

This Month in the Garden

by Peggy Koppmann



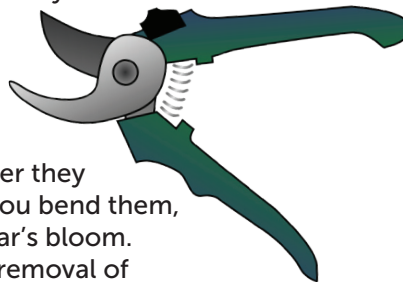
June is a happy month. The first month of the summer season brings peonies, iris, roses, delphiniums and so many plants and blooms that satisfy and gratify the gardener. June in the garden brings a sense of peace and refuge from the demands of technology, social media, and phones. Go hide in the garden and enjoy the beauty of June.

Pollinator Policy – When adding new plants to your garden, choose those that support bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinating insects. Add a serviceberry (*Amalanchier* spp.), wild columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), and fall Asters. Bees don't favor red flowers but they are favorites of butterflies and hummingbirds. Small native bees prefer small flowers like yarrow (*Achillea* spp.) or composite flowers such as purple coneflowers (*Echinacea purpurea*). Bumblebees can get inside the larger flowers of Baptisia. Some research suggests that cultivars are not as attractive to pollinators as the native plant, so choose carefully. It's also important to ask if your new plants have been treated with systemic insecticides such as neonicotinoids. Do your homework and learn more at pollinatorgardens.org.

June Drop – Apple trees usually set more fruit than they can support and drop some young fruit in what's called the "June drop". Six inches between fruits is optimum, so wait till the fruit fall is finished before deciding how much additional fruit to remove.

Pruning Pointers – Prune rhododendrons right after they finish blooming. The old bloom will snap off when you bend them, but don't damage the small buds that will be next year's bloom. Forsythia and lilacs that are established can tolerate removal of about 1/3 of the oldest branches for rejuvenation pruning. This ratio maintains a balance between above-ground growth and the root system. If the plant loses too much of the leafy growth, it may send out suckers or water sprouts. You can reduce the plant's height by cutting back remaining shoots by 1/2 to 1/3, or less if needed.

Just a Pinch – Now's the time to pinch back annuals such as coleus, Petunias, snapdragons, Zinnias, Impatiens, and Salvia to



encourage side growth. Pinch right above a node where the leaves attach to the stem – but not too low or the size of the plant will be compromised. The result will be bushier plants with more blooms

Basil Basics – Consider planting basil as an edging plant along a bed or path; the aroma will be released when you brush past. Remove the flower spikes regularly to promote branching and growth. Local nurseries now offer many interesting varieties for culinary and other herbal uses. Check out the info on 17 basil varieties at rodalorganicle.com or another listing at pantrygardenherbs.com to help decide what to add to your garden.

Try Something New – Oh, the delights at plantdelights.com! Add something new and different to your garden this year. Take a look at Baptisia 'Pink Truffles', a wide variety of the Epimediums mentioned by Kathy Shadrack at our last meeting, or a double-white Hellebore called 'Molly's White'. There's always room for one more new plant.

And then – Place cutworm collars; keep harvesting asparagus; remove rhubarb seed stalks; monitor pines for sawfly damage; apply slug bait; prune spent peony blooms to reduce gray mold disease; support your local nurseries; and mark your calendar for the Garden Walk season - see you there!



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