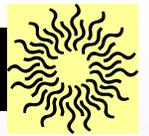


TIPS FOR SUMMER GARDENING



Summer is here and it's time to get that soil fertile again and growing before the autumn harvest season. Learn how to select and apply fertilizer, control insects and snails that are prevalent this time of year, and how to best preserve your garden with a watering program that is best suited for this season and the individual needs of your plants. Then, as things grow in, learn valuable tips on how to best cut and prune plants and trees to help them shed leaves and promote growth.



GARDEN TIPS

Plant Highlights

I think of ground covers as the ideal self-maintaining plants requiring very little care. As a living mulch, they protect the soil from erosion and keep it cool and moist, reducing the need for irrigation. They're green, they cover the ground quickly without being invasive and they grow in shallow soil. Vinca (minor), also known as periwinkle, is fast spreading and hardy. One plant can send out more than 100 stems. In early spring the plants are covered for about one month with 1 inch diameter, showy blue flowers. Vinca grows beautifully in full sun or deep shade. When planted in shade, it's foliage is deeper green, it's growth is not quite as vigorous, but it still forms a nice bed. If you want to stimulate new growth you can cut back the old growth to about 4 inches high in early spring, just before the new growth is up. You can also divide mature plantings – just dig up a clump and transplant it directly into the garden.

Deadheading

Deadheading is removing faded and spent flowers. It improves the plant's appearance and may prolong the blooming period or initiate a second flush of growth. On plants which have foliage on the flower stems, deadhead the spent flowers by cutting them off just above the foliage or along the stem just above the new flower buds. For spring flowering bulbs which have leafless flower stems, cut their spent stands close to the ground.

Pinching

Pinching is removing the growing tips of the plant, usually just above the uppermost full set of leaves. In reaction, the plant produces new branches, grows bushy and compact and flowers later.

Cutting Back

Cutting back means pruning a plant uniformly to reduce its height, renew its appearance or encourage a new flush of growth and flowering. Bloomed-out perennials as well as annuals and herbs that take on a rangey, sunburned appearance in midsummer will produce new growth and often bloom again if cut back. Delphiniums should be deadheaded from the time they first flower in June until they stop in late July. By the second week in August, cut the plant back to the new growth of its base and get a second flush of bloom in September. If you want larger flowers, remove a third of the delphinium stems early in spring. Pansies may flower through summer if consistently deadheaded.

HERB TIPS

Lavender- should not be pruned until late spring or early summer, after new growth has broken from the old wood. With regular deadheading it will flower throughout summer.

Basil- disbud basil completely if you growing it for culinary purposes -flowering will decrease the flavor of the herb.

Mints- Disbudding mints and oregano encourages foliage production. Cut mints to the ground in midsummer and the second crop of tender leaves will develop a few weeks later. The rewards you reap from deadheading, pinching & cutting back include ornamentals with more flowers & more compact growth & herbs with more flavorful leaves.



The only limit to your garden is at the boundaries of your imagination

-Thomas D. Church