

July Gardening Calendar

Written by Janet Oja and Marilyn Stewart, certified WSU Clallam County Master Gardeners.

General: July can be dry! Proper watering is critical. Check the root zone of plants to determine when to water. Water plants deeply but infrequently to encourage roots to go deeper which will make the plants more drought-tolerant. All new plantings need regular water. Containers may need water daily during hot weather. The best time to water is early morning or late afternoon to minimize water loss to evaporation; however, if plants are wilted, water immediately. Always water after fertilizing. Apply 2- to 3-inches of mulch to garden beds to hold in moisture and keep down weeds. Watch for diseases, pests and nutrient deficiencies; consult your local Master Gardeners for help.

Flowers: Deadhead faded flowers to keep energy going into the blooms instead of the seeds. Cut back the top few inches of straggly annuals to improve appearance and stimulate a second bloom. Fertilize plants in containers every 2 weeks with a low-nitrogen liquid fertilizer. Don't feed roses after July.

Stake tall plants such as lilies, delphiniums and sunflowers early in their growth. When staking plants, allow for some plant movement.

July is a good time to divide and transplant spring-blooming bulbs. Divide bearded iris 4 weeks after they bloom so transplants will be well-rooted before winter. Cut young rhizomes (underground structures that send out roots and shoots) away from the older segments; keep only firm rhizomes with a fan of healthy leaves. Plant rhizomes shallowly about 9-inches apart. Keep watered. Leaves may be trimmed to 6 inches. Do not compost iris foliage because of the danger of nurturing iris borers and other pests.

After lilies have bloomed, cut the stalk to just below the lowest flower but leave the remaining stem and leaves to produce energy for next year's flowers. Allow foliage to go brown naturally.

Gather and dry herbs. Harvest lavender just as the buds show color but before they open.

Trees/shrubs: Avoid planting bare-root or ball and burlap specimens this time of year. Prune spring-blooming trees and shrubs. No need to fertilize shrubs and trees unless you notice signs of nutrient deficiency such as stunted growth or distorted or yellowing leaves.

Veggies: Pull out finished crops, replenish the soil and plan your fall/winter vegetable garden. Sow broccoli, carrots, onions, parsley and peas by mid-July and bush beans, beets, kale and lettuce by the end of July. Watch tomatoes for late blight.

Fruit trees and berries: Thin fruit, if necessary, or prop up branches that are heavily loaded with fruit. Prune cherry trees when weather becomes drier. Remove water-sprouts and suckers from trunks of all fruit trees. Cover fruiting plants with netting to protect your harvest from birds, raccoons, and squirrels.

Lawns: Water deeply about once a week, or let lawn go dormant and water once a month. Mow regularly to prevent weed seed spread. Leave clippings behind if they aren't too tall or weedy to return nutrients to the soil. Don't fertilize the lawn during hot, dry weather.

You, the gardener: Relax in a lawn chair or hammock and enjoy your garden and the fruits of your labor!