

## Gardening Article

July may not be the best month for gardening, for it is generally hot and humid, but there are certainly a number of dramatic plants to enjoy like crape myrtles, hydrangeas, and chaste trees.

Since planting is not optimal this month, most of our work tasks shift a bit. This is a time for maintenance and keeping one foot ahead of the army of insects and critters invading our garden. Keeping faded flowers pinched or cut off will encourage more blossoms as well as benefit the plant's overall health. Harvest herbs, fruits, and vegetables regularly to encourage production. When making bouquets cut, in the morning and place in water ASAP. Remember cutting stems under water usually extends vase life.

Watering is also an ongoing but critical chore for these hot months. Trees and shrubs should be watered deeply at least one or two times weekly, depending on soil type and rainfall. Lawns should be watered deeply and infrequently to promote deeper root growth. Avoid watering in late evening; leaves that don't dry during the warm evenings are prone to fungal diseases. Instead, water in the early morning. Keep an eye on container plants. Small containers and clay pots tend to dry out quickly.

It is still not too late to plant annuals like zinnias, bedding dahlias, and marigolds. Dig and divide irises by digging up plants and discarding old rhizome, as well as any diseased or rotted sections. The young, healthy rhizomes may then be replanted shallowly.

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