

# JUNGLE TAMING

MONTHLY HORTICULTURAL NEWSLETTER

803.463.2655

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Helping to minimize the effects of original sin in your Garden of Eden!

## Amy's June Horticultural Tasks

Written by Amy Bledsoe

Annuals



Turf



Perennials



Roses



Shrubs



Trees



### Annuals

Say "Hello" to the heat! By now your warm season annuals should be planted and even blooming in many cases. Night temperatures have now turned warm as well, and annuals could use a boost of a water soluble fertilizer to keep up with their rapid growth rates. Some annuals need to be deadheaded to keep them blooming, so watch for flowers that have lots of spent blooms, but aren't setting new blooms. Removing the spent flowers will make them re-bloom. Be on the lookout for spider mites who love dry, hot weather and aphids who love tender new growth. Look for the beneficial insects, as well (like lady bugs), and allow them to do their job of controlling aphids.



High temperatures will play a role in when and which pesticides can be used. Many pesticides have a top temperature in which they are safe to use before becoming volatile and dangerous to the applicator and/or plants. At this time of year prevention of diseases is your best bet. Ensure good air circulation, avoid overhead watering,

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and water early in the day. Check irrigation frequently for problems or dry spots. High temperatures mean that plants cannot go without water for long. Weeds will compete for water, space, and nutrients; keep them to a minimum.

### Turf

Do not use your mower's bagger this month. Returning clippings to the lawn returns nutrients to it. Grass is mostly made up of water, and it will decompose quickly.



If you need to de-thatch the lawn, mow (with bagger) afterward to remove any debris and water thoroughly. Mowers should be set to a higher mowing height than they were for spring mowing. Mow 1/3 of the height of grass to keep it less stressed and healthy. Remember to vary your mowing patterns, and do not blow debris into the street as this is a violation of storm drain management practices that City of Columbia employees must follow.

Watch your turf for signs of dry areas caused by broken heads or irrigation heads not overlapping properly.

Mole crickets can be a problem, particularly in sandy soils. Watch for quarter-sized holes in the lawn and patterns of dying

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## Gardening for Everyone

## Better Safe than Sorry? I Wish It Were So with Pesticides

Written by Donald McInnes, Ph.D.



*Last month, Dr. McInnes presented safety and health concerns associated with some commonly used pesticides. This month, he discusses how the government evaluates and controls the manufacture and use of pesticides.*

As I discussed last month, pesticides and herbicides commonly used by homeowners have been associated with health risks in some studies. This month, let's examine how the United States oversees these chemical products.

In the U.S., a manufacturer does not have to prove a product is safe before it can go on the market. Under the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976, the burden of proof is on the EPA to prove a chemical presents an "unreasonable risk" before it can be banned or restricted. It's estimated that there are over 80,000 different chemicals in consumer goods. Only a handful have been thoroughly vetted for safety. Only one class of chemicals, PCBs, has been completely banned. A few hundred chemicals have had their uses restricted. The EPA does not even have the power to ban asbestos, something we've known the dangers of for decades—it tried, but the proposed ban was overturned when a court deemed the EPA did not prove the risk from asbestos was "unreasonable."



The safety of chemical products is also cast in doubt by manufacturers' ability to withhold the identities of ingredients from regulating agencies (and the public) by claiming they are trade secrets. Another problem is in the testing. Most of the studies relied on by the EPA to make regulatory decisions have been done by researchers with financial conflicts of interest. It's unlikely the EPA will be more effective in protecting the public any time soon. Currently the agency has its hands full with political pressure from the fossil fuel industry and its allies in Congress who don't want any restrictions on the release of climate changing air pollution.

Many countries take a different approach. Regulation is not so tilted in favor of industry. They follow the precautionary principle—a product must be shown to be safe before it can be released on the market. Even some third world countries ban pesticides that are unrestricted here. I'd like to think our government could do a better job protecting us than Ghana's. Wouldn't you?

I urge you to be mindful of the potential dangers posed by pesticides when tackling problems in your landscape and garden. Herbicides and insecticides were designed to kill—don't assume they are perfectly safe just because you can buy them easily at the hardware store or garden center. Treat them with the respect a dangerous substance deserves. Follow the directions on the label to the letter—not just those on dosage, but also the directions on protective clothing and masks, the timing of application and other cautions. Use them only when you have to—learn to tolerate some imperfections in your landscape, consider less toxic or non-toxic alternatives (see [beyondpesticides.org](http://beyondpesticides.org)), and inspect often—incipient problems are always easier to correct than ones allowed to get out of hand. And also make sure you've got the



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### **Amy's June Horticultural Tasks**

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turf. Mole crickets can quickly cause large areas of turf to die. If you suspect mole crickets, contact the City of Columbia's Forestry & Beautification division for help and information on how to test for mole crickets: <http://www.columbiasc.net/forestry>.

#### **Perennials**

Perennials should be out of dormancy by now. Replace any that didn't over-winter.

Now is a good time to evaluate your landscaped areas. While annuals are great for color spots, the use of perennials will save money in the long run. Concentrate annual color at entry points to the parks, but be sure to work in perennials overall. If there are places that are difficult to maintain or mow, consider using perennials as an alternative to mulch or turf. Perennials can be used effectively for hillside plantings or in areas where deer and rabbits have eaten annuals. Because many perennials can be divided later, you can plant one area with perennials with the intent to plant other areas from divisions of the starter bed.

Perennials are also useful for attracting beneficial insects to the landscape. These will help control "bad" bugs that can be problematic to the rest of the yard. Be on the lookout for aphids and spider mites. Avoid overhead watering to prevent fungal diseases like powdery mildew. Pull weeds to avoid competition for water, space, and nutrients.



#### **Roses**

Water deeply and infrequently to keep fungal diseases to a minimum. Avoid excessive fertilization which produces soft, succulent growth favored by pests. Deadheading the flowers will encourage re-bloom, but it is not recommended for newly planted roses. Be watchful for aphids, spider mites, thrips, and Japanese Beetles. Horticultural soaps can be used to control these pests. Pull weeds to

avoid competition for water, nutrients, and space.

#### **Shrubs**

Continue to water newly planted shrubs, avoiding overhead water. If you applied slow-release fertilizer in the spring, you should not need to feed them yet. Little or no pruning should be done during hot temperatures. Only azaleas that have finished blooming and didn't get pruned last month should be pruned now.

Hydrangeas, Rose of Sharon, Abelias, native azaleas, Gardenias, Chinese Indigo, and other summer bloomers



should be coming into their glory this month. Watch for aphids, scale, spider mites, and Japanese Beetles on shrubs. Particularly watch gardenias for white flies. Good air circulation will help control this pest of gardenias. Heavy infestations can kill gardenias.

Fire blight can show up in some shrubs. Leaves will look brown and scorched, and hang down from the stem, but not fall off. Quickly remove infested shrubs and destroy them. You cannot treat this disease with fungicide - try to prevent its spread to healthy plant specimens. Be careful that you do not spread this disease through your contact of hands or tools to healthy plants.

#### **Trees**

Water recently planted trees thoroughly and deeply as they become particularly vulnerable during high temperatures. Palm trees can be planted now. Fertilize Palm trees monthly as they are heavy feeders. Palms will benefit from monthly applications of Epsom salts and iron. Older trees will get enough fertilizer from turf grass applications of fertilizer. Only prune broken or damaged limbs. Leyland Cypress can become infested with bag worms. Remove as many of these as possible by handpicking. Older varieties of crape myrtle may become diseased with powdery mildew. Apply fungicide as needed, and keep good air circulation as much as possible.



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**Professor Ron's Timely Tips****There is a Fungus Among Us***Written by Ron Cowart*

Recently, I've visited yards in the area that were suffering from two fungal diseases: Large Patch and Dollar Spot. Both of these diseases are stimulated by high humidity caused by recent rains.

**Large Patch Fungus**

Large patch fungus can infect our four warm season grasses: bermuda, zoysia, St. Augustine and centipede.



**Signs and Symptoms:** The first symptoms are dinner plate sized yellow patches bordered with a reddish brown color of grass moving into the green grass areas at the rate of 4 to 12 inches per month. By summer these patches may be 15 to 20 feet in diameter. There are no spots on the leaves but the base of the leaf where it enters the sheaf contains a soft dark rot.

**Cultural Management:** Mow at the upper range of recommended cutting heights, improve drainage, and manage thatch build-up.

**Chemical Management:** Fungicides containing thiophanate-methyl, azoxystrobin, chlorothalonil can be used for preventative control. Apply one of these fungicides at first occurrence in spring or summer and an alternate fungicide application in October or November.

**Dollar Spot Fungus**

Dollar spot fungus begins as an isolated stray spot varying from two to five inches in diameter. It is reproduced not from spores like most fungi, but by the main structure of the fungus called the mycelium. Parts of the mycelium may be spread throughout the remaining lawn via lawn mower blades.



**Signs and Symptoms:** Look for cobwebs early in the morning on your grass. If the grass is straw-colored beneath the cobweb mass, it is dollar spot. If the grass is green beneath the mass, don't worry, it is a spider web caused by a very small spider. A closer examination of the plant's leaf will reveal a straw-colored lesion, outlined by a reddish brown border. This lesion will elongate longitudinally with the blade and cross the width of the blade, leaving a green basal portion and a green blade tip.

**Disease Cycle:** The fungus survives winter in the grass thatch, and begins to grow upward during the spring feeding on the water droplets exuded from the tips of the grass blades. These droplets are called guttation droplets and are loaded with plant sugars that feed the fungus. After feeding on the water droplets, the fungus inserts its mycelium into the leaf and feeds on the leaf sap causing the straw color as stated above.

**Cultural Management:** Fertilize grass to stimulate leaf growth and mow high to cut tips of grass blades with bag attachment. Water deeply and infrequently.

**Chemical Management:** Dollar spot responds well to fungicides such as thiophanate-methyl, azoxystrobin, or mancozeb. Garden stores can assist you in identifying the trade name fungicides.

For best results, consult a landscape professional.



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## Growing Little Green Thumbs

### Queen Anne's Lace

Written by Ruby Haycock DeLoach

*How does the meadow-flower  
its bloom unfold?  
Because the lovely little flower is free  
Down to its root, and in that  
freedom bold.  
~William Wordsworth*

Beside the roads and down country paths summer snowflakes of Queen Anne's Lace grow wild and free from April until frost. Wild carrot's regal name comes from the fable about Queen Anne of England pricking her finger while stitching white lace which was stained by a drop of her blood. Look closely: In the center among all the white florets you'll see a red-purple dot.



The blooms press beautifully and look like crocheted doilies. You can spray paint them and attach thread for hanging.

Here's a little project you can do with the kids. Cut the flowers allowing about 6 inch stems, put them in a glass of water colored with food dye and watch the blooms change color. Experiment with making secondary colors from the three primaries of red, blue and yellow.

Two books at your public library to read are **Little Blue and Little Yellow** by Leo Lionni and **The Carrot Seed** by Ruth Krauss which is also available as a read-aloud on YouTube. To develop literacy skills and learn about plants, open a book and read to your child.

### About the Authors

**Amy Bledsoe**, who has a degree in horticulture, is a Certified Nursery Professional, Pesticide Applicator, Environmental Landscaper, Arborist, and Landscape Technician. She is currently the landscape designer for the City of Columbia. She has consulted on gardening articles for Columbia Metropolitan magazine and The State newspaper, appeared on ETV's "Making It Grow," and has also been a radio guest on "The Andy Thomas Show" to answer questions on gardening. Email Amy at [abledsoedesign@msn.com](mailto:abledsoedesign@msn.com).

**Patsy Cowart**, "Miss Patsy," is the eldest of four children, all born in a country house built before 1900. She was taught to cook at an early age by her mother, Miss Mildred Ross. It was and still is a sign of respect in certain pockets of Kershaw county to refer to locals by their name with Miss or Mr. preceding the first name. Simple home cooking was the rule of the day, and nothing was thrown away. A cook book was hardly followed and recipes were shared using terms like "use a pinch of this, pinch of that," and "add to taste." Miss Patsy is pretty darn good cook—so Professor Ron married her 41 years ago.

**Ron Cowart** has 40 years of landscaping experience. Since 1975, he has owned and operated Tookeedoo Farms, a landscaping and nursery business. With two degrees from Clemson University, he is also a horticulture and landscape instructor at Midlands Tech, and owner of Cowart Landscaping Consulting, LLC. To contact Ron, call (803) 513.4242 or email [cowartconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:cowartconsulting@gmail.com). You can visit Ron's website at [www.cowartconsulting.com](http://www.cowartconsulting.com).

**Ruby Haycock DeLoach** has an Ed. D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of South Carolina. After retiring as an educator, she developed her artistic abilities and illustrated her first nonfiction children's science book, **Earth Turns on Its Axis, and...** She has another book under production called **Growing Little Green Thumbs**. To contact Ruby, email [rhdeloach@aol.com](mailto:rhdeloach@aol.com). Also visit her website at [www.crookedcreekart.org/deloach.htm](http://www.crookedcreekart.org/deloach.htm).

**Donald McInnes** has degrees in biology from Duke, Northwestern and Florida State. He has worked for Clemson Extension in Richland County for more than a decade, assisting thousands of consumers with landscape, garden, wildlife and pest control questions. He is also the owner of Southeastern Environmental Design, a landscape coaching, consulting and design service, and chairs the City of Columbia's Tree and Appearance Commission. He can be reached at [seenvdes@aol.com](mailto:seenvdes@aol.com).

### About Jungle Taming

**Jungle Taming, LLC** is an upscale yard and garden restoration company that specializes in pruning, cultivating and uncovering hidden beauty from overgrown landscapes. Call Jungle Taming for fence line cleaning, ivy and weed removal, bed improvement, trimming and cleaning shrubs, tree trimming, debris removal, herbicide application and much, much more.

Owner **Bill Kunze**, certified in Landscape Management, has over 15 years of hands-on experience in the Midlands area. For more information, contact Jungle Taming at (803) 463-2655 or email [info@JungleTaming.com](mailto:info@JungleTaming.com). Visit the website: [www.JungleTaming.com](http://www.JungleTaming.com).



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# Food for Mind, Body & Soul



**Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine for the soul.**

## Miss Patsy's Secret Weapon Recipes

### Peach Cobbler

*Written by Patsy Cowart*



*This is the time of year to enjoy the delicious peaches that will be harvested in South Carolina. There is nothing better than fresh picked fruit. Enjoy!*

*The following is a recovered peach cobbler receipt found on an old yellowed piece of paper in Miss Mildred's handwriting.*

1. Cut up a quart-plus of peaches, sweetened to taste
2. Pour into flat casserole dish
3. Sprinkle with cinnamon
4. Cut up 1 stick butter over mixture
5. Mix together 1 cup sugar, 1 cup self-rising flour and 1 cup buttermilk
6. Pour above mixture over fruit but do not stir
7. Bake at 350 – 375 for 45 minutes or until done

**Note:** *Canned plums, peaches or pears may be used.*

## Gardening for Everyone

*Cont'd from Page 2*

right weapon for the problem. I'm amazed by how often folks are disappointed that the insecticide they applied didn't solve the problem they were having with a fungal disease. If you're not sure what you're dealing with and what the best solution is, ask a Master Gardener, a reputable garden center, or your county Extension Office.

I also urge you to ask your congressman and senators to support the Toxic Chemicals Safety Act. This bill would limit manufacturers' ability to hide information about toxic products and would put more of an emphasis on safety in the regulatory process (for more information, see [notaguineapig.org](http://notaguineapig.org)).



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