July Gardening To-Do

- Weed, weed, weed! All this rain followed by warmer weather is perfect conditions for weeds to take off with seemingly sonic speed. After weeding, mulch with 1 to 3 inches of wood chip mulch (not fresh) to prevent weeds from returning.
- You can divide perennials that bloom in spring now, as needed or desired. Hold off on dividing those that bloom in late summer or fall. For them, it's too close to show time!
- Deadhead—that is, trim spent blooms—from annuals, perennials, and some shrubs. It keeps your garden more attractive and in many cases, it will encourage more flowers longer.
- Continue to plant container-grown or balled-and-burlapped trees, shrubs, and roses now. However, avoid planting bare-root roses and other bare-root plants. This late in the season, they'll struggle to get established.
- Time to practice tough love. If a tree or shrub is still struggling with winter damage or overall sickness, with significant amounts of dead wood, it's almost certainly time to dig it up or cut it down.
- Remove the browning foliage of tulips and daffodils once it pulls away easily. Until then, the plant is using it rejuvenate for next year.
- Pinch mum buds until the 4th of July. This helps them produce larger, bigger flowers on stronger stems.
- Harvest early and often for the most tender, sweetest produce and to keep plants producing well. Pick zucchini, for example, with the yellow flower still attached.
- Most lettuce by now has started to bolt, that is, send up tall, elongated stalks. At this point, it turns bitter. Pull it up and pitch it on your compost heap.
- Remove old raspberry canes after the plants stop producing fruit.
- Check out the bulb catalogs and on-line sources. Ordering now assures the type and quantity you want this fall, when supplies run low.

Notes