



Oh, the dog days of summer. Technically, they are over by August 11, marking the end of the hottest and muggiest days of the summer season. We tend to move a little more slowly in the August garden – partly due to the heat and often because we are weary by now. Don't sweat the work yet undone, just forgive yourself and wait for cooler days to tackle some of these tasks.

It's Not Easy Being Green – Even Kermit would agree that lawns should be allowed to go dormant and mowed at 3" to support strong root systems. Don't reseed now, wait for cooler temperatures. Cornell recommends the period between August 15 and September 25 to give cool-season grasses time to establish before cold weather. Cooler temps also mean less competition from weeds and easier watering.

More Veggies Please – Take advantage of ways to increase your garden yield by harvesting early and often to keep plants in reproduction mode longer. Make small sowings of succession crops, (carrots, beets, turnips, radishes, lettuce, spinach); lift and compost spent plants to free up planting space. Pinch out the side shoots of tomatoes and cucumbers to increase yield. Pinch back new blossoms as they form. Increase potato yields by increasing water. Gently reposition squash and pumpkins to allow them to grow bigger.

Get a Gator – Take a look at treegator or tree watering rings to provide water for trees planted recently. Trees are surprisingly susceptible to drought. Check the Colorado State extension service for an article on "Taking Care of Newly Planted Trees" for additional information. An interesting tidbit from that article: "Larger



volumes of water applied infrequently will not compensate for the need for frequent, light irrigation." Taking proper care of your trees is truly an investment in the future.

Baby Your Back – By this time in the summer, garden chores may have taken a toll on your back. If you want to keep working in the garden, it's important to observe some basic rules. Don't rush or jerk - move slowly. Breathe - don't hold your breath when lifting. Keep objects close to your body when lifting them. Lift with your knees – not your back. Keep your back straight. Keep objects close to your body when lifting. It's just good form.

Division and Multiplication – Multiply the number of available plants by dividing iris, rudbeckia, Echinacea, daylilies, oriental poppies, and tall phlox. Wait till they finish blooming before dividing and give yourself a good sized clump – it'll bloom sooner. Cut back the foliage by half before replanting.

And then – Continue to fertilize containers and trim them to extend the bloom season; order fall bulbs for autumn delivery; keep asparagus well weeded; sow another crop of peas; water your compost pile if needed to keep it cooking; stop fertilizing roses after August 15; cut back berry canes that have finished fruiting; weed – they steal moisture and nutrients; take cuttings of coleus, geraniums, and begonias; harvest and share your seasonal bounty. 🌱



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