

## Summer Chores

Now that we have finished planting during the spring rush, the real work begins for the genuine gardener. While the plants are young removing all weeds & putting down mulch is essential unless you enjoy weeding all summer. New plantings need to be kept well watered. Water only morning & evening, using a soaker hose is best. Tomatoes especially should never be watered overhead to prevent disease.

Watch plants carefully for problems with disease & pests. Catching problems early & using the correct remedy will keep plants healthy & prevent the problem from spreading to other plants. Deadheading flowering plants will help keep annuals & perennials in bloom for longer. Annuals especially can be kept flowering until frost with a little maintenance. I enjoy walking around the gardens in the morning with a cup of coffee, a can of hot soapy water, & a small pair of scissors. This is a good time to spot pests while they are slow moving & can be plucked off & put into a can of soapy water. This works well for Japanese beetles, red Lily beetles, slugs & all other beetles. I put the can under the spot where one is sitting, shake the plant a little & the beetle flies down right into the can. No need to touch them.

In the vegetable garden keep an eye out for caterpillars on tomatoes (horn worms), cabbage, broccoli, peppers & other plants. An early application of *Bacillus Thuringiensis* or 'BT' will kill them before they can damage the plants. Start thinking of a fall planting, you can keep the garden going until December with a late planting of many vegetables that enjoy cool weather. Broccoli, cabbage, lettuce & other greens, radishes & kale are cool weather lovers. Harvest vegetables everyday to keep the plants going as long as possible. July is the time to harvest the garlic, if you planted it last fall, cure it for several weeks before using.

*Pinch back Asters, Chrysanthemums & Monarda to keep them bushy & prevent them from getting so tall that they just fall over when they begin to flower in the late summer. The final pinching should be mid July for best results.*

*Mid summer is time to fertilize again for a pick-up. Fish emulsion is a good product to use on vegetables & annuals. This is also a good time to plant biennials for blooming next year. Mark perennials for dividing in the fall or next spring. Bulb catalogs will be arriving at this time. Plan your spring display & order early to be sure to get the bulbs you want.*

*Houseplants love a vacation outdoors for the summer. Put them in the shade & gradually put them into more light. Keep an eye on them for any pests & take care of any problems immediately. Make sure to check beneath the pots as well.*

*Container plantings may need to be watered often when the weather is warm if moisture-retaining crystals were not added when planted. Check every day if they are in full sun. Deadhead spent blooms & fertilize with fish emulsion.*

*Visit nurseries to check out their sales. Perennials can be planted until October. Annuals can be cut back & planted for indoor containers brought in late summer to enjoy through the fall.*

*Most of all take time to enjoy the gardens. Sit out in the evenings with a glass of wine, savor the beautiful weather & admire your work. Invite friends over to share in the beauty.*

*Suzanne Tait*

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