



July, August, September 2016

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Summer days, summer days! The still, quiet early mornings, the long hours of daylight stretching ahead as the day gets underway, the soft twilights that last into gentle evenings ... they're finally here! And they are to be savored and stored up in our memories because gardeners know all too well that the seasons can change quickly. Mother Nature is really in charge of these golden days and she has a way of making sure that we understand that.

For some gardeners, this is a time to finally rest after the glories of spring and the beauty of June. Others are already looking ahead to late summer and fall and the subtle color shifts that come to many gardens. As the sun changes position in late summer, some flower beds may not get as much sun as they did earlier in the season. Tucking in some fall-blooming, shade-tolerant plants will help you extend bloom time and may add a new dimension to your flower beds. Walking through the nursery and seeing what's currently in bloom on the benches will help you fill any "holes" you spot in your flower beds. Bring a photograph of the place with the "hole" and carry it around the benches with you ... it will help you visualize how a new plant will look and how it will blend in with what you are already growing.

Although gardening chores are never really done, now is the time to sit quietly and enjoy the garden you have created. A special sitting area with comfortable chairs or benches will give you the opportunity for rest and relaxation. Replant containers to try out different floral color schemes ... it's an easy way to see how a larger flower bed might look! You can also surround the sitting area with Ferns, Grasses, Heucheras, Mints, Hostas and Sedums for a study in foliage combinations. Whatever you choose should reflect what makes your garden special to you.

You've worked very hard on your garden and you deserve the chance to take a break and let the garden refresh your spirit. Why not share the pleasure your garden gives you with your friends? Invite them to come and walk around with you exchange information on the different plants you grow, and why, and share what you have learned. Hopefully, your friends will invite you to tour their gardens and see what they are growing. This is a perfect opportunity to widen your perspective and to discover what has worked for other local gardeners.

The Plant of the Month

The plant of the Month is available at the nursery checkout table from the first of each month on. These plants are carefully chosen to showcase current bloom and are featured from April through October.

July : **Achillea** (Yarrow)

Zone: 3-9 Height: 2-3' Spread: 2-3'

This long-blooming perennial loves full sun, attracts butterflies and tolerates hot, humid summers and drought. Quickly forming large clumps, Achillea blooms repeatedly throughout the summer and is well-sited in the middle of a border. Deadheading will keep more flower buds coming. Divide every 2-3 years as needed. Newer cultivars feature strong stems and larger flowers in a wide range of colors. The foliage has a spicy smell that lasts in dried arrangements

August: **Perovskia** (Russian Sage)

Zone: 5-8 Height: 3-4' Spread: 2-3'

Airy spires of small, purple-blue flowers and gray-green foliage add a haze of color to the garden all summer long and blend well with other flowers. Plants are vigorous and hardy. Full sun and well-drained soil will help Perovskia thrive. With semi-woody stems, this member of the mint family is drought-tolerant and virtually trouble-free. Cut plants back to 12" in the spring.

September: **Helianthus** (Perennial Sunflower)

Zone: 4-8 Height: Spread:

These late season flowers will bloom long into fall. The showy, daisy-like flowers are smaller than those of their annual cousins but they are very long-lasting. New cultivars are available with flowers in yellow, orange, red and even bronze. Sunflowers need full sun and well-drained soil and are excellent grown among grasses, Joe Pye Weed and Asters. Sunflowers make good cut flowers and attract bees and butterflies.

The Really-Must-Do-Now List

Prune Weigela bushes now before they set next year's bloom. Shape-up Forsythia bushes.

Delphiniums, Nepeta, Salvia, Coreopsis, Buddleia, Kalimeris, Daylilies and annuals all benefit from July fertilizing. August fertilizing is generally considered too late in the season for this area. Feed Roses and containers on a regular schedule.

By mid-July, you should have cut back your Mums, Asters, Sedum and Montauk Daisies to keep them under control and to ensure good branching.

Dead-head as needed to extend blossom time and encourage re-bloom later in the season.

Turn containers often to keep them growing evenly.

Re-apply slug bait.

Control broad leaf weeds in the lawn and apply fertilizer in late August-early September.

Weed, weed, weed! They won't go away on their own!

Find the time to sit quietly and enjoy the garden you have created.

Summer Gardens to Visit

The Garden Conservancy runs self-guided tours of hundreds of private gardens from coast to coast. Most of the gardens are only open to the public once a year. Open Days in Connecticut run through September 18 with admission at \$5 for an adult. No reservations are required; Open Days are rain or shine events. Visit www.gardenconservancy.org to search by garden, city or state. Open Days are also listed for Rhode Island, New York and Massachusetts.

Seasonal Reminders

If you are planting something, plant late in the day, not in the hot sun, and be sure to water it in deeply.

Cut flowers for the house in the early morning or evening hours and try to choose flowers that are half open. To help your flowers last longer, add 1 Tb. sugar, ½ tsp. of white vinegar and ½ tsp. of bleach into 1 qt. of water and use to fill vases as needed. Your cut flowers will also stay fresh longer if they are not placed in front of an open or sunny window. Change the water as needed.

Houseplants spending time outdoors in the summer will probably need more water than they do during the winter months inside. Trim, fertilize and re-pot if necessary towards the end of August and bring them back inside on or near Labor Day.

Established lawns need only 1" of water a week; don't water on a regular schedule. Control broad leaf weeds in the lawn and apply fertilizer in late August-early September. The lawn can be re-seeded from the last week of August into the 3rd week of September. Dry conditions will not affect the re-seeding.

September always gives you a chance to get a jump on next spring! The days are beginning to cool a little and working in the garden is a peaceful pleasure. In fact, it is the perfect time to move, divide and plant. The soil is still warm and watering will not be a big chore. Bearded Iris, Daylilies, Siberian Iris, Bleeding Heart, Astilbe, Rudbeckia and Hosta all benefit from fall division. Cut down established Hostas as the leaves die to remove winter shelter for slugs.

Last Winter's Toll

Hydrangeas

This past winter was exceptionally hard on the old-fashioned Hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla* and the oakleaf *Hydrangea quercifolia*) which bloom on 2- year old wood. The late cold and ice actually killed the wood carrying the buds for this year's flowers down to the ground and left bare sticks standing up. The only recourse is to cut down each individual dead stick to give the new emerging growth room and support but the bush will probably not bloom this year.

Some Hydrangeas bloom on new wood each year and are always reliable: *Hydrangea arborescens* ('Annabelle'), *Hydrangea paniculata* ('Tardiva' and 'PeeGee'), and Climbing *Hydrangea petiolaris*. They will give plenty of bloom this year and can always be depended on.

The new Hydrangea introductions of the last few years (The Endless Summer group and its current offspring) all bloom on a mix of old and new wood and are proving very reliable in our difficult climate. However, the plants may take several years to really establish their blooming cycles. New introductions come in a variety of sizes, some suitable for flower beds and containers.

If you had a favorite Hydrangea that will probably not flower this year, all is not necessarily lost! You can try rooting a new bush from the strong growth emerging from the base of the shrub.

Take a 5-6" slanted cutting from the new growth. Remove the lower leaves of the bottom 2 leaf nodes (bumps) and place in a filled water glass.

Prepare small pots (with saucers) by filling with a good potting mixture. Water them well and let them drain in the sink. Dip the bottom of the cuttings into rooting mixture, insert into the pot and firm the soil around the cutting. Cover the pot with a Ziploc bag and place in an east window where it will get strong light but not sun. Add small amounts of water only when the top of the soil feels dry.

Cover the pot with a Ziploc bag and place in an east window where it will get strong light but not sun. Add small amounts of water only when the top of the soil feels dry. After 5-6 weeks, a gently tug on the cuttings should produce resistance. You have roots!

Plant in the garden, ideally in a protected spot. It's a good idea to use a marker stake and to make a circle of stones to mark the location.

Some gardeners have actually successfully rooted hydrangeas by leaving the cuttings in a glass of water for several weeks until they grew roots, planting them into pots and then transferring them to the garden after they have grown-on.

Buddleia (Butterfly Bush)

Because Buddleias are usually cut back to 18-24" in early spring, some gardeners were slow to realize that Buddleias also suffered damage from the past winter. Coming originally from Tibet, Buddleia is usually reliably hardy but should never be pruned in the fall! New growth is slow this year but it is coming and your bushes should be hard at work attracting butterflies very soon. Some Buddleias suffered severe damage and may need to be replaced; others will re-establish themselves and grow from the bottom up but it may take a season for them to reach full strength.

Many new Buddleia introductions (especially the Buzz series) feature a shorter 3-4' plant and there are even a few dwarfs suitable for large containers or flower borders. Buddleias actually don't require much fertilizer and are happy with just a little compost in the spring. Good drainage is important. Deadheading old blooms will encourage re-bloom and keep the butterflies coming.

Pruning Lilacs

The Lilacs were exceptionally beautiful this past spring, blooming abundantly and leafing out vigorously. As Lilac stems get older, flowers can become smaller and out of reach. A yearly pruning will develop a good framework of stems and promote strong growth.

Once the Lilacs have stopped blooming, deadhead the faded flowers. Cut off the faded flower cluster at its base, above the two new shoots angling out from the stem. Those shoots will grow and set flower buds for next spring.

Cut diseased, broken, non-productive and/or poorly shaped stems to the ground. Look at the bush and thin some stems to allow for spacing and new growth. Remove small, twiggy growth and keep the thicker stems. If some of the stems have grown too tall, cut the top of the stem back to a single side shoot.

When you have completed the pruning, fertilize the bush with compost. Lilacs prefer a soil pH close to neutral. Adding mulch will help to stimulate new growth and better flowering.

Deadheading vs. Pinching

Pinching:

Pinching back fall-blooming garden mums to control height is a technique that also works for Asters, Montauk Daisies, Joe Pye Weed, Summer Phlox, Monarda and Sedum. cases, can eliminate Pinching off half of the growth results in a bushy plant with more flowers and, in many staking. Pinching should be finished by mid-July.

Deadheading:

Trimming off (deadheading) faded flowers keeps a plant producing more buds and flowers instead of seeds. Some perennials (Peonies) look terrible if not deadheaded after bloom; some (Columbine) will self-seed all over your flower bed if not trimmed back. Regular deadheading becomes a routine summer garden chore, encourages repeat bloom and helps shape the plant. Be sure not to cut off any developing flower buds. Deadheading annuals keeps them looking neat and under control and discourages bolting.

Re-Doing Containers

You may find that at this midway point in the summer you are ready for a different “look”. Bring your container, or a picture of it, to the nursery and let us help you re-design it. Adding cascading plants is always a simple way to create a look of abundance but you might want a complete color change as we slide into early fall. There are many ways to achieve the garden designer’s goal of “Thrill-Fill-Spill”... the choice is yours. Sometimes you just need a little “high summer punch”... using plants in new and stronger colors will help fill that goal. You can always re-position containers and put them in different garden locations. Large planters can be used to divide space visually and create privacy.

By mid-summer, Petunias grown in containers may be looking sad and droopy. Petunias growing in too much shade will get leggy and produce fewer flowers. Be sure they are getting good drainage but having overly dry soil is the more common problem. Although you will lose a few weeks of bloom, the easiest fix is to cut every stem back by 1/3 to 1/2. Fertilize with a general liquid plant food. Your Petunias will branch and flower again in a few weeks and keep going until a killing frost.

Be sure to keep turning your annual containers so that they grow evenly. Containers benefit from the use of liquid plant food once a week. Cut back as necessary; the plants will fill back in. If you are planning on a short trip or a long weekend, deep water your containers and move them away from direct sunlight, placing them in an area of low light. This will cut back on their light supply, minimize their growth and reduce their need for water.

Discovering Succulents

At this time of the year, with the main garden flourishing and under control, a gardener may think about “something new.” Planting succulents in rock gardens or containers is a perfect way to experiment with different leaves, colors and shapes. The combinations are endless! These plants have evolved in tough growing conditions and are happy with hot sun and well-drained soil. They are not cacti and do require gentle watering, storing it in their fleshy leaves. Stone containers, large or small, troughs and hypertufa pots provide ideal growing conditions for succulents and your succulent garden can easily spend the winter indoors. Think about some of these plants and how you might use them together. Acer Gardens staff will be happy to help you design your own “mix and match” grouping from the large nursery selection.

Sedums, also known as Stonecrop, cover a wide range but almost all have dependable foliage, sprays of star-like blooms in late summer, unusual shapes and leaves that change color in the fall. Many Sedums cascade; all are easy to divide. With its wide range of heights, Sedums do well in both rock gardens and pots. Although they spread rapidly, they are not considered invasive and are hardy to zone 5.

Sempervivums, known to many as Hens-and-Chicks, are hardy to zone 5 and are the perfect companion to Sedums. *Sempervivum tectorum* is large in size and very open-looking. *Sempervivum arachnoideum* is smaller, rounded and ball-like with a silver webbing over the leaves. These plants are widely grown in rock gardens, stone walls and containers.

Echeverias offer amazing color, interesting leaf textures and growth habits. Some resemble heads of lettuce with frilly leaves, others produce amazing rosettes. Some are very small and subtle in color. They are shallow-rooted plants and benefit from the addition of organic matter to the soil. The more sun they get the more they will display their colors and shapes. Hardy only to Zone 9, these plants cannot be left outside for the winter.

Summer-Flowering Bushes

Long-blooming summer shrubs can give a dependable backdrop to your summer garden. Many require almost no maintenance and thrive in high temperatures and humidity. Most are fragrant, long-bloomers followed by interesting fall foliage and, often, berries for the birds. Because they tend to be fast-growers they will also provide privacy ... another easy way to reduce maintenance!

Consider adding:

Viburnum (Summer Snowflake)

6 – 8' Sun to part shade Well-drained soil May – Oct.

White flowers bloom from late spring to early October. Excellent for naturalizing. Fall orange-red berries attract birds. Tolerates a wide range of soils and is drought resistant. Shrub will develop a spreading shape. Extremely hardy.

Clethra alnifolia (Summersweet)

4 – 6' Full sun to partial shade Moist soil June – Sept.

Heavily fragrant, bloom begins in late spring and continues into early fall. Pest and disease free, it will even tolerate shade. Avoid hot, dry sites. Looks well near ponds and streams. Colors range from white to pink with some compact (3' – 4') forms in white.

Hydrangea quercifolia (Oakleaf Hydrangea)

5 – 9' Will take deep shade Well-drained soil late June

Stunning, huge white flowers in June surrounded by deep green, bold leaves. Some bloom as the summer continues. Fall foliage is burgundy-colored. Shrub forms a naturally graceful shape and is well-suited to the edge of woods. Survives difficult winters.

Sorbaria sorbifolia (False Spirea)

5 –10' Sun to partial shade Well-drained soil June - July

Forms large masses of arching branches with white sprays of very showy flowers in June and July. Not fussy about soil. Mature plants will spread and need to be controlled. Very hardy (to zone 2). Excellent in the shrub border and a good spreader for banks.

Aesculus parviflora (Bottlebrush Buckeye)

8-10' Full sun to shade Moist, well-drained soil July

An enthusiastic grower, Bottlebrush showcases early summer spikes of creamy white flowers. Especially useful on banks, slopes and in woodland borders. Extremely pest resistant. Naturalizes in semi-shade; does not require pruning. Yellow foliage in autumn.

Hibiscus moscheutos (Rose of Sharon)

8 –12' Full sun Well-drained soil August

Leaves out very late in the season. A prolific bloomer with extremely large flowers (5-10" wide), in many colors, blooming in August. Thrives in heat. Attracts hummingbirds and bees. Mulch to help maintain soil moisture. Bush has a deep root system and resents being moved.

Callicarpa dichotama (Purple Beautyberry)

3' – 4' Sun to light shade Well-drained soil August

Covered in late summer with pink flowers, followed by purple berries lasting through the winter. Flowers and fruits on new growth so cut to 18" in spring. Attracts cardinals. Spectacular when used "en masse"; useful as a hedge or as woodland underplanting.

Caryopteris (Blue-Mist Shrub)

2 – 3' tall Full sun-part shade. Not fussy about soil August – Sept.

Aromatic, this shrub is perfect for the sunny edge of a woodland garden. Heat and drought tolerant, it blooms from summer through fall on new growth. Plant “en masse” for dramatic effect. Cut back to 12” in April. Deer-resistant and a magnet to butterflies and bees. Colors range from light to dark blue.

Good Watering Practices

Establishing good watering practices will help your garden plants establish strong, healthy roots. In general, your garden requires 1” of water per week and a good rain gauge will help you track rainfall. The best gauge is still checking the soil ... stick your finger into the soil 1” down. If it feels dry, water. During hot, dry spells you may need to water more often.

Water in the morning when the air is still, or in the evening, but don't waste your time watering in the heat of the day as most of the moisture will be lost to evaporation. A single weekly deep soaking is much better for your plants than a daily sprinkling.. Water deeply and get the water to the roots, not onto the leaves. Some gardeners divide their gardens into grids and water 1 grid a day. Plants which have become used to reaching down for water grow stronger roots and are better able to withstand periods of drought. Water stressed plants will look droopy in the morning or late evening and may have brown edges to their leaves. New plantings will need more attention; a layer of mulch will help retain the water.

Drought Tolerant Perennials

The long-range forecast for this area is for drier summers. Growing reliable, heat-tolerant plants in your garden will help you cope with longer dry spells and cut back on your watering needs... but everything starts with good soil. Well-drained, loose soil allows roots to grow deep to where the moisture is held. It's not a good idea to put plants that prefer wet conditions in the middle of a mixed bed! Use native plants where you can; they've already adapted to the climate. In general, established perennial flowers require less water than annuals. Good choices include: Achillea, Agastache, Artemisia, Columbine, Corydalis lutea, Echinacea, Gaillardia, Lychnis, Nepeta, Oenothera, Penstemon, Perovskia, Salvia, Sedum and Stachys.

Drought-tolerant doesn't mean you never have to water... in fact, you must water until they are established. Drought-tolerant plants tend to have deep roots that seek moisture well below the surface of the soil.

A complete list of Drought Tolerant Plants, ranging from perennials, annuals, grasses, vines and shrubs, is available on the web site. And remember, when the heat wave hits, do only what is absolutely necessary in the garden ... don't push yourself. Many gardeners keep an eye on weather reports and water deeply just before the temperatures soar.

Growing Some High-Summer Favorites

Monarda (Bee Balm)

The flowers of this plant will bloom from early to mid-summer in a range of colors from white, pink, red and purple. Easy care and very low maintenance, this plant asks only for sun and well-drained soil and will

attract hummingbirds and butterflies. Light mulch will help to retain moisture. Divide plants in the spring every 3-4 years. Some gardeners dry Bee Balm, picking the flowers just before they open.

Veronicastrum (Culver's Root)

The soft bloom spikes of this plant range from white to pale pink to blue-purple and resemble candelabra. The flowers can reach 4' and will add a vertical accent to the back of the border. Blooming from mid-summer to early autumn, Veronicastrum's leaves remain attractive throughout the season. Plant in full sun to partial shade and provide medium moisture. Attractive to butterflies, this plant is one of the showiest "natives"

Eupatorium (Joe Pye Weed)

Considered a butterfly magnet, all forms of Joe Pye Weed are crowned with huge, puffy clusters of flowers in August and September. This easy naturalizer prefers moist soil but tolerates drought very well and will easily grow 4-6' tall (or more). Flowers range from white to pink to blue and give way to attractive seed heads for winter. This plant combines well with grasses and Russian Sage and is considered deer resistant.

Helenium (Sneezeweed)

The bright yellow, red and oranges of this daisy-shaped flower hint at the coming of fall as they bloom mid-August through September. Ranging in height from 2-5', Heleniums like full sun and moist, well-drained soil but do require watering in dry spells. Pinching back new growth in late spring will prevent any flopping produced by the large flower heads. Try combining this plant with deep purple asters and grasses.

Maintaining a Seaside Garden

The mild, moist seaside climate can be very favorable to many plants. Salt spray has been credited with keeping insects off Roses and powdery mildew off Monarda! But, almost constant wind brings challenges and carries salt and sand. Wind can be very drying and sandy soil won't hold water and nutrients well. The best seaside plants are drought-tolerant and sturdy. Many native plants have developed their own defenses: silver-gray foliage and small leaves to shed water and fog.

Watering seaside plants with overhead irrigation will help remove coatings of salt and sand. It is a good idea to check your soil and add organic matter to the top 6 inches. This will help the soil hold water. Adding a layer of mulch will also help to conserve soil moisture and regulate the soil temperature. Use a slow release organic fertilizer to feed your plants steadily throughout the season.

For listings of seaside-friendly plants, trees and bushes, please check out the Information sheet ... [Seaside Planting](#) ... on Acer Gardens website.

New Grasses

Ornamental grasses are almost the only completely maintenance-free plant a gardener can grow! Their beauty and diversity is remarkable, they thrive in diverse soil conditions and are usually free of insect and disease problems. Combining well with other flowers and bushes, grasses offer a wide range of height, texture and drama. They ask only for full sun, good drainage and plenty of spreading room. In return, they provide 12-month landscape interest, a safe winter home for birds and a focal point in your landscape.

Planted as a specimen plant or in drifts, grasses bring an almost architectural quality to your garden and attract butterflies and song-birds. Each species has its own form. New varieties include:

***Sporobolus heterolepis* (Prairie Dropseed)**

H: 2-3' Zone: 3-9 Well-drained soil Blooms Aug. - Oct.

Easily grown in full sun, this American native forms clumps of fine, arching leaves. Drought and deer tolerant, this grass tolerates dry soil and grows slowly. Flowers have pink and brown tints and are uniquely fragrant, smelling of coriander. The plant is very effective in large rock gardens and foundation plantings.

***Deschampsia cespitosa* (Tufted Hair Grass)**

H: 2-3' Zone: 4-9 Well-drained soil Blooms: July-Sept.

Easily grown in part shade, this grass prefers moist, organically rich soil as it is often found in bogs, meadows and in damp open woodlands. Fine foliage forms neat clumps with slender flowers rising above the foliage. Gold, silver, purple and green flower panicles turn yellow-tan after bloom and remain attractive all winter long. This native grass makes a very effective ground cover, attracts birds and combines well with Ferns and Hostas.

***Panicum virgatum* (Switch Grass)**

H: 3-4' Zone: 4-10 Well-drained soil Blooms: Aug. – Sept.

This clumping native grass is spectacular when planted in groupings. Its upright blue-green foliage changes over the summer to a deep maroon. Red seed heads appear and last through the winter. Deer-resistant, this plant does not like to be over-watered. For real “punch”, consider adding the strong accent of the cultivar “Hot Rod.”

Fast Fillers in the Perennial Bed

There are different reasons for changing the look of a perennial bed. Sometimes, gardeners lose interest in a particular color or want a different emphasis. Physical limitations may dictate the amount of time available for gardening. Life brings changes and people may be away a good part of the summer or be occupied with visitors and grandchildren. Or, it may just be time to spruce up a particular area and bring in a more modern, easy-going look. Whatever the reason, a gardener often wants rapid results and is not always willing to wait for plants to fill in over a period of years. Turning to fast fillers allows the gardener to replace existing areas with long-blooming perennials and plants that routinely form big, dependable clumps. Meeting their light and moisture requirements will help speed them along! Almost all are sun lovers and like evenly moist soil. Some may actually need cutting back as the season progresses. These plants will produce mature clumps and fill in spaces very quickly.

Perennial	Common Name	Bloom Time
Aconitum	(Monkshood)	Mid to late summer
Agastache	(Hyssop)	July to first frost
Aster	Aster	July to August
Boltonia	(Star Flower)	August to October
Centranthus	(Jupiter's Beard)	All summer
Crococsmia	(Falling Stars)	Mid-late summer
Digitalis	(Foxglove)	Late spring to early summer
Echinacea	(Coneflower)	June to August
Gaura	(Wand Flower)	May to September
Helianthus	(Sunflower)	Fall
Heliopsis	(False Sunflower)	Mid-summer to early fall
Kniphofia	(Red-hot Poker)	Mid summer
Liatris	(Blazing Star)	July to August
Monarda	(Bee Balm)	June to August
Nepeta	(Catmint)	June to September
Persicaria	(Knotweed)	June to October
Stachys	(Lambs' Ears)	Early to Mid-spring

Often-Asked Questions

My Peonies were gorgeous this year! What do I do now?

Peonies bring wonderful color to the June garden and require very little after-bloom care. Remove the faded flowers and the stem, leaving as much foliage as possible. In the fall, after a heavy frost, cut the stems to within 3" of the soil surface. Extremely long-lived, peonies can grow 10 years or more without needing division and dislike being moved. Early fall is the best time to plant new peonies. Winter's cold actually helps peonies flower well.

I enjoy sitting on my terrace in the evening but don't want to spray. What can I do?

A number of herbs and plants naturally repel many insects and are good choices to plant near your sitting area. Consider using Nepeta, Lavender, Lantana, Lemon Balm, Lemon Thyme and Santolina.

My gravel driveway is over-run with weeds. Is there an easy fix?

An old-fashioned but highly effective remedy is to spray a mixture of ½ white vinegar and ½ water directly on the weeds. Do this when there will be several days of sun to follow and the weeds should be gone in a matter of days! This mixture also helps control weeds around patios and terraces.

How do I tell what kind of shade I have?

Part shade is defined as 4-6 hours of mostly morning sun or all-day dappled light.
Full shade means your garden gets only 2-3 hours of sun daily.

Which natural pollinating plants will help bring bees back to my garden?

Among the best natural pollinators are: Achillea, Agastache, Coreopsis, Echinacea, Lavender, Liatris, Monarda, Rudbeckia and Thyme.

My annuals are slowing down and not blooming well. What can I do?

Cut them back by at least half, fertilize, water and wait a few weeks. They'll come back quickly!

How can I keep powdery mildew off my Phlox and Monarda?

Spray the plants with Horticultural Oil once a week for 3 weeks in a row.

I'm planning a small garden near my front door. Any tips?

The easiest way to design an entry garden is to make a list of what you don't want. It's a good idea to avoid plants with thorns or plants that attract bees and yellow jackets. Branches at face height could present a problem for arriving visitors as could any plant that sprawls across the walkway and could become a tripping hazard. Try not to choose shrubs that need yearly pruning. Smaller, slow-growing evergreens will add structure and provide winter interest. A focused light source feature will ensure that your garden is noticed by visitors.

What's the best way to divide Hostas?

Late summer is the best time to divide Hostas. Medium-sized Hostas can be split every 4-5 years ... anything too large will take at least 3-4 years to regain its size so choose carefully. Dig up the entire clump and gently break away the soil and wash the roots until you see the "eyes". Gently pull apart the roots to form new plants. You may actually have to cut them apart with a very sharp knife. Quickly plant them in their new location, spaced about 12-18" apart, and water well until thoroughly established and rooted in. Most Hostas prefer 3-4 hours of morning sunlight. Harsh afternoon sun will fade their leaves. Plant Hostas in good soil, high in organic matter; well-drained soil will still hold moisture.

2nd Crop Vegetables

Now is a good time to put down straw in the vegetable garden (never hay). (Be sure to weed thoroughly first!) Continue to check your garden for insects and disease. Clean off harvested rows immediately to prevent any insect/disease build-up. The nursery has several organic insecticides and fungicides available to help you protect your vegetables.

Water tomatoes deeply and regularly, at least once a week. Once the fruits start to ripen, water only if the plants start to wilt; this will encourage better-flavored fruit. Harvest tomatoes when they are completely colored and feel slightly soft to the touch. Gently twist and pull from the plant.

Second plantings will mature before frost. Plant beans, cucumbers and squash. Cabbage, beets and broccoli are also good candidates for the "second season". Many gardeners wait until early

August to sow spinach as it will continue to produce leaves until a freeze. Swiss chard, kale, and leaf lettuces can be planted in two-week intervals from mid-July into September. Try putting a series of lettuces in small, individual containers and use them on the patio as accent plants.

Acer Gardens will have a good supply of herbs ... especially cilantro, basil, arugula mint and thyme ... as well as lettuces ... right into the fall.

If you don't use all your herbs, you can dry them easily in the microwave. Arrange sprigs of thyme, oregano or rosemary in a single layer on a paper towel. Microwave on High for 2 minutes or until dry and brittle. Remove the leaves from the stems and crumble into small, labeled Ziploc bags. They can be stored for 1 year. Do not freeze.

Preparing for a Storm.

As unpleasant as it is to contemplate, we do get storms from time to time: thunderstorms sweep in with heat waves and hurricanes come up the coast. The prudent gardener pays attention to weather reports and takes notice of the state of the garden before a storm arrives.

Prune out dead branches on trees or shrubs.

Make sure that pergolas, arches and trellises are firm on their foundations.

If a storm is due to hit and you have a staked sapling, untie the tree from the stake so that it can move with the wind. Re-tie it when the storm has passed.

Gather gardening tools and equipment, hanging plants and small containers and park them in the garage.

Remove small, decorative garden objects, including wind chimes, which could become air-borne.

Finally, move light furniture and tables into the garage until the storm has passed

Bulbs

Sliding into late summer means it's time to plan for bulbs! Adding small, unusual bulbs to your established gardens is a quick way to enhance your spring plantings and a fun way to experiment with "new looks". You can plant bulbs almost anywhere in the garden as long as the soil drains well. Bulbs like sun even after they have bloomed ... most need it to develop next year's flowers. Don't just scatter your bulbs around the garden ...plant bulbs thickly to give an abundant look. The following chart will help you determine the number of bulbs needed per square foot in order to give a dense display:

<u>Bulb</u>		<u># per sq. foot</u>
Allium sphaerocephalon	(Drumstick Allium)	1-2
Anemone blanda	(Grecian Windflower)	18-20
Chionodoxa gigantea	(Glory of the Snow)	18-20
Crocus	(Crocus)	8-9
Daffodils	(Daffodils)	4-5
Galanthus elwesii	(Giant Snowdrop)	12
Hyacinthoides	(Spanish Hyacinth))	5-6

Leucojum aestivum	(Summer Snowflake)	9-10
Muscari armeniacum	(Grape Hyacinth)	12
Scilla hispanica	(Spanish Bluebells)	8

Acer Gardens will also be carrying tulips again as well as several varieties of garlic.

Many bulbs will be available at the nursery from Labor Day on including Alliums, Anemones, Chionodoxa, Leucojum, Scilla hispanica and Snowdrops. Daffodils, Paper Whites for forcing and large-sized Amaryllis bulbs, some pre-potted, will also be available.

In this climate, bulb planting should be an on-going process as the nights begin to cool down in late September. Start with the smallest bulbs (and remember...some of those don't really have a sharp-end-up so just lay them on their sides in the ground. They'll actually right themselves and grow properly towards the light when the time comes!) As fall continues, start planting the larger bulbs and finish with the tulips in early to mid November. Some gardeners put a thin layer of fine gravel in with the bulbs to deter the voles.

General Reminder

Tuesdays at Acer Gardens are 60+ Discount Days ... 10% off all purchases.

Wednesday offers a 10% Nursery **Discount** to all customers.

Acer Gardens
Linda Z. Lynch
Editor

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