

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Knowledge for the Commonwealth



HOME GARDENING NEWSLETTER – May (Hampton Roads Area, VA)

This newsletter is geared to the home gardener for the care of plants that grow in the Hampton Roads Area (Eastern Virginia and NE North Carolina). However, the plant information is based upon caring for plants anywhere in the American Horticultural Society Heat Zones 6-8 and the USDA Plant Hardiness Zones 6b – 8a, which includes a major portion of the Continental United States and parts of Canada. Below are links to both maps in case you are not sure in which zones you garden.

<http://www.usna.usda.gov/Hardzone/ushzmap.html>

http://www.ahs.org/publications/heat_zone_map.htm#1

Spring has sprung (and summer is just around the corner) !!! For all you warm season turf lawns out there ... NOW IS THE TIME TO START YOUR ENGINES. May is the ideal month to get your FIRST fertilization down for warm season turf lawns. If you fertilized in March you should have a good crop of weed plants by now. Don't be too fast on your broad leaf weed control until after all your lawn is fully greened up. Cool season lawns ... just keep mowing every 3 to 4 days. Don't wait too long to get the rest of your summer annuals or vegetables into the ground. Now is the time. If you haven't done so in the fall/winter, top dress your gardens with mulch to obtain a 2" to 4" thickness of mulch. Make sure the mulch is not mounded against the stem, stalk, or trunk of the plant as this encourages diseases and pest problems. Mulch will reduce your weeds and reduce watering required during the hot summer months. Tackle your weeds now before they develop a deep root system. However, be careful that what you are pulling out is a weed and not a self-seeding annual from last year. Many plants such as Celosias, Lantanas, and Melopodium are annual plants but they self-seed and new plants spring up with mild winters. On average this month, it will be a high of 75 degrees and a low of 57 degrees and Hampton Roads will get 10 days of rain averaging 3.81 inches.

Lawn Care: Proper lawn care helps reduce watershed pollution, reduces the possibility of lawn diseases, saves you money, and time. A beautiful lawn should not be the bane of your gardening desires. A properly maintained lawn should only cost you between \$10 and \$15 per 1000 square foot per season. Use fertilizers only when needed, use pesticides (insecticides, fungicides and herbicides) only if you have a problem and at the correct time. Putting down fertilizers and pesticides at the wrong time or improperly will not only be a waste of money and not solve your problem but also can cause more damage and is polluting our environment. Industry and farming are no longer the biggest polluters of our waterways ... homeowners are. Do not apply a fungicide unless you have a fungus problem. The only way you know you have a fungus

problem is to have your soil and turf analyzed. Most lawns do get ‘spots’ now and then, but most of the time these problems are caused by overwatering especially in the warmer and humid summer months or by improper lawn care. Soil compaction, improper mowing heights, improper pH, and thatch are also common problems that will lead to bigger lawn problems. Do not apply pesticides unless you have a ‘known’ problem with pests. A healthy lawn will have fungus, mold and bugs all through it. Most pesticides (which include insecticides and fungicides) are indiscriminate killers and will eradicate good bugs and good fungus as well as the bad. Most lawn problems can be resolved with patience and proper lawn care techniques.

- When was the last time you did a soil test? If it has been over 3 years now is a good time to do it
- Remember to sharpen your lawn mower blades every 8 hours of cutting. Dull blades and improper cutting heights will damage your turf grasses and cause a browning affect. Use a lower RPM when cutting grass. Greater RPMs tend to rip the grass blade rather than clean cut it.
- Set lawn mower cutting height according to the type of lawn (See below for cutting heights).
- Deep water all turf grasses with 1 inch of water every 7-10 days in the absence of rain. Turf will readily let you know when it needs watering. When you walk on it and it stays down ... it needs water. Never Never Never ... water in short intervals or more than twice a week. Deep watering promotes a deep root system so in July and August when it is really hot and dry your lawn will still be green with minimal water.
- Alternate mowing patterns. Following the same path all the time just creates ruts and a place for weed seeds to congregate
- Know how many square feet of lawn you have. This is extremely important when fertilizing, seeding, and composting.

Weed Control: If you are going to apply a broad-leaf weed killer to control summer annual weeds then the optimal time is now through mid June. You may need to ‘spot’ treat later in the summer. Look for products labeled for the weeds you have in your lawn. These usually contain 2,4-D with Mecoprop (MCP) and/or Dicamba. Remember to always read the label and strictly adhere to instructions before applying any pesticide in your yard.

Most broad-leaf pesticides are safe for lawn grasses, however; few are safe for St. Augustine or Centipede grass. Some hybrids of several warm season grasses are sensitive to any chemical applications during green up periods, so wait until your lawn is fully “greened up” before applying a broad leaf weed control. Be sure to read the label on the pesticide to make sure it is safe for your variety and cultivar of turf grass.

Before applying weed control, check your lawn to see if you really have a weed problem. Healthy and properly maintained lawns tend to inhibit weed growth. You may be able to just pick those stray weeds out by hand or only spot treat bad areas. Weed seed germination depends upon soil temperature. Weed killers to control broad leaf weeds are ‘systemic’ solutions and are absorbed by the leaf and not the roots of the plant. This is why a liquid broad leaf weed killer works better than most granular products. A liquid will coat the plant leaf while the granular must rely on sticking to the leaf. If the granular lays in the soil surface, it will do little to kill unwanted broadleaf weeds. Some persistent weeds such as clover and violas almost always need a second application.

Crab Grass Control: If you haven't already applied your first pre-emergent crabgrass preventer you are too late. Last year's seeds have germinated and now they are in your yard. Applying a pre-emergent crabgrass preventer will stop more seeds from germinating. Digging or pulling (wet your lawn thoroughly before doing this to make it easier) is not as hard as it sounds, especially now as the root systems of the new crabgrass are small and rather shallow.

Annual Blue grass (*Poa Annua*) is on its last leg and should be gone by June. This is a winter annual grass and hard to treat in fescue lawns. You have to apply a crab grass preventer starting in August and again in January to prevent it. Annual Blue grass thrives on compacted soil, so aerate you lawn annually and you will see less of this pesky grass next year. Also, a thick carpet of desired grass (warm or cool season) will inhibit this grass's ability to seed and germinate next season.

In fescue lawns, a good way to reduce this pesky Annual Blue grass is to make a note of where you have it growing right now. In very early September, core aerate and overseed heavily in those areas. If you can get a thick lawn established you will see a dramatic decrease of this plant next year.

Cool Season Grasses (Fescue): Do nothing now except mow your lawn every 3 to 4 days until the fescue starts to slow its growth rate down as the weather gets warmer ... you should have fed your lawn last fall. If you didn't feed 3 times last fall you still can apply no more than ½ lbs of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn. The sooner you apply this, the better ... do not apply after May 15th or you will add stress to your fescue as it starts to go into summer dormancy in June or July. Feeding now will also feed that unwanted common bermuda and other unwanted grasses and making them hard to eliminate later.

Cutting height: 2 ½ inch minimum. 4 inch optimum. pH: 5.5 to 6.5.

Warm Season Grasses (Bermuda, Centipede, Zoysia, St. Augustine):

Establishing or Overseeding: The best time to establish and overseed these types of lawns is May through July. For establishing these types of lawns, it is best to use sod or plugs. Seeds can be expensive and not available for St Augustine. Overseed Bermuda with 2 lbs of seed per 1,000 sq ft of lawn, and Centipede and Zoysia with 1 lb of seed for 1,000 sq ft of lawn.

Fertilizing:

- For Centipede and Zoysia lawns, apply 1-2 lbs of Nitrogen this summer. Apply 1 lb of nitrogen per 1000 sq feet of lawn in May and an optional fertilization in late July or early August.
- For Bermuda and St Augustine lawns apply 2-3 lbs of nitrogen per 1000 sq feet of lawn this summer. Apply 1 lb of nitrogen per 1000 sq feet of lawn in May and again in late July or early August. You can apply an optional 1 lb of nitrogen per 1000 sq feet of lawn in June. Allow a minimum of 30 days (45 days is better) between fertilizations. Do not fertilize after September 15.
- Well established warm season lawns do not need the optional fertilizations.

Thatching/Core Aerating: Warm season lawns (except Centipede) require periodic thatching, that is removing that dense undergrowth. If the thatch is greater than ½ inch ... you need to thatch. Generally, you need to thatch at least once every 3 years. It is a good idea to core aerate your lawn annually and it is best to do it just before overseeding.

Cutting Heights: Bermuda ¾” to 1 ½” ; Centipede and Zoysia 1” – 2” ; St. Augustine 2’ – 3”.

pH: Bermuda & Zoysia 6.0 to 7.0; St Augustine 6.5 to 7.5; and Centipede 4.5 to 5.5

General Gardening Tips for this month:

➤ Entomosporium leaf spot

- One of the most common diseases of **Indian hawthorn**. It is most damaging following periods of frequent rainfall in the spring and fall. The first symptoms are tiny, round, red spots on both the upper and lower sides of young leaves. These expand and on heavily diseased leaves, merge, forming large, irregular blotches. Severe infections may result in early leaf drop. Slow the spread of disease by spacing plants to improve air movement. Water plants with drip irrigation rather than overhead sprinklers. Collect and discard fallen diseased leaves. The best way to prevent leaf spot on Indian hawthorn is to plant selected resistant cultivars.
- Remove infected twigs and leaves and rake up and discard fallen leaves to reduce the amount of overwintering fungal spores.
- Prune only in late winter before bud-break. Summer pruning encourages flushes of new growth which are susceptible to attack.
- Space plants far enough apart to encourage rapid drying of the foliage after a rainfall, and avoid wetting the leaves when watering since the fungus is spread by splashing water.
- Fungicides will protect the young foliage; however, fungicide applications should be continued until the growth matures.
- Avoid frequent pruning and summer fertilization, which stimulate succulent growth.
- Entomosporium leaf spot is also common to **roses, Photinia, and many other plants in the “rose” family.**

➤ Identify the Problem before Using Pesticides.

- Pesticide is a term that also includes products commonly referred to as herbicides (control of plants), insecticides (control of insects) and fungicide (control of fungus).
- When diagnosing a plant problem, remember that most problems are not caused by insects or disease. Severe cold or heat, waterlogging or drought, lawn mower damage, and carelessly applied herbicides frequently injure plants. Pesticides will be useless for these kinds of plant damage.
- Be aware that even if an insect or disease is present it may not be the cause of your plant problem. The original source of damage to your plant may no longer be present. Also, poor growing conditions can make a plant more susceptible to pests and are often the original cause of the "pest" problems.

- If you determine your problem is caused by a pest, identify the insect, disease, or weed before choosing a pesticide. Ask yourself:
 - Is the injury severe enough to require control? If so, what options are available? Is chemical control the best option?
 - Can the pest be controlled by a pesticide at this stage of its life cycle?
 - Is there a pesticide labeled for use on the plant involved and effective against the pest?
- Often no pesticide is required for proper control-but if needed, the right pesticide must be applied at the right time to control a particular pest.
- Refer to expert information. Talk to your Extension agent, or an experienced horticulturist at your local garden center-or check the symptoms against a good chart or reference book. Check out the 2007 Pest Management Guide at the following link: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/pubs/pmg/#home>
- **Daylilies/Hostas:** Feed with a 10-10-10 and add lime to your Daylilies. You can divide Daylilies and Hostas anytime but it's best to do them in early spring or fall. Deadhead spent flowers throughout the blooming season.
 - Watch for daylily stripe on daylily rust.
- **Azaleas, Camellias, Rhododendrons:** After they bloom prune to shape and feed with fertilizer for acid loving plants (be careful not to use this fertilizer on alkaline loving plants (lilacs, daylilies, etc)). REMOVE ALL SPENT FLOWERS and replace the mulch from under these plants sometime this summer. You can move the mulch to another place in your garden but not under another plant from the Rhododendron family. An annual mold spore will remain dormant for a year until just before the next blooming cycle. This mold can cause these plants' flowers to brown fast and fall off in a day.
- **Mums:** For maximum autumn bloom pinch mums down to 4 inches on May 1st. Remove all buds. You will do this again on June 1st and July 1st (no later than July 15th). If you want large blooms rather than many smaller blooms leave the terminal buds and remove ½ of the side buds in July.
- **Roses:** Your roses should start blooming soon. Roses are heavy feeders so keep them fertilized every two weeks or at least once a month with a rose fertilizer (20-20-20 or 18-24-16 type). Add 1 tablespoon of a fish emulsion (5-1-1) to each gallon of water and apply this once a month. Do not let the ground get dry. Look for leaf spots and fungus and treat accordingly. Do you want fewer, larger blooms or smaller but plentiful blooms? On hybrid-tea roses if you want large blooms leave the terminal bud and pinch off side buds to six inches below terminal bud. On floribunda roses remove the large center bud and several smaller buds from each cluster. As soon as hybrid-tea roses blooms withers, prune stem above a strong shoot or outward facing bud. You can prune back to first leaf with 5 leaflets but this may result in less flowering stems. Be sure to stay on top of withering and faded blooms. Deadhead faded blooms back to the first leaf with 5 leaflets. Once the plant sets hips (seeds) the flowering process stops.
- **Bees:** You haven't heard? Seems that every one is looking for a freebie, only beekeepers get them ... free bees (get it ...). Bees are a-swarming. Swarms have already been rescued by local beekeepers. Peak time is April and May. If you see a swarm, don't panic, don't spray, (even with water hose), call your local extension office, or local beekeeper if you know one. Many local beekeepers in the area will remove fresh swarms **without** charge. Timely calls and quick response is essential in collecting these wild bees. They can be 'recycled' but only if the beekeeper can put them in a box.

- Remember the bees when you are considering an application of pesticide. If it is toxic to insects ... it will kill bees. <http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/> (Tidewater Beekeepers Association)
- **Bulbs:**
 - Never put “uncoated” fertilizer in the hole when you plant bulbs.
 - Fertilize bulbs only in the spring and fall, and then with a fertilizer that is very low in nitrogen and high in potassium, not a 10-10-10. Use a 1-3-2 or similar ratio fertilizer. Why? Because you don't want the bulbs to go to green but rather to store starch for the bulb during the winter months.
 - When daffodils are through blooming, it is ok to deadhead them because most are sterile anyway. However, don't cut the foliage down until it turns brown. The bulbs need all the chlorophyll they can get after they bloom to store up food for the winter growth time.
 - Daffodils have a poisonous sap, if you pick them and want to use them in a vase with other flowers, let them stand alone in water for at least two hours before putting them in with other flowers so that they can leach out their poison or they will kill the other flowers.
 - Don't cut daffodils to put in a vase. Reach down as far as you can and snap them like you would an asparagus. That prevents crushing them and damaging the stems.
 - Consider most tulips to be annuals in the Hampton Roads area.
 - You shouldn't have to lift bulbs over the winter because it would be too labor intensive. Find bulbs that are tested for ‘your area’ hardiness. Go to reputable nurseries or ‘bulb’ farms to get the best bulbs for the area.
 - Gladiolus grows best in well-drained soil, protected from wind. Bulbs can be planted now. For best bloom, water thoroughly once a week after the spike begins to show above the soil.
- **Cocoa Mulch** --- According to the ASPCA: Cocoa beans contain the stimulants caffeine and theobromine. Dogs are highly sensitive to these chemicals, called methylxanthines. In dogs, low doses of methylxanthine can cause mild gastrointestinal upset (vomiting, diarrhea, and/or abdominal pain); higher doses can cause rapid heart rate, muscle tremors, seizures, and death. Eaten by a 50-pound dog, about 2 ounces of cocoa bean mulch may cause gastrointestinal upset; about 4.5 ounces, increased heart rate; about 5.3 ounces, seizures; and over 9 ounces, death. (In contrast, a 50-pound dog can eat up to about 7.5 ounces of milk chocolate without gastrointestinal upset and up to about a pound of milk chocolate without increased heart rate.) Below are several links related to the subject. ASPCA, Info on cocoa mulch toxicity study: http://www.aspc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pro_apcc_publicationscocoa ASPCA, "A Poison Safe Home": http://www.aspc.org/site/PageServer?pagename=pro_apcc_poisonsafe Urban legends reference page on cocoa bean mulch: <http://www.snopes.com/critters/crusader/cocoa.htm#add>
- Design flower borders and gardens with the same care as any other border. Consider harmonies and contrasts of color, form, texture, plant height, and bloom times. Given the many varieties of plants available, the gardener has a wider color palette than an artist. So be creative in your gardens ... Hot colors and hot color mixes are in fashion now.
- Lightly side dress perennials with a 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer, being careful to avoid the center or crown of the plant.
- Caladiums need generous amounts of water and fertilizer to encourage continuous production of new leaves during the summer. Apply a light, side dressing of 5-10-5 fertilizer every two weeks, and water thoroughly to encourage bright-colored foliage.

- If you are looking for plants that flower each year, require little care, and are rarely bothered by pests or disease, try some of these perennials: coneflower, bleeding heart, coralbell, daylily, geum, hosta, bergenia, Virginia bluebell, and veronica.
- If you love to garden, but don't have a lot of time, choose plants that are easy to maintain. Plants that do not need "deadheading" include begonia, impatiens, coleus, alyssum, ageratum, lobelia, vinca, and salvia.
- These flowers save time and work in the garden by dropping dead blooms and thus requiring no trimming or dead-heading: mignonette, love-in-a-mist, cleome, scabiosa, and daylily.
- Potted plants, when placed outdoors, may need to be watered more frequently than if they were inside. If you place plants in clay pots inside larger plastic pots or cover clay pots with aluminum foil, you will reduce the frequency at which you must water. Remember to punch a drainage hole if foil is used.
- Plant asters in a different part of your garden each year to minimize the possibility of aster wilt.
- Dig and divide dusty miller in the spring and replant the more- vigorous, outside portions of the clump. Fertilize liberally during the growing season.
- Bright-red and deep-red salvias are good for concentrated color in full sun. Use the lighter or pastel shades of salvia in partial shade.
- Pinch back annuals when 4 to 6 inches high to promote bushy growth. Some that require pinching are zinnias, petunias, and salvia.
- Set out marigolds, petunias, ageratums, and fibrous begonias. All are good border plants.
- Impatiens is the most satisfactory annual for use in shady areas. Begonias, coleus, ageratum, salvia, and vinca prefer light shade (5 to 6 hours of sunlight.)
- Need a tall, bold plant in the back of the border, along a wall or fence, or even standing alone? Try these: cleome or spider flower makes a fine, airy, 4-foot or taller display; 'Giant Imperial' larkspur produces 4- to 5-foot spikes of white, red, and purple blooms; 'Summer Carnival' annual hollyhock bears 4- inch double flowers on 5-foot stems.
- Multiflora petunias withstand heat much better than other types and are more attractive throughout the summer. They are more resistant than other types to botrytis, a disease that cripples petunias, especially in damp weather. In addition, they branch more easily, meaning less maintenance. Multifloras are most useful for massed effects in beds.
- Set petunia plants among fading tulips or daffodils to hide the unsightly wilting leaves. After the bulb foliage begins to fade, you can tie the leaves in gentle knots to neaten them, but don't remove them until they have dried completely.
- Grow your own dried flowers. Start seeds of statice, globe amaranth, strawflowers, and other everlasting to provide flowers for this year's arrangements.
- In the past, begonias were recommended for areas of partial sun and full shade. However, they will also do well in full sun if kept moist and well mulched. 'Pizzaz' and 'Basel Hybrid' are two varieties that do particularly well in full sun.
- To grow annuals in pots on the patio, use a light-weight soil mixture. Keep the plants well watered, as container-grown plants dry out fast. Apply water soluble fertilizer according to package directions every two weeks. Do not apply granular fertilizers to a potted plant.
- Don't be surprised if variegated hosta has green leaves when grown in the sun. The best, variegated, color pattern is developed on plants in a semi-shady location.
- Birds have five basic needs: food, water, shelter (from hot and cold weather), nesting sites, and protection from predators. Supply these and you will have many more birds around your home to entertain you and control insect pests. Be sure feeders and nesting boxes are located where cats and other predators cannot reach them. To cat-proof them attach a smooth, metal

cylinder or cone at least 12 inches long to the pole or tree where the feeder or nest box is mounted.

- Do you want to rid your plants of aphids, spider mites, and other pesky bugs without applying chemicals or other sprays? Keep your bird feeders well stocked to ensure a good supply of birds visit your yard. If you see pests, stop feeding the birds for 3 days. Many birds are creatures of habit and will continue to look for food in their feeders but when they find it empty they will look around your garden for other suitable foods ... i.e. aphids, spider mites etc.
- Regularly water newly planted trees and shrubs during the first year or two after planting to help establish a good root system. They need at least 1 inch of water each week. It is better to water deeply once a week than to water lightly every day; the former practice encourages deep, drought-resistant roots while the latter practice encourages surface roots that may suffer during dry spells. Mulch to conserve moisture and control weeds.
- Always remember to take proper precautions to ensure physical safety while gardening, regardless of equipment choice. Use of eye wear to protect from liquid splash and dust particles when mixing chemicals or to protect from rocks, twigs, or other loose objects or when using power equipment. Use helmets made of high-impact plastics for head protection during tree and shrub pruning and other overhead tasks. Use gloves to protect hands and wrists from abrasion, blistering, burns, and dirt; and, most importantly, if you must use power tools while gardening, wear ear muffs or ear plugs to protect your hearing.

Herb Gardening Tips for this month:

- **Thyme** after Thyme: Thymes for kitchen use, thymes for fragrance, thymes for beauty - the many varieties of thyme suit many needs in a home garden. Everyone knows thyme as a versatile culinary ingredient, but there are also thymes that are scented of orange, lemon, and lavender. Try using thyme as a ground cover, or as a border in the flower garden. With its ease of culture and the multitude of varieties to choose from, thyme can find a place in most gardens. Most herbs need no fertilizer and little water, so water only during prolonged dry spells. Avoid mulching herbs as mulch keeps the soil too moist. If fungus develops on your herbs during wet weather, cut them back to encourage healthy new growth.
<http://www.ext.vt.edu/departments/envirohort/factsheets2/herbs/jul88pr3.html>
- Many herb plants thrive in soils with widely varying pH levels. Rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*) and common oregano (*Origanum vulgare*) are well adapted to pH levels between 4.5 and 8.7. Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) withstands a range of 4.5 to 8.4 and mint (*Mentha spicata*) 4.5 to 7.5.
- Chervil matures in six weeks and grows best when planted in light shade. Make successive plantings if you want to harvest it all summer.
- The best time to harvest most herbs is just before flowering, when the leaves contain the maximum essential oils. Cut herbs early on a sunny day.

Interior Gardening tips for this month:

- When placing your indoor plants outdoors in your flower borders during the summer, clay pots can be set directly in the ground so the soil is 1 to 2 inches below the pot rim, allowing moisture to go through the porous clay. If your plants are in plastic or glazed containers, replot them in to clay containers or check frequently for water because moisture will not move through the plastic.
- Adding fertilizer to a dry root ball burns the roots, damaging or killing the plant, so water dry houseplants before fertilizing and NEVER fertilize wilted plants.
- Maidenhair ferns need at least 50 percent humidity and grow well in a terrarium. You also can group ferns around an aquarium to raise the humidity around the plants.
- Once established on a house plant, powdery mildew is very difficult eradicate. If there are only a few spots (gray or white, fuzzy looking), pick off and destroy the affected leaves. If the problem is more serious, the best answer may be to get rid of the plant before the fungus disease spreads to other plants. Powdery mildew is caused by stale, moist air and too much water. Provide better ventilation or use a small fan to circulate the air. Cut down on the watering.
- For an unusual house plant, try water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*). Float its perfect rosette of fuzzy, greenish-yellow leaves in a container of water about 12 inches square and 5 to 9 inches deep. Give it part sun and temperatures over 60 degrees F, and fertilize with a high-phosphorous, water-soluble fertilizer at one-quarter strength every three weeks in summer, every six weeks in winter. Change the water every two to three months, and as new plants arise from runners, remove the old ones to make room.
- Divide indoor plants when new growth starts in spring. Root cuttings during spring and summer when the plant is actively growing.
- Vacation hint: Sink house plants, pots and all, in the soil in a shady area of the garden. Mulch to reduce the need for frequent watering.
- House plants in containers without drainage holes are poor candidates for outside. A rainstorm may drown and rot them. All plants perform better in containers with drainage holes.
- The mother fern (*Asplenium bulbiferum*), so-called because it produces plantlets on its fronds, is exceptionally tolerant of dry air in the home. It does well at 30 percent humidity. For homes with 50 percent humidity, button ferns (*Pellaea rotundifolia*) are an excellent choice.
- Move your house plants outdoors when the night temperatures stay above 50 degrees F. Avoid sun burning the foliage by moving the plants gradually from the relative darkness of the house to their bright, summer location. Start by putting them in a well-shaded location and progressing to increasingly lighted areas.
- If you plant your Easter lily outdoors, it may flower again in late August.

Fruits and Vegetable Gardening Tips for this month:

- Do you have your summer vegetables in yet? If not, now is the time to get them in. If you plant too many don't worry ... Plant a Row for the hungry will take your excess vegetables. Look in your local paper for collection sites and times.
- Stay out of the garden when foliage is wet. Walking through a wet garden spreads disease from one plant to another.
- **Tomatoes:**

- When tomato seedlings have five to seven leaves, they are ready to transplant into the garden.
- Deep transplanting is good for tomatoes. Tomato plants can be set so deeply in the ground that only a little tuft of leaves shows above the surface. Remove all leaves that would be under the soil. New roots will sprout along the stem. Don't try deep transplanting with other vegetables or flowers.
- If you plan to can tomatoes, plant determinate tomatoes so the fruit will ripen all at once. If you prefer your tomatoes fresh from the vine, plant indeterminate tomatoes so the ripening will be staggered.
- Plant sweet corn and beans every two weeks through June for an extended harvest.
- If spraying fruit trees near a vegetable garden, cover the vegetables with a large sheet of plastic to protect them from the spray. Remember to be careful – on a sunny day the temperature under the plastic can become too hot for the plants! Remove the plastic promptly.
- Successful eggplant development is dependent on a span of temperatures (80 to 90 degrees F) and plenty of water. Water well when the plants are young. Water at least two times a week when temperatures are high and there is no rain.
- Consider planting some ornamental gourds in the garden this year. After harvest in the fall, wash and dry them thoroughly and paint them with clear shellac. Place the gourds in a basket or bowl, and you'll have an attractive centerpiece for Thanksgiving.
- Gourds of different shapes can be used to create animals or birds by sticking legs and heads on them. Try scratching a child's name into the skin when the gourd is half grown. The gourd forms a scab over the scratches, and as it grows, the name grows bigger and bigger.
- Southern peas require very little fertilization; too much nitrogen encourages vine growth and delays pod set. When peas are fully formed, harvest ripe pods to encourage continuous production.
- Another garden use for plastic milk jugs -- seep irrigation. Simply use a large nail to punch holes in the sides of a jug, spacing them about 2 inches apart. Bury the jug, leaving the neck protruding from the soil. Fill the jug with water (solutions of liquid fertilizer may be used to water and fertilize at the same time) and screw the cap on firmly. The water will gradually seep out, providing a slow, deep irrigation for surrounding plants.
- **Slugs** love cool, moist weather and succulent, leafy crops, especially lettuce and cabbage. Debris in the garden provides them with a place to hide and should be removed promptly. To see if your garden is under attack, put out a board or invert a flower pot in the garden. The next morning, see if there are any slugs clinging underneath. If so, begin removing them by hand every few days to decrease their population.
- Frequent picking of cucumber, summer squash, bean, pea, lettuce, and greens while they are small and tender will improve the quality of the produce and increase the yield of each plant.
- Protect developing strawberries from birds with a spun-bonded row cover or plastic netting.

Don't forget to visit

Master Gardener/Cooperative Extension Programs:

<http://cmgv.org> (Chesapeake MG Programs)

<http://www.vbmg.org> (Virginia Beach MG Programs)

<http://www.nmgv.org> (Norfolk MG Program)

<http://jccwmg.org/> (James City County/Williamsburg Master Gardeners)
<http://www.yorkcounty.gov/vce> (York County MG Programs)
www.ext.vt.edu/resources (Virginia Tech Gardening Information)

Other Horticulture sites of interest:

<http://www.virginiazoo.org/horticulture/> (Virginia Zoo Horticulture)
<http://norfolkbotanicalgarden.org> (Norfolk Botanical Garden)
<http://www.fredheutte.org/> (Fred Heutte Center Information)
<http://www.tidewaterbeekeepers.net/> (Tidewater Beekeepers Association)
<http://www.butterflysocietyofva.org/> (Butterfly Society of Virginia)
<http://www.tcc.edu/academics/divisions/academicC/horticulture/index.htm> (Tidewater Community College School of Horticulture)

MAY PRUNING CALENDAR: Changes from previous month underlined. The below pruning calendar applies to all of Virginia and was compiled by Virginia Tech. Shrubs and trees have ‘Best time to Prune’ months, ‘Do not Prune’ months, or timing is not critical months. Those plants listed below are the “best time to prune” or ‘do not prune’. If a tree or shrub is not listed, then timing is not critical this month. The best time to prune is based upon optimizing flowers or fruits and reducing summer/winter stresses. Deadheading or removing spent flowers on flowering shrubs is OK all growing season, for plants such as Rose, Crapemyrtle, Butterfly bushes, etc. Pruning to remove diseased or dead branches is necessary when you see them. Contact your local extension agent if you need more detailed information about any specific plant. REMEMBER to keep your pruning equipment sharp. Make sure you clean them each time you prune with 9 parts water to 1 part bleach solution or the same ratio water to antiseptic mouthwash to prevent the spread of plant disease.

When the weather is hot and dry, try to avoid pruning your plants. If you do, the plant will require extra water. Wait for cooler days if at all possible.

(NOTE: For those of you who live in the more temperate (Hampton Roads) or coastal areas of VA or NC you may want to delay pruning any Shrubs and Trees marked with an * until January or February as these plants produce flowers on new seasons growth. Coastal areas tend to get some sustained warm days in winter and the plants can be ‘tricked’ into thinking spring is here only do be hit with a frost and kill some of the new flower buds.)

Shrubs: Flowering Almond, Azalea (after they finish blooming), Barberry, Bayberry, Boxwood, Camellia japonica (spring bloomer) (after they finish blooming), Camellia sansanqua (fall bloomers), Cherrylaurel, Daphne, Eleagnus (thorny), Euonymus (evergreen), Forsythia, Fothergilla, Harry Lauder (Walking Stick), Honeysuckle, Indian Hawthorne, Jasmine (winter), Mahonia (Oregon Grapeholly), Photinia, Pieris, Mugo Pine, Pittosporum, Privet (Ligustrum), Quince, Serviceberry, Spirea (Spring Blooming), Viburnum, Weigela, Pussy Willow, Witchhazel, and Yew.

Do Not Prune: Abelia, Aucuba, Beautyberry, Beautybush, Broom (Cytisus), Butterfly Bush, Chastetree, Clethra, Cotoneaster, Crapemyrtle, Deutzia, Redtwig Dogwood, Euonymus (deciduous), Gardenia, Hibiscus (incl: Rose of Sharon & Althea), Holly (deciduous/evergreen),

Hydrangea (Spring Blooming), Hydrangea (summer/late blooming), Hypericum (St. Johnswort), Kerria, Leucothoe, Lilac, Mockorange, Mountain Laurel, Nandina, Pearlbush, Potentilla, Pyracantha, Rhododendron, Rose, Smoke Tree, Spirea (Summer Blooming), Sumac, and Sweetshrub.

Evergreen Trees: Arborvitae, Dedar Cedar, Hemlock, Pine, and Spruce. (Seldom need pruning. Most evergreen trees are pruned during the winter months.)

Do Not Prune: Holly, Southern Magnolia, or Live Oak.

Deciduous Trees: Buckeye, Crabapple, Horsechestnut, Magnolia, Maple, Redbud, and Serviceberry.

Do Not Prune: (except to correct damage): Birch, Flowering Cherry, Crepe Myrtle, Dogwood, Elm, Fringe Tree, Goldenrain Tree, Hawthorn, Linden, Oak, Flowering (Peach, Pear or Plum), Sophora, or Sourwood.

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If you have any questions, you can call or visit your Virginia Cooperative Extension listed below:

Virginia (area code 757):

Chesapeake	382-6348	Eastern Shore:	414-0731	Hampton:	727-1401
Isle of Wight:	365-6261	James City:	564-2170	Newport News:	591-4838
Norfolk:	683-2816	Portsmouth:	393-5314	Suffolk:	923-2050
Virginia Beach:	427-4769	York County:	890-4940		

North Carolina (area code 252):

Currituck:	232-2262	Dare:	473-4290	Pasquotank:	338-3954
Chowan-Gates-Perquimans:	482-6585				

This newsletter is authored by Jim Lachowicz, a Chesapeake Master Gardener and edited by Michael Andruczyk City of Chesapeake and/or Lynnette J. Swanson, City of Norfolk Horticulture Agents, Virginia Cooperative Extension. .

***"We hope you find this gardening newsletter helpful."
Happy Gardening !!!***