

DIVERSIFIED

By Greg Gruben

Garden Checklist for June

- Take a critical look at your landscape at the height of summer development. Make notes of any plants that need replacement, overgrown plants that need to be removed, better arrangements for your landscape, and possible activity areas that can be enjoyed by family members. These are good projects for next winter.
- Check for insects and diseases. Spider mites can be especially troublesome at this time. Insecticidal soaps can be helpful in their control. Remove and destroy severely infested annual plants.
- The best way to conserve garden moisture is mulching. Good mulch not only retains valuable moisture needed for plant growth, but also improves overall gardening success.
- Hand pull or hoe weeds before they mature and produce seed.
- Mulches are usually applied 2- to 6-inches deep, depending on the material used. In general, the coarser the material, the deeper the mulch. For example, a 2-inch layer of cotton seed hulls will have about the same mulching effect as 6 inches of oat straw or 4 inches of coastal Bermuda grass hay.
- Removing faded flowers from the plant before it sets seed will keep them growing and producing more flowers. A light application of fertilizer every four to six weeks will also be helpful.
- Houseplants can be moved outside this month. Sink the pots in a cool, shaded garden bed to prevent them from drying out too quickly. Water pots, container plants and hanging baskets often. Monthly feeding with a household fertilizer encourages continued growth.
- Now is the time to plan for next spring. Consider digging and dividing any crowded spring bulbs. Once bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them up and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every three to four years. Replant immediately in prepared soils.
- June is the month to select day lily varieties as they reach their peak bloom.
- Fertilize rose beds every four to six weeks. Apply small amounts of fertilizer high in nitrogen immediately after a flush of bloom or every four to six weeks.
- There is still time to plant some of the heat-tolerant summer annuals. You can direct-seed zinnias and portulaca, and purchase periwinkle, salvia, marigold and purslane plants for transplanting. Be sure to water transplants adequately until roots become established.
- Pinch back chrysanthemums, Mexican marigold mint, autumn asters and other late summer and fall blooming annuals to prevent the necessity for staking.
- Reblooming salvias such as *Salvia greggii* and *S. farinacea* (such as *S. 'Henry Duelberg'*) should be pruned back periodically during the summer. To make the job easier use hedging shears and remove only the spent flowers and a few inches of stem below. Fall blooming perennials such as Mexican marigold mint (*Tagetes lucida*), chrysanthemums, physostegia, and *Salvia leucantha* (Mexican bush sage) should be pruned in the same manner during the summer to keep them compact, reducing the need for staking. This

type of pruning should be completed prior to September 1st, since flower buds begin forming about that time

Source: Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, Texas AgriLife Extension Service

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