

News Article

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August Lawn and Garden Calendar

The following lawn, landscape and garden suggestions for the month of August are from “Summer Garden Calendar,” Purdue Extension publication HO-92, authored by B. Rosie Lerner. Timing horticultural events and practices can vary from year to year, depending on weather conditions. The following information is intended as a general guide. Adjust activities according to local weather and site conditions, and be sure to read and follow label directions thoroughly on all products.

Indoor Plants and Activities

- Take cuttings from plants such as impatiens, coleus, geraniums, and wax begonias to overwinter indoors. Root the cuttings in media such as moist vermiculite, perlite, peat moss, or potting soil rather than water.
- Order spring-flower bulbs for fall planting.
- Cut flowers from the garden to dry for ever-lasting arrangements.

Woody Landscape Plants and Fruit Trees

- Keep newly established plants well-watered when weather is dry.
- Check trees and shrubs that have been planted in recent years for girdling damage by guy wires, burlap, or ropes.
- Don't fertilize woody plants now. It stimulates late growth that will not have time to harden-off properly before winter.
- Hand prune and destroy bagworms, fall webworms, and tent caterpillars.
- Pears are best ripened off the tree, so do not wait for the fruit to turn yellowish on the tree. Harvest pears when color of fruit changes — usually from a dark green to a lighter green — and when the fruit is easily twisted and removed from the spur.
- Prune and destroy the raspberry and blackberry canes that bore fruits this year. They will not produce fruit again next year, but they may harbor insect and disease organisms.

Lawn

- If white grubs were a problem last year, the lawn should be treated in early August to prevent further injury. Be sure to apply insecticides at the proper rate and follow with at least 1/2 inch of irrigation for best protection.
- Begin seeding new lawns or bare spots in established lawns in late August or September.
- Established lawns can be fertilized beginning in late August if moisture is adequate. Use a fertilizer high in nitrogen with a low level of phosphorus and a moderate level of potassium such as 16-4-8 or 30-3-10.

Flowers, Vegetables, and Small Fruits

- Keep the garden well-watered during dry weather and free of weeds, insects, and disease.
- Complete fall garden planting by direct seeding carrots, beets, kohlrabi, kale, and snap beans early this month. Lettuce, spinach, radishes, and green onions can be planted later in August and early September. Don't forget to thin seedlings to appropriate spacing as needed.
- Harvest onions after the tops yellow and fall, then cure them in a warm, dry, well-ventilated area. The necks should be free of moisture when fully cured in about a week's time.
- Harvest potatoes after the tops yellow and die. Potatoes need to be cured before storage.
- Pick beans, tomatoes, peppers, and squash often to encourage further production.
- Harvest watermelon when several factors indicate ripeness: the underside ground spot turns from whitish to creamy yellow; the tendril closest to the melon turns brown and shrivels; the rind loses its gloss and appears dull; and the melon yields a dull thud sound rather than a ringing sound when thumped.
- Harvest sweet corn when kernels are plump and ooze a milky juice when punctured with your fingernail. If the liquid is watery, you're too early; if the kernels are doughy, you're too late.
- Keep faded flowers pinched off of bedding plants to promote further flowering and to improve plant appearance.
- Spade or till soil for fall bulb planting and add a moderate amount of fertilizer.