

July Hints 2010

Let the landscape rest. We are entering our least productive season for planting here in Central Texas, except for the following tough summer vegetables. Accordingly, the planting recommendations are slim this month. Your best bet is to survive through the heat while you plan for the fall garden.

Prepare and plant beds for the fall vegetable garden.

Plant vegetable seeds. Chard, sweet corn, cucumber, okra, black-eyed peas, pumpkin, salsify, New Zealand spinach, summer and winter squash, watermelon EARLY JULY: Eggplant LATE JULY: Beans, cantaloupe

Plant pumpkin seeds around the 4th of July to get jack o' lanterns for Halloween!

Plant vegetable plants. Pepper, tomato

Plant herbs. Basil, oregano, thyme

Plant annual flower/ornamental seeds. Cosmos, morning glory

Plant annual flower/ornamental plants. Blue daze, portulaca, purslane, zinnia

Plant perennial plants. Black-eyed Susan, ornamental grasses, Mexican bush sage, desert plants such as agave, nolina, sotol, and yucca

Plant cover crops. Plant such cover crops as cowpeas (black-eyed peas) or buckwheat in bare-soil or fallow areas to improve the soil while preventing and crowding out weeds. Till in the cover crop - before it goes to seed - about one to two weeks before planting there again.

Mulch all bare-soil areas.

Continue to foliar feed with seaweed or seaweed/fish emulsion combinations. Be sure to spray ONLY early in the morning or late in the evening.

Water deeply, and as infrequently as possible. The only time we need to water shallowly and frequently is on newly seeded or sodded areas.

Watering in the morning is best. If you must water in the evening, avoid wetting the leaves.

Spruce up the garden. Now is the time to do low-energy activities in the garden, if anything. Prune off dead limbs. Add yard art, a birdbath or feeder, or perhaps a pink flamingo.

Watch out for diseases and insect pests, and use the least toxic solution to the problem.

(Thanks to Howard Garrett's Texas Organic Gardening Book, the Travis County Master Gardener Association's Garden Guide for Austin and Vicinity, and the staff of The Natural Gardener for some of this month's tips).

