

## **AUGUST CHECK LIST**

- Trees, shrubs and garden perennials are busy packing away food energy (carbohydrates) for winter survival. It is best to withhold pruning and nitrogen fertilizers, since doing so will help prevent the stimulation of late shoot development at the expense of stored energy.
- To encourage hardening up for winter, avoid frequent watering, which tends to encourage growth, except for newly planted trees and shrubs, which should be watered regularly till dormancy.

### ***VEGETABLE GARDEN***

- For general disease control a great product to have on hand is Ortho's "Multi-Purpose Fungicide". It is not only labeled for vegetables, but also lawns, fruit trees, ornamentals and flowering plants.
- August is prime harvesting month. Be sure to monitor moisture needs in the garden during production time. Mulching will help soils hold moisture longer during the dog days of summer.
- Cut the tip ends off cucumber, pumpkin and squash runners to force late fruiting.
- Keep potatoes well hilled to prevent sunburn.
- Pull soil away from onions for larger bulbs. Do not bend over onion tops. This does not speed up growth, but slows it down as the tissue is pinched off to the bulbs. When onions naturally fall over, it's a sign that they are finished growing.
- In early August you can still plant fall peas, spinach and lettuce.
- Water compost pile and new materials as added. Moisture is critical during hot days to keep the compost pile working.
- Keep fighting weeds. The ones that get away will haunt you for years to come.
- Practice your sweet corn harvesting skills. The goal is to be able to tell when corn is ready, without pulling back the shucks. The silks must first be dried and brown. Feel the ends of cobs to determine if kernels have filled out then feel if the cobs have filled the shucks completely. Check yourself as you like, by peeling back the shuck and checking. A final test is to pop a tip corn kernel with your fingernail. If it's watery and clear, it's too young. If it's watery and milky it's ready. If milky and thick, it's overripe.
- In late August garlic tops will have dried up. Harvest the garlic, separate cloves and replant.

### ***ORCHARD AND FRUIT***

- Keep watering apples while fruits are enlarging. Moisture is very critical during this time.
- Continue spraying fruit trees for codling moths, curculio worms, etc.

### ***TREES AND SHRUBS***

- By mid to late August, trees will have stored about 90% of the nutrient reserves they need for winter. Insect control after this point would be of little help. Spray only if damage is extremely severe. The best treatment to offset effects of insect damage is to provide deep irrigation.
- Be careful when trimming around trees. Grass and weed trimmers can damage young trees, even girdle them.

### ***LAWN***

- Extension Horticulture Specialist, Bob Gough, recommends fertilizing around these holidays: Memorial Day, Labor Day and Columbus Day. General lawn fertilizer recommendations: 6-7 lbs. of 24-4-4 per 1,000 square feet of lawn.

- Don't mow grass too short. Set mower blades to a height of 2 ½ inches. At this height weed seeds will be shaded out and lawn will grow more vigorously.
- Mow before grass gets out of hand. A good rule to follow is to mow so you remove about 1/3 of the grass blades. This allows remaining grass plants plenty of leaf surface for fast recovery.
- Keep fighting perennial weeds.
- From Aug. 15 - Sept. 15 is one of the best times for lawn grass seeding.

### ***FLOWER GARDEN***

- Continue removing spent blooms to encourage more blossoms.
- Between Aug. 15 & Sept. 15, all perennial flowering plants should be divided and transplanted, or new ones should be planted. This allows roots to establish before winter.
- This is also the best time to lift, divide, and replant perennial bulbs such as irises, tulips, daffodils, grape hyacinths, etc. Also, dust the cut surfaces of irises with a fungicide powder to help prevent infection of the cut surfaces. If severe winter conditions should occur shortly after transplanting, a mulch should be applied to prevent immediate freezing of the soil, allowing time for the roots to form in unfrozen soil. The plants should be well watered to prevent winter desiccation.

### ***HOUSEPLANTS***

- To encourage denseness in your poinsettia, pinch the terminal inch of each stem at the end of August. Be sure to return the plant to a warm window before nights become chilly.