

Horticulture Tips

August 2017

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Department of Horticulture & Landscape Architecture
Oklahoma State University

GARDEN TIPS FOR AUGUST!

David Hillock

Vegetables

- August is a good month to start your fall vegetable garden. Bush beans, cucumbers, and summer squash can be replanted for another crop. Beets, broccoli, carrots, potatoes, lettuce, and other cool-season crops can also be planted at this time. ([HLA-6009](#)).
- Soak vegetable seed overnight prior to planting. Once planted, cover them with compost to avoid soil crusting. Mulch to keep planting bed moist and provide shade during initial establishment. Monitor and control insect pests that prevent a good start of plants in your fall garden.

Fruit and Nut

- Continue protective insect applications on the fruit orchard. A good spray schedule is often abandoned too early. Follow directions on last application prior to harvest. ([EPP-7319](#))

Flowers

- Towards the end of the month, divide and replant spring-blooming perennials like iris, peonies, and daylilies if needed.

Lawn and Turf

- Grassy winter weeds like *Poa annua*, better known as annual bluegrass, can be prevented with a preemergence herbicide application in late August. Water in the product after application. ([HLA-6420](#))
- Areas of turf with large brown spots should be checked for high numbers of grubs. Mid-to-late August is the best time to control heavy white grub infestations in the lawn. Apply appropriate insecticide if white grubs are a problem. Water product into soil. ([HLA-7306](#))
- Tall fescue should be mowed at 3 inches during the hot summer and up to 3½ inches if it grows under heavier shade. ([HLA-6420](#))
- For areas being converted to tall fescue this fall, begin spraying out bermudagrass with a product containing glyphosate in early August. ([HLA-6419](#))
- Irrigated warm-season lawns can be fertilized once again; apply 0.5 lb N/1,000 sq ft in early to mid-August.
- Brown patch of cool-season grasses can be a problem. ([HLA-6420](#))

Trees and Shrubs

- Discontinue deadheading roses by mid-August to help initiate winter hardiness.

- Watch for second generation of fall webworm in late August/early September. Remove webs that enclose branches and destroy; or spray with good penetration with an appropriate insecticide.

General

- Water compost during extremely dry periods so that it remains active. Turn the pile to generate heat throughout for proper sterilization.
- Always follow directions on both synthetic and natural pesticide products.
- Watch for high populations of caterpillars, aphids, spider mites, thrips, scales and other insects on plant material in the garden and landscape and treat as needed. ([EPP-7306](#))
- Water all plants thoroughly unless rainfall has been adequate. It is better to water more in depth, less often and early in the morning.

Dividing Perennials

David Hillock

As perennials mature they often need dividing to encourage vigor and continued performance. Luckily the plants provide us a few clues when it is time to divide them - smaller leaves and fewer flowers, weaker stems, the center becomes open and all the growth is on the perimeter of the clump or it may have just outgrown its spot.

The general rule for when a perennial should be divided is opposite its flowering time. So a plant that flowers in the spring can be divided after it flowers, usually in late summer or fall. Late August is a good time to start dividing these types of perennials in Oklahoma. Some plants don't care when they are divided, but in any case care should be taken to ensure survival of the new transplants.

Start by digging a trench around the outside of the clump and then lift the entire clump from the ground. Using a sharp knife or spade begin cutting the clump up into smaller clumps about the size of your fist or a gallon sized perennial. Each section should have at least three healthy buds or shoots.

Discard the older unproductive portions and the weak spindly portions and keep the more vigorous sections. Remove any diseased parts and make clean cuts to any damaged roots.

Prepare the area by digging wide, shallow holes to accommodate the roots. Place the plant sections in the holes by spreading the roots out over the ground and cover them back up. The crown of the plant should be at the same depth as it was before dividing it. Planting too deep may delay or completely hinder flowering of some species. Water the plants and keep the soil moist for several weeks to encourage new root growth.

If you have extras, share them with a friend.

Growing Fall Irish Potatoes

David Hillock

If seed potatoes are available and space permits, potatoes are a desirable supplement to the fall and winter food supply. Yields are usually lower than from spring-planted potatoes, but proper storage is much easier to provide and potato quality is excellent.

The practice of using potatoes from the fresh produce counter for planting purposes is not recommended. This kind of material frequently does not produce adequate growth and is considerably lower in yield.

One of the problems is getting a stand of plants early enough to produce a crop before fall frosts. This emphasizes the need to use matured, medium-to-large potatoes that require cutting into 1 or 1 1/2 ounce size seed pieces.

Cut potatoes should be allowed to cure three to five days before planting, and they should be stored under cool (45° to 65°F) conditions during curing.

In order to have a more favorable (cooler) soil at planting time, deep furrows may be opened in the late afternoon, seed pieces planted, covered with two inches of soil, watered, and mulched with straw or other available organic material. This should provide more favorable conditions for growth.

Help! Weeds are Taking Over the Garden

David Hillock

If you have been on vacation or just not had time to get into the garden this summer, especially with the 100-degree weather we have had, your gardens may be overrun with weeds. It doesn't take long in Oklahoma for weeds to take control and create a real headache. Weeds in the flower and vegetable garden compete for nutrients, soil moisture, sunlight, and space with desirable plants. By this time of year, we are more likely to throw our hands into the air and walk away from it all. However, don't despair because it is possible to regain control.

If your annual flowerbed or vegetable garden is going downhill fast, then you may consider starting over by killing everything in the garden bed. If you still have desirable plants that you want to save, then a different approach may be necessary.

If you are willing to sacrifice what is left of the flowers and vegetables for sake of gaining control, then you can spray the garden with a product containing glyphosate, such as Roundup, Kleenup, Kleeraway, etc. Glyphosate is a non-selective herbicide that will kill both grass and broadleaf plants. It breaks down quickly and is not active in the soil so you can replant in the area within a reasonable amount of time following treatment. Apply while weeds are actively growing for best results.

If you wish to save some of the plants in the garden, then you will need to determine what types of weeds you have. If they are broadleaf weeds such as dandelion, spurge, etc., then you are somewhat out of luck unless you want to pull them by hand. There are no postemergence, broadleaf herbicides available as over-the-top sprays that can be used in the ornamental or vegetable garden that won't damage or kill your desirable plants. If the weeds are grasses, then you have some choices.

Two chemicals, sethoxydim (Poast, Grass Getter, etc.) for use on ornamentals and certain vegetables, and fluazifop-p-butyl (Grass-B-Gone, Grass-Out, etc.) for ornamentals, are available as over-the-top sprays that will kill grassy weeds but not the desirable plants. However, like most pesticides, some damage may occur to some plant species, so it is best to read the label and make sure it is safe to use on your particular crops in your particular situation before purchasing.

Next spring, and possibly even this fall, you will want to use a preemergence herbicide to control any weed seeds left in the garden, if you are not planning on starting new plants by seed. In most cases, if you are starting your garden by seed, preemergence herbicides can be used, but only after your plants have germinated and become well-established seedlings. A product containing trifluralin (Preen) is available for use in ornamental and vegetable beds. More than one application may be needed to provide season long control.

Once you have gained control again of your garden, it shouldn't be as difficult to maintain. Staying on top of new weeds that pop up by occasional hand pulling, light cultivation, and the use of mulches should ensure a healthier, more productive garden in the future.

Attracting Birds to Landscapes and Outdoor Areas

David Hillock

Attracting birds to landscapes and outdoor areas is an activity that can bring much enjoyment to the entire family. Landscaping and gardening for birds is gaining in popularity as people become more aware of the benefits of having a diverse environment around them. Bringing these beautiful creatures near home sites also helps manage insect populations and maintain the ecological balance of outdoor environments.

Birds need three things to survive — food, water, and shelter. These elements can easily be supplied in your backyard. One of the key elements for attracting many species of birds is a wide variety of plants arranged into sheltered areas of shrubs and trees, open areas of lawns and gardens, and/or wet areas around ponds and streams.

Gardeners and landscapers should be aware that the predominant habitat type in the area will determine which bird species can be attracted to a yard. For example, if the entire neighborhood is heavily wooded, purple martins will be difficult or impossible to attract. On the other hand, areas with many tall, mature trees will have numerous birds, such as some of the owls, vireos, and warblers, that open areas may not attract. Some species such as the cardinal and mockingbird require shrub cover. In particular, if you have a new house in a recently built residential area,

give the yard time to mature; as the shrubs and trees grow, so will the number of birds in your yard. New areas with few mature trees and little shelter for birds will take several years to become hospitable places for birds requiring trees and shrubs.

Seven Steps to Landscaping Your Yard for Wildlife

1. Set your objectives and priorities. Decide which types of birds or other animals you may feasibly attract given the habitat surrounding your yard and already in place (for example, whether the area is open, forested, etc.). Organize your landscape design accordingly, using plants that you know will work best for you.
2. Draw a map of your property. A map will help determine how much available space you have and other features about your yard. A map can help you experiment with different designs, keeping in mind those areas that are shady, sunny, wet, dry, or scenic.
3. Review the basic needs of birds (food, water, shelter, cover) and determine those components already present in your yard and those that may be lacking. Check local sources for listings of plants to determine which plants are appropriate for your area that you may want or need to obtain. Realize that while your yard and garden may not provide all of the necessary components, your neighbor's yards may contain some of these. Emphasize native plants!
4. Check with natural resource professionals and various reference books at your library or bookstore for practical tips.
5. Develop a planting plan. It is important to draw shrubbery and trees at full or mature size to plan for space needs. Determine how much money you are willing to spend. Realize that you do not have to plant it all in one season. Use native plants where possible.
6. Implement your plan. Shop local nurseries and garden centers as well as catalogues of plant and seed suppliers to determine the availability of plant materials. Keep records of your expenses and take pictures as your plan develops.
7. Maintain your plan. This involves watering, fertilizing, pruning, weeding, and mowing. Maintaining nest boxes and feeders on a regular basis is also necessary.

Further Wildlife Enhancements

1. Leave as many thick, dead branches and tree trunks (snags) in your landscape as possible. Woodpeckers, chickadees, warblers, nuthatches, and brown creepers will look for insects on them. Other birds can use the cavities in dead wood for homes. Safety of the trees must be considered, too.
2. Place short pieces of yarn (4 to 6 inches), hair, or the feathers from an old feather pillow in the yard. Birds will use the material for their nests.
3. Keep a small area of your garden muddy for robins and swallows to use for making their mud nests.
4. Minimize the use of chemicals in your yard. The more insects around the yard, the more birds you will have. Try to remove problem insects by hand. Some insects can be ignored without damaging plants too much. Most plants can tolerate some insect or disease damage without harmful effects.

5. If you have a cat, keep it indoors as much as possible. Keeping the cat inside all the time would be best. Cats are very efficient predators and can kill numerous birds each day, generally more than the owner realizes. Encourage your neighbors to keep their cats inside or to use collars with bells.

Open, dry, dusty areas are great for birds to use as dust baths. Leave a small area of the garden unplanted and dry to make a dust bath. Stir up the soil occasionally to get it started. A pile of sand or crushed egg shells nearby can also serve as grit for birds that need it for digestion of food.

For more detailed information on food, water, shelter, nesting boxes, and plant material recommended to attract birds, see OCES Fact Sheet [HLA-6435 Landscaping and Gardening for Birds](#).

Upcoming Events

Cimarron Valley Research Station Horticulture Field Day Part II – August 1

Want to know what is going on at the Cimarron Valley Research Station with horticultural crops? Make plans to attend the scheduled Horticulture Field Day on August 1, 2017 from 1 to 4 p.m. This tour and field day will be similar to the May field day that was held but a new batch of crops will be toured and discussed. Please meet at the North entrance on 104th Street just north of Perkins. There is no charge for event. Participants will get to tour and learn about pumpkins, cow peas, grapes, pecan crop load thinning and other horticultural crops.

Fall Pecan Field Day Set for September 22

Knight Creek Farms near Sapulpa will host an upcoming field day for interested pecan growers. This free event will showcase topics like early pecan harvest and drying operations; row harvesting; new planting and irrigation options; wildlife control options; and marketing. The field day is scheduled to begin at 2 p.m. on Friday, September 22 and dinner will begin at 6 p.m. sponsored by Grissoms John Deere. More information and directions will be available soon for this event presented by Oklahoma State University, Noble Research Institute and Oklahoma Pecan Grower's Association.

Viticulture & Enology Workshop Scheduled October 24

A special workshop will be held at Waddell's Vineyard & Winery near Ada on October 24. Registration for the event will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the presentations will commence at 9 a.m. Featured speakers from Texas AgriLife Extension program include Dr. Justin Scheiner and Michael Cook.

Dr. Scheiner will be making a return appearance to share expertise on many applicable topics for our Oklahoma growers. He was a favorite presenter at a 2014 advanced training workshop. Michael Cook is located out of Denton, Texas and has been spending some quality time in some of our Oklahoma vineyards lately. He has provided consultations to vineyards that had requested

site visits through an Oklahoma Grape Industries Council grant. The OGIC grant as well as the grant for this workshop was made possible through the ODAFF Viticulture & Enology Fund.

Some possible topics for the day's workshop include Grape Cultivar Selection, Fruit & Foliar Diseases, Understanding Vineyard Fungicides, and Grapevine Nutrition. Many of the topics will address challenges that vineyards are encountering as observed by Michael Cook on his site visits. This will be an excellent learning opportunity and will benefit all grape growers. An agenda will be available soon with more details on how to register for this free workshop. Lunch will be catered so an accurate count of those planning to attend will be helpful.

SAVE THE DATE – March 8, 2018 for a Horticulture “Spray Day”

A new horticultural event is in the planning stage that will be focusing on **spraying**, including fungicide, insecticide, and herbicides. This event will be held at the Cimarron Valley Research Station and open to anyone interested. Emphasis will be on equipment demonstrations for different crops and different sizes of operations; question and answer times; sessions on calibration, worker protection standards, pesticide certification requirements and pest management. We hope to have vendors with different types of equipment and chemical representatives in attendance. Sponsored by Oklahoma State University Horticulture & Landscape Architecture Department, Oklahoma Field Research Service Unit, Noble Research Institute, Oklahoma Pecan Growers, Oklahoma Grape Industries Council, and Oklahoma Fruit & Vegetable Growers.