



AUGUST GARDENING

August's heat ushers in harvests of many of our most cherished summer crops – stone fruits, melons, berries, bell peppers and tomatoes to name a few -- rewarding food growers for all the TLC they showered on fledging plantings the past few months. So gather your bounty and taste, can, freeze and share the riches of your garden.

Crape Myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*) in bloom (Photo by L. Stevens)

Planting

- Start germinating cool season vegetables in flats for broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and most greens; plant in 6-8 weeks.
- Plant South African bulbs such as *Freesia*, *Ixia* and *Watsonia* for late winter bloom.
- If thinking of planting crape myrtle, select your trees now for flower color while plants are in bloom.
- Visit these local botanical gardens for water-wise planting ideas suited to our Mediterranean climate:
 - San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden
 - Cal Poly Leaning Pine Arboretum
 - Santa Barbara Botanic Garden

Chores

- Summer prune fruit trees after all fruit has been harvested, shortening shoots and removing crossing branches.
- Prune waterspouts from citrus and stone fruit trees.
- Divide bird of paradise, iris, belladonna, lilies and daylilies after blooming.
- Pinch back geraniums, begonias and impatiens to encourage compact growth and flowering.
- Remove spent fruit and vegetables from the garden to discourage pests and disease, and add them to your compost pile.
- Occasionally hose off foliage to wash off dust and discourage spider mites.

References

- Pest Note 7405, Spider Mites
- ANR Pub. 8058, Fruit Trees: Pruning Overgrown Deciduous Trees