

Garden Club Horticultural Hints

August 2018

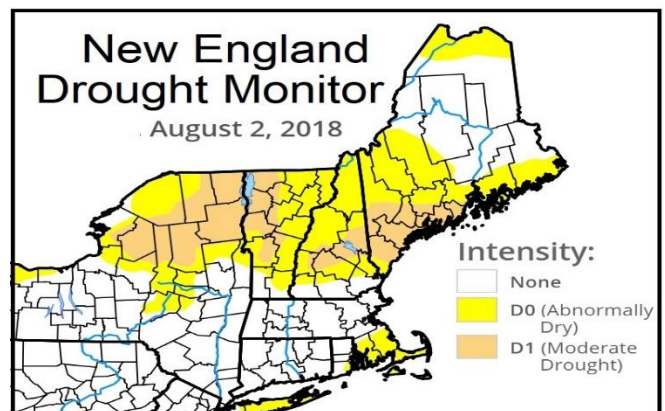


Swallowwort seed pods are maturing this month. If you have it on (or near) your property, cut it down or dig it out now. Not only is it highly invasive, it mimics butterfly weed and milkweed, yet is actually deadly to the monarch butterflies that lay eggs there. With the Monarch population at an all-time low, give those beautiful visitors a hand by ridding your area of this killer.

The vegetable gardening season isn't over! Use up leftover seeds and extend your fresh vegetable by planting new rows of beets, peas, lettuce and other greens, chard and radishes. These cool-weather vegetables will keep growing as the days shorten and the cool weather begins, giving you a fall harvest. You can even add green beans and summer squash to the list. You may need to provide a couple of layers of row cover for cool nights in October, but aren't more fresh vegetables worth the effort?



Be water-wise. Much of northern New England is now in a moderate stage drought. While our position pales in comparison to the arid West and its seemingly never-ending wildfires, we live in a time of finite water resources. What to do? Mostly, it's what *not* to do. Your lawn doesn't need watering. It will turn green again with autumn's cool temperatures. Water container gardens and newly-planted perennials, trees, and shrubs; and always with a hose or a watering can. Hand-water your vegetable garden as early in the day as possible.



Keep up with the harvest in the vegetable garden to keep plants producing. Few things can compare with fresh-picked corn or tomatoes still warm from the vine. Excess produce can be shared with friends, frozen or canned.



Here are three great late summer natives that can brighten your garden with abundant color. At left, native monarda; center: native geranium arrayed into a planting 'river'; at right: rudbeckia.

Did your garden look great in the spring, but now it's looking tired and in need of more color? The summer heat is no deterrent to many native perennials such as black eyed susans, Joe Pye weed (which does not look like a weed at all), bee balm (monarda) or native geraniums (that just keep going and going). Add these hardy and dependable bloomers and enjoy them all of summer (and you may find a few more butterflies flitting around your garden).



One of the most unusual public gardens in the country is Bedrock Gardens in Lee, New Hampshire

Going on vacation this month? Add some visits to public gardens to your schedule to get ideas for your home landscape. Type in the location you'll be visiting plus 'gardens' into a search engine to get a preview of possible stops.

While spring bulbs should not be planted until autumn, now is the time to order for the best selection from the mail order nurseries. Early bulbs, such as crocus, snowdrops (*galanthus*), rock garden iris, Glory of the Snow (*chionodoxa*), and striped squill (*puschkinia*) provide the first evidence that winter is breaking and spring is near. Pick out places in flower beds, then use golf tees or other unobtrusive markers so you can plant, confident that you are not disturbing the roots of sleeping perennials.

How about a stop at the Coastal Maine Botanical Garden near Boothbay Harbor?

