

## July 2021

Many great plants are in bloom this month including: Hydrangea, Clethra, Stewartia, Clematis, Echinacea, Hemerocallis, Lavandula, Leucanthemum, Liatris, Monarda, Perovskia, Phlox, Rudbeckia, Hibiscus, and Salvia.

Plantings in containers dry out much faster than plants in the landscape. In order to prevent over-watering, potting soils contain lightweight materials such as peat moss, perlite and bark and not soil. Lightweight potting mediums make moving pots easier but more frequent watering is required. Be sure to keep deadheading to keep container plants looking their best and encouraging new blooms.

Continue good maintenance in the garden by removing any dead or diseased plants to prevent the spread of disease. Pick up their dropped leaves and don't compost these plants. Keep up with the weeding. Don't let weeds go to seed.

Be on the lookout for poison ivy in the landscape. Be sure to wear gloves or use tools to remove and dispose of these plants. If poison ivy plants are small, place a plastic bag on your hand to pull up the plants and then fold the plastic over the plant and dispose it in the trash.

Never use pesticides or fungicides on your garden plants when temperatures get higher than 85 degrees. The bright sun will burn the foliage and may kill the plant.

With the heat and humidity of summer, keep a close eye on your garden for powdery mildew. This fungus will begin as a white dust like covering on the leaves of your plants, especially if you water with overhead sprinklers. Powdery mildew will block the sunlight from plant foliage and the leaves will turn brown and black quickly dying. When the foliage dies, the plant is prevented from making fruit and flowers.

Restore a naturalistic look to shrubs such as: azaleas, rhododendrons, lilacs, winterberries, viburnums, weigelas, hollies, boxwoods, and small trees such as crabapples and Japanese maples. Remove deadwood, broken and crossing branches to increase air circulation and space for branches to leaf out and photosynthesize. This will reduce the incidence of disease and pest problems. Give these shrubs and trees a naturalistic look.

Don't irrigate in the midday or on windy days when evaporation is the greatest. It's best to water in the early morning or evening. Use drip irrigation or soaker hoses when possible. Overhead irrigation may result in watering plant surfaces and not the root systems. Water deeply allowing the water to soak in the soil. Newly installed plants need more frequent irrigation until established. Less frequent, deeper irrigation encourages good root growth which will help plants survive water stress.

Maintain your irrigation system. Check for leaks, broken spray heads, and perform an irrigation system audit to assure uniformity.

\*\*A good book discussing plant maladies and remedies is *What's Wrong with My Plant* by David Deardorff and Kathryn Wadsworth available on Amazon.