



July Tips



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July is a month where the heat is upon us and Fall's cool weather is still around the corner. Now is a good time to plan what you would like to plant for the fall garden. Cool season crops can be started indoors and transplanted outdoors when the heat subsides. Transplant heat loving plants now.

Vegetables, Berries and Herbs

Plant melons, watermelons, cucumbers, squash, potatoes, pumpkins, and even winter squash. Transplant late in the afternoon or evening so plants have a whole night to begin to recover before they get exposed to the full sun and heat. Water the plant in well and provide a bit of shade for them from the midday sun for a few weeks. Mulching the transplants to lessen the evaporation of irrigation water will help them take up water better and survive the heat better.

At the end of the month you can plant cole crops, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, and kohlrabi. Keep the soil moist and shaded until the seeds are up for about a week and gradually allow them more sun.

Corn can still be planted.

To give the seeds a better start you can sow the seeds in flats or beds and put sifted compost around them to keep them moist. Mist the seedlings to keep them moist during the heat. Use shade for the seedlings until they are up. A good time to transplant the seedlings is when they develop the second set of true leaves.

When sowing carrot seeds plant them on the north side of the furrow and cover them with compost or potting soil. Try to keep them shaded.

Grapes need to be evenly watered when the harvest approaches to make sure they fill out and ripen evenly. Use old pantyhose for covering grape clusters to keep out insects and birds, these can be reused each year.

Water berries deeply at least once a week till harvest, then water deeply once a month. Little to no pruning is required during the first year after planting. Prune brambles (blackberries and raspberries). Remove all canes that fruited this year and place new canes that began growing this spring onto the trellis or support system.

Blueberries are becoming more popular in southern California with several different varieties to choose from.

Water melons evenly for juicy and sweet evenly ripened fruit at harvest. Tomatoes and other large fruit should be watered deeply and sprayed with water on the undersides of the leaves to discourage insects.

Melons can be protected from slugs by using pie tins or coffee cans turned upside down and placing the melons on top to keep them off of the ground. Harvest melons, squash and tomatoes every other day to encourage production. If left on the vine the plant will slow down producing fruit or even stop producing completely.

Keep herbs pinched back to promote branching and tender shoots. Only harvest herbs when cool such as early morning and late afternoon when the oils are not fragrant.

Bell peppers can be harvested and then sliced and frozen for cooking later. Tomatoes can be frozen whole, and then thawed to cook with. Or puree the whole tomatoes to make sauce and then pour onto an empty water bottle and freeze. When thawing, turn the bottle upside down and the liquid will separate and thaw faster than the pulp. Then make your sauce with the pulp and use the liquid separated for a soup base.

Fruit Trees

Prop up fruit laden tree branches so the weight of the fruit doesn't break the branches. The warm nights can cause disease problems. Check for diseases on trees and plants.

Ornamentals

Transplant alyssum, begonias, calendula, celosia, chrysanthemums, cosmos, crape myrtles, dahlias, daylilies, delphiniums, dianthus, forget-me-nots, foxgloves, gazania, hibiscus, hydrangeas, impatiens, marigolds, nasturtiums, petunias, portulaca, salvias, statice, verbena, and zinnias. Keep the soil moist until they are established. Red sage, vinca, and zinnias can be used to fill in gaps in the landscape, these plants will flower into the fall.

Pruning

Prune chrysanthemums and poinsettias for the last time in July to bush out and be ready for fall. Prune rose blooms that have faded back to the five part leaf to the plant blooming continuously and healthy looking.

If you have suckers on roses it is a good idea to pull them off not just cut them. Injuring the sucker bud will not allow them to grow back.

Bulbs

Store bulbs when their foliage is dry. Be careful not to injure the bulbs when you dig them out. Store them in a cool, dry, dark place.

Now is the time to divide bearded iris clumps and replant in loosened soil. Clean the rhizomes by cleaning off the dry leaves and cut the roots to two inches. Then replant one foot apart.

Turf

Continue to mow turfgrass at two to two and a half inches to shade the roots from the sun and heat. Check regularly for even watering

Irrigation

Check irrigation to your plants and adjust time clocks and irrigation schedules to water plants thoroughly during the hot months. The irrigation may need to be changed several times according to the change in the weather.

Remember not to overhead water late in the day when the leaves don't have a chance to dry off. Wet or damp leaves encourage mildew and diseases, keep these at a minimum. Also, check the yard for any under watered areas and adjust sprinklers accordingly. Applying mulch to these areas to retain moisture can also help if this is possible. Sometimes changing the head or the nozzle to change the amount of water or the spray pattern is helpful.

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