

Horticulture News

August Gardening Tips from the Horticulture Committee

Martha Pendergast, Horticulture Chair



"Earth Laughs in Flowers", Emerson

Hello August!

The hot, humid weather we have had can certainly put a damper on our desire to get out to do garden work but it is critical that we do. A quick inventory of what needs to be done can take place inside where the air-conditioned comfort of home makes every project seem doable and then armed with our list, hat, sunscreen, gloves and sunglasses we hit the garden to do what we know needs to be done! A certain image of how we want a particular area to look inspires us!

Our gardens can start to look jungle-like with undesired growth on azaleas, rhododendron, flowering shrubs and our trees, and the weeds can easily start to take over without consistent attention. Pruning late July, very early-August may mean a loss of some blooms next spring but the sunlight and air space created could be worth it! Careful not to prune more than 1/3 of the plant in any given year. Have your loppers, pruning saw and clip sharpened and ready. Rambling or once-blooming Roses can take a good pruning now. Some of the perennials that are finished flowering can also be deadheaded, especially ones that are prone to excessive or unwanted self-seeding and those as well that may bless us with a rebloom.

Roses getting ready for another flush as well as Dahlia, and late-blooming Lilies and other Fall-blooming perennials and some of the annuals might benefit from one last feeding before the cooler weather sets in.

Continue to be on the lookout for invasives like sprouting bittersweet vine. The seedlings can sprout just about anywhere and are easy to pluck when little but left alone can grow into rope like cables that can kill even the tallest trees. Other vines also can choke out our beloved plants

if left to grow. Grab and to the trash bin with them! Gravel and shell walkways and driveways can be weeded with a stirrup hoe (warm up your shoulders before starting) or your favorite weeding tool to keep them looking good without chemicals.

Pollinators should have lots to choose from in our yards now. Blue and Yellow flowers are particularly attractive to bees and reds pinks and oranges are of great interest to butterflies such as Echinacea, Dahlia, Rudbeckia, Monarda, Buddleia and Asters to name a few. The hummingbirds will come looking for their favored foods including Agastache, Penstemon, Salvia, Petunia, Verbena and Zinnia. If you have feeders, be sure to rinse and change the home-made nectar weekly. Of course, some plants attract multiple pollinators so you can't go wrong by offering a variety. Have your cameras ready! Our August gardens are a testament to all the hard work we have put in now for months and they deserve to be shared! Call a "flower-friend" and invite them over for some garden-viewing. Isn't this what it's all about?

Have a good gardening tip you'd like to share? Drop your suggestion at the "Tip of the Month" jar at Horticulture Committee's Flower of the Month table in the back of the meeting room. Be sure to put your name on it so we can quote you as the source!

Have a plant in your garden that you would like to share? Exhibit at the Flower of the Month program! Our table is set up each month at the back of the room for members to display their horticulture and compare notes with other gardeners. Come early to the meeting and we will help you set up your entry with glass vases ready and index cards available for you to tell us the Botanical Name and Common Name of your entry (we can help you with this) and be sure to put your name on the back. Select your entries with good form, condition and color and after the meeting come check the back of your card to see your score of a possible 5 points! Check page 25 of your yearbook for additional info on the Flower of the Month program. Even if you are not submitting an entry, stop by to see the beautiful entries from fellow members and to say Hi. We love talking about and sharing Horticulture!

Join us on September 6th from 9-12 at the home of Pricilla Ruegg, 138 Two Ponds Rd, Falmouth for the first **"September Swap"- Bring a plant, take a plant. There is no charge for this event and no RSVP required. Please do label the Botanical and Common name of your donated plant. This is a great way for members to get to know each other, to compare notes and share out love of horticulture!**

We hope you enjoy the rest of your summer!

FGC Horticulture Committee

Tip of the Month:

July- From Hort Committee member Lee Drescher who has had “tremendous luck planting seeds after the soil gets warm into the third week of July in flats or window boxes filled with potting soil. Seeds sometimes come up in a day or two instead of 7-10 days. They grow quickly, and then you can transplant them in your garden. It’s a good way to get a late start...”

August- Check your tall plants including dahlia, giant Zinnia and tomatoes for proper supports for those days of high winds! Better safe than sorry. Pinch those Dahlias after the 3rd set of leaves to promote lateral growth with more blooms and pinch the extra side buds to encourage fewer but larger blooms, if you like and a little low-nitrogen fertilizer at this time will be much appreciated by these stunning plants!