

# Horticulture Tips

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

### **GARDEN TIPS FOR JULY!**

*David Hillock*

#### General Landscape

- Water plants deeply and early in the morning. Most plants need approximately 1 to 2½ inches of water per week.
- Providing birdbaths, shelter and food will help turn your landscape into a backyard wildlife habitat.
- Insect identification is important so you don't get rid of the "Good Guys." ([EPP-7307](#))
- The hotter and drier it gets, the larger the spider mite populations!
- Expect some leaf fall, a normal reaction to drought. Water young plantings well.

#### Vegetable Garden

- Make fall vegetable garden plantings in late July. Fact Sheet [HLA-6009](#) gives planting recommendations.

#### Lawn

- Brown patch disease of cool-season grasses can be a problem. ([HLA-6420](#))
- Meet water requirements of turfgrasses. ([HLA-6420](#))
- Fertilization of warm-season grasses can continue if water is present for growth. ([HLA-6420](#))
- Vegetative establishment of warm-season grasses should be completed by the end of July to ensure the least risk of winter kill. ([HLA-6419](#))
- Mowing heights for cool-season turfgrasses should be at 3 inches during hot, dry summer months. Gradually raise mowing height of bermudagrass lawns from 1½ to 2 inches.
- Sharpen or replace mower blades as needed. Shredded leaf blades are an invitation to disease and allow more stress on the grass.

#### Flowers

- Divide and replant crowded Hybrid iris (Bearded Iris) after flowering until August.

#### Tree and Shrub

- Control bermudagrass around trees and shrubs with products containing sethoxydim, fusillade or glyphosate herbicides. Follow directions closely to avoid harming desirable plants.

## Fruits

- Continue insect combat and control in the orchard, garden, and landscape. ([EPP-7306](#), [EPP-7313](#), [EPP-7319](#))
- Check pesticide labels for “stop” spraying recommendations prior to harvest.
- Harvest fruit from the orchard early in the morning and refrigerate as soon as possible.

## **Pecan, Peach, Apple, Grape & Blackberry Tissue Sampling for Fertilization Recommendations**

*Becky Carroll*

Grape, blackberry, pecan and tree fruit growers have an easy to use and inexpensive way to monitor the fertility needs of their plants. Although fertilizer is applied in the springtime, mid-July is the time to determine what grape, pecan, peach or apple trees require for best health and production. Tissue analysis is a reliable management tool used to indicate the fertility needs. Soil samples indicate what nutrients are in the soil, but tissue samples reflect what the plant is able to take up from the soil. Pecans & fruit trees can be monitored by collecting leaf samples while grapevine monitoring requires collection of leaf petioles.

Mid-July is the time frame for sampling pecan, peach and apple leaves. Grapevines should be sampled during veraison (berry color change), which varies greatly within types and varieties of grapes but is normally around mid- to late July. Blackberries can be sampled in early August after harvest. Pecan and fruit tree leaf samples are collected according to fact sheet [HLA-6232 Fertilizing Pecan and Fruit Trees](#) or the simplified instructions located at <http://okpecans.okstate.edu/news/pecan-leaf-samples-instructions>. Grapevine petiole sampling procedures can be found at <http://www.grapes.okstate.edu/news/july-is-grape-petiole-sampling-time>. Blackberries leaf samples are collected from primocanes or non-fruiting shoots using fully matured leaves from the middle of the canes. About 60-80 leaves will make up a sample.

Results will only be as accurate as the sample collected so it is advised to follow the directions. Once the leaves are sampled, they should be submitted to the local county extension office. The cost for tissue analysis is \$20. The extension office will send the samples to the OSU Soil, Water, and Forage Lab. The results will be returned to the extension educator for interpretation and then shared with the grower. Interpretation guidelines are available on the OSU SWAFL website <http://soiltesting.okstate.edu/soil-test-interpretation-program>.

Fertilizer recommendations will be provided for the following spring application. Frequently growers find out that they are applying unnecessary nutrients and can reduce their costs of fertilizing. The fee for a tissue sample can be an inexpensive tool to determine shortages or excesses before problems develop.

For collection or interpretation questions, please contact [becky.carroll@okstate.edu](mailto:becky.carroll@okstate.edu).

## **Tomato Blossom-End Rot**

*David Hillock*

This is a common physiological disorder. A small water soaked spot appears near the blossom end of affected tomatoes and enlarges, darkens and becomes sunken and leathery. Fruits are most commonly affected when they are a third to half grown. Blossom-end Rot (BER) often occurs on developing fruit when plants have grown rapidly during the early part of the season and then are subjected to prolonged dry weather. Other factors that increase BER are heavy applications of nitrogenous fertilizers, a widely fluctuating water supply and hot, dry winds. The exact nature of this disease is still debated, but involves an imbalance in amount of calcium in the fruit.

Control - On soils known to be deficient in calcium, use agricultural lime and avoid overfertilizing with commercial fertilizer. Use gypsum as a supplement to liming on calcium-deficient soils. Provide an even supply of water to the plants and avoid any water stress (mulching encourages even soil moisture and temperatures; irrigate during hot, dry periods). Plant in well-drained soil. Within one foot of the plant, do not cultivate deeper than one inch. Protection from exposure to wind is beneficial, also. Affected plants can also be sprayed with a commercially-available calcium preparation. ([EPP-7627](#) - Common Diseases of Tomatoes, Part 3: Non-Infectious Diseases)

## **Injury Prevention Tips for Gardening**

*David Hillock*

Using common sense and joint/muscle protection techniques can help minimize potential injury or overuse of our hands and arms.

Gardening, a common summer time activity, can cause repetitive injuries if not done correctly. It is important to take precautions to avoid injuries. Gardening is made up of many repetitive activities such as weeding, digging, raking, lifting, gripping, stooping, squatting, etc. The nature of these activities places the avid gardener at higher risk for injury than those with a more stationary hobby. For those who work full time and garden in their off time, the risk of injury is even greater since the body doesn't have time to recover between activities.

The repetitive nature of gardening places stress on the hands, wrists, elbows, neck, back, hips, knees and ankles. Poor posture and awkward positions only increase the stress to the body. Using proper ergonomics, good posture and performing warm up exercises prior to gardening can help prevent injuries.

There are numerous ergonomic tools for gardening available at home and garden stores and online. These tools are designed to place less stress on the body during use, thus, helping to prevent injuries. For the do-it-yourselfer, tool handles can be built up using padded tape called "Wrap N Grip" or foam pipe insulation. Another alternative is to wear padded gloves like those used by bikers or weightlifters. Any of these options will increase traction for gripping, decrease

the amount of muscle force needed to grip, and decrease the stress and strain on the joints. Tools ideal for padding include rakes, shovels, trowels, pruning shears, and spray nozzles.

Periodic maintenance of tools can lessen the chance of injury. Shovels, hoes, trowels, and pruning shears require less muscle force to use if kept sharp. Tools with moving parts should be lubricated. Simple modifications to help prevent injuries include:

- Stretch before and after gardening
- Change position frequently
- Keep work as close to your body as possible
- Avoid reaching
- Use light weight equipment
- Use step stools or ladders to avoid reaching overhead
- Use two hands when possible
- Avoid twisting the forearm
- Keep elbows slightly bent
- Avoid overexertion
- Keep wrists in neutral
- Avoid a tight sustained grip
- Take short breaks every hour
- Bend from knees instead of from your back
- Keep back straight
- Rotate activities
- Use padding under the knees when kneeling

If, despite your best efforts, you get a sprain or strain, use the “RICE” principle (rest, ice, compression, and elevation). Once injured, it is important to limit aggravating activities to avoid making the injury worse. If symptoms persist, your doctor may recommend a brace, prescribe an anti-inflammatory, and/or make a referral for physical or occupational therapy.

## **Summer is for Fall Harvest**

*David Hillock*

Summer may not seem like the best time to be thinking about a fall garden, but in actuality July through September is the time to start planting several vegetable varieties in order to have a fall harvest. Some tender vegetables that can be started in July and August and harvested before fall frosts include beans, cilantro, sweet corn, cucumber, pumpkin, and summer and winter squash. Be sure to choose varieties that mature early and are disease resistant. Some semi-hardy plants, those that may continue to grow and be harvested after several frosts, include beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, garlic, leaf lettuce, parsnip, and radish.

Climatic conditions of July and August involve high soil temperature, high light intensity, and rapid drying of the soil, resulting in an increase in the problems of obtaining a uniform stand of

plants. Achieving a full stand of plants in the heat of summer may require special treatments. This might include shade over rows when seeded and supplemental watering to reduce soil temperature and aid in seed germination.

Insects and weeds can be more prevalent this time of year so check frequently for insect activity and weed growth and use appropriate control measures. For more information on planting a fall garden see OSU Extension Fact Sheet [HLA-6009](#) Fall Gardening.

## **Culinary Herbs for Oklahoma Gardens**

*David Hillock*

Culinary herbs are plants grown for flavoring various kinds of foods. Many kinds are adapted to and grow successfully in Oklahoma gardens. The plants, in many instances, are ornamental and interesting to grow.

Frequently, the beginner plants far too much of individual kinds of herbs. Since very small amounts are used in most foods, plan on growing few plants of each kind that is not frequently used.

In many instances the flavors imparted by home-grown herbs are stronger or more pungent than available commercial materials so use very small quantities until experienced.

The general culture of herb plants is quite similar to both vegetables and flowers. Suitable soil, mulching, irrigation, plant spacing and insect control should be followed. In the control of insects and diseases the gardener must recognize needed cautions regarding chemical residues on plant parts which will be harvested and used. For pesticide recommendations, contact your local County Cooperative Extension office.

Herbs are classified with respect to their life span. Some are annuals and thus grown from seed with the knowledge that portions will be harvested at the appropriate time. Usually mature seeds may be harvested and used for plantings in future years.

Other kinds are biennials which suggest the plant will grow and produce during portions of two seasons. Seed production generally takes place only during the second year of growth. With carrot and caraway, the usual flavoring substance used is the seed while with parsley it is the foliage. The seeds would be the product of the second growing season while the best parsley foliage for flavoring would be produced the first season.

Another group of herbs are perennials and may grow and produce several years from one planting. In several instances seeds are not produced so the grower may use bulbs, roots, rhizomes or cuttings to propagate more plants.

Harvesting and storage - Those herbs used as leaves usually are more flavorful when harvested at or just before blooming. In such instances, harvest portions of the stems with leaves and flowers

or flower buds attached. Following thorough drying in locations with minimum sunlight to reduce the loss of color, materials may be stored in darkened areas in airtight containers or in containers in the freezer.

Some herbs are preferred as fresh material to be used as a garnish thus might not be collected for drying.

Many herbs are available commercially as dry, rather finely ground or rubbed materials. For those who desire to grind or pulverize home processed materials, it is best to grind only small amounts rather than all as soon as dried. There may be a greater loss in aroma and flavor following prolonged storage after grinding.

Some Culinary Herbs for Oklahoma

Annuals: Anise, Basil, Borage, Coriander, Dill, Fennel, Garden Cress, Nasturtium,

Savory

Biennials: Carrot, Caraway, Parsley

Perennials: Chives, Garlic, Horseradish, Lemon Balm, Mints, Oregano, Rosemary, Sage, Tarragon, Thyme

**Plant Materials for the Green Industry Professional and End Consumer: The Green Industry's Evolution in Management, Cultural Practices and Plant Materials – Shackelford Lecture Series - August 9, 2018, Wes Watkins Center, OSU, Stillwater, OK**

*Mike Schnelle*

This conference features speakers addressing ornamental plant materials as well as how and why the green industry has evolved over the last few decades. Attendees will enjoy presentations from leading green industry professionals as well as academics. Landscape architects, horticulturists, landscapers, Master Gardeners, Linnaeus Gardeners and anyone else with an interest and appreciation for plant materials will benefit from this event. Continuing education units are anticipated from both the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry as well as the American Society for Landscape Architects. Registration is \$40 and includes lunch. For registration and other information, please visit [www.hortla.okstate.edu/events](http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/events).