

July Garden To-Do List

July is here, which means it's time to start enjoying the bounty from your vegetable gardens, planning for your fall crops, and concentrating on garden maintenance in your perennial beds.

Here are a few things you should be doing in your gardens this month:

1. **Water! Water! Water!** The most important gardening task in July is watering. Plants in containers should be checked daily; most will need water every day, some will need to be watered twice a day. Plants in raised beds or in the ground should be watered deeply and regularly. Make sure the water is getting down 4-6 inches into the soil. If it doesn't rain, then established trees and shrubs will also need to be watered to prevent drought stress.
2. **Deadhead** your spring and early summer blooming annuals and perennials. Removing spent blossoms will allow your annuals to put energy into producing more blooms. Some early blooming perennials, like May Night Salvia and Red Valerian, will reward you with a second bloom if trimmed back. Plus you will appreciate how much neater your garden beds look once the spent blooms are removed.
3. **Dig and Divide** your Iris and Lilies once they are done blooming if they are getting overcrowded. They both appreciate being divided every 3-5 years. If you don't have room for the divisions in other areas of your garden, then be sure to share them with friends and neighbors. If you don't need to divide them this year, then just be sure to cut off the flower stalks when they have finished blooming.
4. **Assess** your perennial beds and shrubs. Are they performing as you hoped? Are there bare spots that need to be filled in? Are some plants growing too big and crowding out smaller ones? Is your irrigation system providing the right amount of water? Have the weeds taken over in some sections?
5. **Seeds** for late season crops of beets, cabbage, kale, lettuce, etc. can be started at the end of the month. Garlic and onions should be ready to harvest and dry by mid-month. Make sure you are checking your summer squash plants daily and harvest when they are still small and tender. If you find you have overplanted and can't eat or preserve all your harvest, donate some to a neighbor or the Tri-Lakes Cares' food pantry.



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