

# Garden Club Horticultural Hints August 2023

## How did it get to be August?!



**July's bountiful rains** were a gift for gardeners. Unfortunately, they were also a blessing for the grubs in your lawn. When the soil dries out and stays dried out for lengthy periods (as happened last year) grubs often die from lack of moisture. This year grubs are likely to be back. But before you begin treating your lawn with one of the chemicals sold for that purpose, be aware of what you are doing. Products that actually kill grubs are dangerous to you, your family, pets and every other living thing that walks across your lawn. Lawns can be reseeded and fertilized in the fall repairing any damage without danger to anyone.

*Lawn grubs, which were not a problem because of last year's drought, have all the moisture they need this year to be a problem.*

*This salvia will re-bloom later in August and into September if you cut it back now.*



**Container gardens,** Despite July's generous rains, watering may be needed in containers where limited room and exposure to heat and sun from all sides mean they dry out quickly. Check containers by wiggling your finger down in until you reach the second knuckle looking for wet soil. If it is dry, water until it comes out of the bottom of the container. And never leave pots sitting in water-filled saucers as this can lead to root rot.



**Garden maintenance.** Cut back perennials that have finished blooming. They'll look neater and many will surprise you with a second bloom when prevented from setting seed the first time. Keep picking your vegetable gardens. By picking, you are preventing your plants from going to seed so they keep producing produce. If you have more vegetables than you can use, offer it to friends or call a local food cupboard and ask for their drop-off days. Replant this month for a more bountiful fall crop: green beans, peas, cucumbers, carrots, kohlrabi, summer squash, early sweet corn, green onions. Water seeded areas by hand daily until the new plants are up and a couple of inches tall. Cover the newly planted seeds with row cover to help keep them cooler and out of pecking range of birds. You can take the row covers off when the plants are several inches tall.



**Strawberry plants** will have sent out many runners (baby plants on a leash) by now. There are two ways to turn them into bearing plants next year. One, fill small pots with quality soil and put them down near the mother plant. Lift any plantlets, and using unbent paperclips, hold them in place in the pot. After the new plant has developed roots (try a gentle tug), cut its connection to its mother. Plant them in their new home by the end of the month to give them time to root itself before winter.



**Houseplants.** As you bring in houseplants that spent the summer outdoors, it is a good time to consider repotting. Your plant almost certainly grew over the summer. And the roots almost certainly grew as much as the pot allowed. Getting a clean pot with fresh soil allows the plant to settle in for the winter without the salts that may have accumulated. Don't be afraid to prune back any part of the plant that took advantage of the extra sunlight to stretch out—and now no longer fits its allotted space in the house.

**Spring bulbs.** Any remaining foliage should be cut off and removed now. If you had areas that did not bloom well in the spring, the problem could be that the bulbs have divided and are now too crowded. Or if you weren't happy with an area of your yard this year, dig the bulbs up carefully now, dry them in a garage or garden shed and replant them in the fall. If you're thinking of adding bulbs for next spring, this is the month to order those new bulbs for fall planting. The selection only narrows as summer turns to fall.



*High humidity and prolonged rain is a breeding ground for disease. Trim off diseased leaves and bag them as trash – never compost them!*

**In the ornamental garden.** Watch for insect and disease on annuals and perennials. Check online for recommendations but also check with a good local nursery for advice, especially if this is a new problem for you. It's in their interest to make a regular customer of you by helping you solve your gardening problems. Treat problems as soon as they appear and before they can spread. Over the winter releasing their load of nutrients back into the soil.



**Deer deterrent.**

In my yard the deer have decided they prefer certain garden plants to what they can find in the woods and fields. I spray monthly with a garlic and putrefied-egg-based deer repellent that discourages them from further dining.

*Written and created by Betty Sanders. For more horticultural suggestions for June and throughout the year, please visit [www.BettyOnGardening.com](http://www.BettyOnGardening.com)*