month. In addition to insect monitoring and management, the following will keep you exercising and getting your fresh air:

- If you haven't already, job number one is to check your irrigation system for damaged sprinkler heads or clogged emitters and make repairs and renovations before the real heat of summer.
- 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 once they finish blooming. 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 before watering.
- 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 ground and then tie up the new green canes in 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. You can also do a light summer pruning of other stone fruit trees. 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 preemergent herbicide in the winter than to selectively try to remove crabgrass from the lawn with a postemergent 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 non-selective or broad-leaf herbicide 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.



Tobacco hornworm larva.
Photo by Jack Kelly Clark



Yellow nutsedge.
Photo by Jack Kelly Clark.

CONSERVING: If you do not know what any of the insects mentioned in this article look like, do some research first so you don't accidentally destroy a fledgling population of allies. Our Master Gardener website and the UC IPM websites are excellent sources of information. We even have an article called "How Can You ID That Bug?" written by our Master Gardener Anne Skinner! One of the best ways to help encourage a healthy garden full of life is to be a careful and frequent observer of what's going on. If you don't have a

great place to sit and watch the activity, why not create one in your "spare time" this month? Do you have a variety of birds, butterflies, moths, bumblebees and native solitary bees? If not, consider reducing your use of synthetic chemicals, allowing some "overgrowth," of shrubs and perennials, adding variety (a new plant!) and tolerating some damage. Continue to conserve water, even with this year's beautiful white snow on the mountain peaks and consider switching to electric or hand-powered tools where possible. Every little bit helps!

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

The UCCE Master Gardeners will be available to answer your gardening questions at the following venues in June:

June 13: 5:30 – 9:00 pm, Hanford Thursday Night Marketplace

June 14: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm, Tule River Indian Health Center Health Fair

You can find us every Saturday from 8-11 am at the **Farmer's Market** in the Visalia Sear's parking lot on Mooney. Masters Gardeners also maintain the Tulare County Courthouse Roses and the Ralph Moore Memorial Garden on the 3rd Wednesday of each month and are available for questions.

*For answers to all your home gardening questions, call the Master Gardeners in Tulare County at (559) 684-3325, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 9:30 and 11:30 am; or Kings County at (559) 852-2736, Thursday Only, 9:30-11:30 a.m; or 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/*

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