

JUNGLE TAMING

MONTHLY HORTICULTURAL NEWSLETTER

803.463.2655

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July, 2012

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

Amy's July Horticultural Tasks

Written by Amy Bledsoe

Annuals



Turf



Perennials



Roses



Shrubs



Trees



Annuals



If you used a slow release fertilizer in the spring to fertilize your annuals, now is the time to reapply. These fertilizers have a four month life span, so this application will take you through the remainder of the growing season. Pay close attention to plants in containers as they will dry out faster than will plants in the ground. Many annuals will need to be dead-headed to keep them blooming. Pinch back coleus and impatiens to keep them from becoming leggy.

Turf

This is not the time to try to establish a new turf area. Watch for damage from mole crickets, beetles, and chinch bugs. Be sure to vary mowing patterns and keep grass cut a little higher now because of the heat. Check irrigation systems for leaks or needed repairs, and make sure

heads haven't become misaligned: This can create dry spots in the lawn that will quickly lead to dead areas.



Monthly Horticultural Newsletter is distributed free of charge each month by Jungle Taming, LLC, an upscale yard restoration landscaping company proudly serving the Columbia, SC area.

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Disclaimer

The information in this newsletter has been compiled by local experts in horticulture and landscaping, and combines scientific and practical applications of horticultural theory. Suggestions are general, and individual results may vary. Opinions of author do not always reflect Jungle Taming's opinion.

Perennials

Reapply slow release fertilizers to perennial plants now, too. If you have perennials that have finished blooming, you can often get a second bloom period by dead heading them now. This will cause them to bloom again during the late summer. Keep an eye out for aphids, spider mites, and other heat loving insects during this month. Treat with a systemic insecticide for best results.

Roses

Do not fertilize roses this month. However, if you have Knock-out Roses, they can be cut back by a third to encourage new growth and set an intense display of blooms. Japanese beetles can be a nuisance on many plants including roses at this time of year. There's an easy way to take of them: Take a jar of soapy water (dish soap will do) out to the plants that Japanese

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Gardening for Everyone

Plants Not Thriving?

Written by Donald McInnes, Ph.D.



Summer's here now officially according to my calendar, although for us, it seems to have started a couple of months ago. Some of our ornamental plants disappear in summer. They follow a pattern the reverse of most of our hardy but tender plants—those that die back to the ground after we get a hard freeze. For instance, the foliage of spider lilies (AKA hurricane lilies, *Lycoris radiata* and other species) withered a few weeks ago, and the plants will remain hidden until the flowers appear as summer wanes and fall begins.

Most plants should be thriving this time of year. If the plants in your landscape are not living up to your expectations, it may be time to lower those expectations. Many plants don't seem to grow much until they have had sufficient time to become established. Trees and shrubs, especially, may take a few years before they start to grow in earnest. During the establishment period, most of the growth is in the root system, and we don't see it.

If your plants aren't relatively new, it might be time to see if there's a reason for the plants' poor performance. Water, too much or too little, is responsible for more problems in the garden and landscape than any other factor. The immediate symptom of over-watering is usually wilting, with leaf yellowing, browning and dieback following. Drought can also produce wilting—if the roots are deprived of oxygen from saturated soil they will cease to function and the leaves will not get sufficient water. Excessive moisture often leads to disease problems; fungal diseases, especially, thrive with ample moisture and humidity. Don't assume your irrigation system is working perfectly when problems arise—pull the mulch away and get your hands in the soil to check moisture levels.



Usually if critters (mites, slugs, insects, squirrels, rabbits, deer) are feeding on your plants, you'll see the damage they leave behind or the critters themselves (although it may take magnification to see the smallest mites and insects). [Look for more on this topic next month.]

Diseases can be less obvious. Many produce lesions on leaves, but some are difficult to diagnose. Sometimes the only symptom will be wilting or dieback. I find tomatoes to be the most difficult plants to diagnose--there are viral, bacterial and fungal diseases that all produce quite similar symptoms.

If your plant is growing slower than it should or producing insufficient flowers and fruit, and the problem is not suboptimal water and light conditions, it might be time to have the soil analyzed. By having your soil chemically analyzed, you'll know what to apply to get pH and nutrient levels optimal. Optimal soil chemistry means healthier plants, less waste (and less expense and potential run-off pollutants). Clemson Extension offices will accept soil for testing—for a modest \$6, you'll find out which fertilizer is best for what you want to grow and how much of it you'll need, and the same for lime.

The only tricky part about having your soil tested is knowing how many tests you need. Most average size lots will require at least two tests. Any area in which a problem is occurring, whether it's a dead spot in the lawn or a pecan tree that's not bearing, should be tested separately—sample the healthy part of the lawn separate from the problem spots. Also any place where the soil color and texture are obviously different should be sampled



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Professor Ron's Timely Tips

Re-Thinking Lawn Irrigation Is Overwatering Causing Disease in Your Lawn?

Written by Ron Cowart

Tantalizing. Dictionary meaning: "To tease or disappoint by promising or showing something desirable and then withholding it."

Are you a teaser? Did you know that you may be tantalizing your lawn with an insufficient amount of water? It is generally recommended by the green industry that turf growing on clay soil receive 1 inch of water per week, and turf growing on sandy soil receive 1.5 inches of water per week as rainfall and/or supplemental irrigation. The Columbia S.C. area receives an average of 1 inch of rainfall weekly March through October. So what is the problem?

There are two problems: (1) Our lawns are not receiving enough water, and (2) We are spoon feeding that water over three to four days during the week. Both of these cultural practices may be causing shallow root systems leading to disorders and diseases in the turf.

Problem #1: Lawns Are Not Getting Enough Water

A simple irrigation test can reveal if your lawn is receiving enough water. Place five tuna squat cans randomly around the yard, collecting irrigation water from a major water zone. Collect water for 20 minutes; pour contents together into one can, and measure the height of the water in inches. Divide by five. This is the average amount of water your irrigation system is delivering per 20 minutes. Multiply by three, and this gives the amount of water being delivered in one hour. You can divide this amount of water by 60 minutes to determine the amount of water being delivered per minute. Add the total minutes of run times on your irrigation clock. Are you getting enough water after considering weekly rainfall?



Problem #2: Lawns Are Being Intermittently Sprinkled With Water

Insufficient amounts of water will percolate to an insufficient depth of the root system. Most of the root activity will occur in this shallow root zone limiting the turf's ability to withstand severe drought situations and absorb the needed plant nutrients that reside below the shallow root zone.



The Solution To These Two Problems

Irrigate **one time weekly** when rainfall fails to supply the necessary water (1 inch in clay and 1.5 inch in sand).

To help you, the reader, further understand the problems and solutions, the following is an excerpt from a yard report for a client last month. The client's centipede had large patch fungus, caused by intermittent irrigation (more than three or four days per week) throughout the week. These three irrigation intervals during the week caused high humidity on the grass leaves.

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Professor Ron's Timely Tips*Cont'd from Page 3***Excerpt from Water Management Irrigation Test:**

Irrigation rate test revealed that 0.51 inch of water was being applied per week. According to green industry standards, turf should receive one inch of water per week (four inches per month) in clay soil during the growing season. The normal growing season is March through October. The average precipitation (1957 to 2012) for our area is 4.02 inches per month or 1 inch per week. Rainfall as recorded for the past 55 years for your area is as follows:

These are historical averages. Droughts will occur; adjust accordingly.

Month	Average Monthly Rainfall	Estimated Weekly Rainfall	Additional Water Required Weekly	Estimated Weekly Irrigation Minutes
Mar	4.55	1.14	none	none
Apr	3.14	0.78	0.22	67
May	3.26	0.82	0.18	54
Jun	4.52	1.13	none	none
Jul	5.20	1.30	none	none
Aug	4.50	1.12	none	none
Sep	3.75	0.94	0.06	18
Oct	3.20	0.80	0.20	61

Landscape irrigation systems are used as supplemental irrigation. Therefore, landscape irrigation should be used when rainfall fails to provide 1 inch per week for clay soil.

The diagnostic report indicates that "watering three times a week in this heavy clay soil is excessive and has created ideal conditions for the development of this disease. The homeowner should irrigate weekly when rainfall fails to provide an inch of water."

Amy's July Horticultural Tasks*Cont'd from Page 1*

beetles are feeding on. Hold the jar beneath the beetles and tap gently on the plant. The beetles will react by dropping off the plants and fall into your waiting jar of soapy water where they will die. This can be done a couple of times a day for the short time that Japanese beetles are feeding on your plants.

Shrubs

Little or nothing should be done to shrubs now. It's a good time to note which shrubs may need to be replaced in the fall when planting times comes around again. Many conifer type shrubs are susceptible to spider mites during hot, dry summer months, in particular Dwarf Alberta Spruce. These can not easily be seen until they've caused irreparable damage. Monitor closely for webbing or discoloration of plants.



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Gardening for Everyone

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separately. Vegetable gardens, where the soil has been amended should be analyzed separately from the surrounding lawn.

For each area to be tested, you need to submit a pint or more of soil. The submitted soil should be representative of the area of interest—this means you should take a number of subsamples, at least six, and combine them to make up the sample for submission. For example, for a small front lawn, select eight spots spread around the lawn. At each spot, collect one-quarter of a cup of soil, place it into your bucket, and move on to the next spot. The soil from all eight spots will comprise the one pint sample for submission. The soil too should be collected from the depth at which most of the roots will grow. For lawn grasses, this means from the surface to a depth of 3–4". For most other situations, including trees, shrubs, landscape beds and vegetable gardens, aim for the surface to a depth of 5–6". The easiest way to do this, unless you have a soil corer, is to make a V-shaped pit with a trowel to the appropriate depth and then scrape the sides of the pit to collect the quarter cup of soil. The soil should be free of roots or stones

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or anything else that's not growing medium. It should also be dry or nearly so—if you collect wet soil, let it dry for a day or two before taking it to your county Extension Office (Richland: 900 Clemson Road, 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m., 865-1216; Lexington: 605 W. Main Street, 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., 359-8515). You can also take in cuttings and photos of your problem plants.

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.

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 a 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. You can visit Ron's website at 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. Also visit her website at 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.

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. Visit the website: www.JungleTaming.com.



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Food for Mind, Body & Soul



"You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence every July 4th, not with a parade of guns, tanks, and soldiers who file by the White House in a show of strength and muscle, but with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is patriotism." *-Erma Bombeck*

Miss Patsy's Secret Weapon Recipes

Green Meadow Mountain Cauliflower

Written by Patsy Cowart

This dish complements your favorite meats. A favorite for summer meals!

Ingredients

- 1 medium-sized head of cauliflower
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 3 teaspoons prepared mustard
- 1 teaspoon dry mustard
- 4 ounces sharp Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 16 ounces frozen English peas



Place whole head of cauliflower, stem end down, in an 8-inch glass pie plate. Cover with plastic wrap. Microwave on HIGH 7 to 8 minutes or until tender.

Mix mayonnaise, prepared mustard, and dry mustard in a bowl. Pour mayonnaise mixture over top of cooked cauliflower. Sprinkle with shredded cheese. Microwave at HIGH 1 minute to melt cheese.

Cook peas according to instructions on package, season to taste (salt, pepper and butter) and spoon around cooked cauliflower.

Yield: 4 servings. **Enjoy!**

Growing Little Green Thumbs

Plan a Peach of a Day!

Written by Ruby Haycock DeLoach

July is prime peach time. Load the family into the car and drive in search of a roadside stand or a pick up truck that shouts, "Locally Grown Peaches." Those strange noises you hear are not car trouble - it's just your stomach growling for peaches in a cobbler pie, warm cinnamon oatmeal, homemade ice cream, cold smoothies, preserves on a buttered biscuit or spicy pickles. Pull over, park and buy the biggest basket available. If you're real lucky, the peach orchard can be seen from the stand.

Southern peach eating enthusiasts know the perfect peach is ready when the ruddy, velvety skin can be peeled off by hand.

Children learn that peaches grow on trees and that the seed called a stone is inside the peach. Cultivated peaches are divided into two categories: clingstones and freestones, depending on whether the flesh sticks to the stone or not.



Take pictures for your journal article, "My Peach of a Day," and record peach facts. A very important fact: Peaches should be stored at room temperature and refrigeration should be avoided as this can lessen the taste of the peach. If you're real lucky you'll find red, ripe tomatoes and watermelons, too.

Another Peach of a Day trip could be to a local farmer's market.



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