

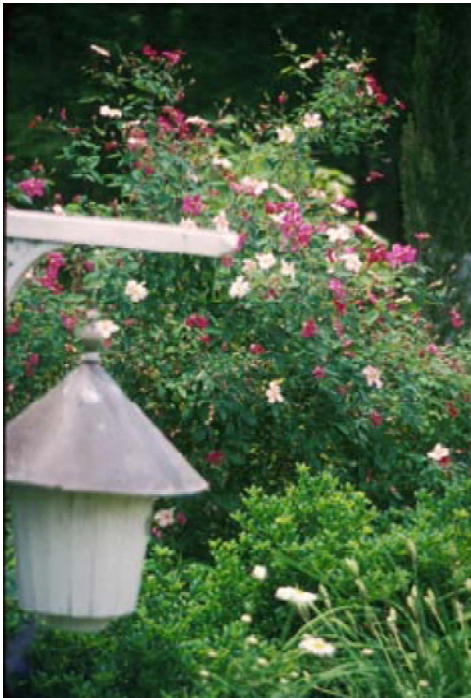
Summer Landscape Tasks

Larry Williams*

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There are a number of summer landscape jobs that can pay big dividends a little later.

Touch-up pruning with hand pruners on a number of shrubs can greatly improve their appearance. Ligustrum, elaeagnus, cleyera and a number of other shrubs tend to send up shoots that protrude wildly from the rest of the canopy. These longer shoots should be completely removed back to their origins or at least cut off below the surface of the canopy. This will give the shrubs a neater look but leave them more natural-looking than will shearing.



You should do some pruning on roses now, also. Gardeners often neglect their roses during the busy summer months. It's not too late to start rose care again in order to obtain excellent blossoms in the months ahead.

First, cut out any diseased, injured, or spindly growth. Then, shorten the main canes and lateral branches. But leave at least half the length of each main cane or branch. It generally takes healthy rose bushes approximately six weeks from this pruning to the beginning of a flush of flowers.

It's also important to follow a spray schedule for control of insects and diseases. A weekly application of a fungicide is especially important. This will provide a protective coating over the new growth, greatly reducing black spot and powdery mildew problems.

If the roses have not been fertilized in the last month to six weeks, an application of fertilizer now will be beneficial. If granular fertilizer is used, be sure to spread it well beyond the drip line of the foliage and water it in for faster action. 15-0-15 is a good fertilizer to use.

Did you know that you can extend the bloom period on crape myrtles if you remove the old flowers as they fade. While this may be too much work in many cases, if you have a crape myrtle of moderate size and a pole-pruner, it can be very rewarding to stimulate a second bloom cycle. Removal of the flower heads prevents seed formation and allows that extra energy to go back into this season's flowers. It should take about four to six weeks for the plants to re-bloom. This technique can also work on Vitex (chaste tree).

Now is a good time to propagate many plants such as oleanders, hydrangeas, and azaleas. To propagate most plants, take tip cuttings three to five inches long with several leaves attached. You may wish to dip the cuttings in a rooting hormone such as Rootone to increase your chances of success. Then, stick the cuttings in a pot with a rooting medium that holds moisture yet drains well. You can make your own rooting medium from a mixture of peat, perlite, and

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sand. A well-drained soil mix, such as sold by some local nurseries, can be used also. Avoid many of the pre-packaged, mass-merchandized soil mixes, though, as they are often poorly drained.

Place the pot in a shaded area and keep the cuttings moist by covering the pot with a plastic bag.

If you have cold sensitive ornamentals in your landscape, you might think about rooting a few cuttings before winter and keeping the young plants in a protected place. Then, if some of your tender ornamentals do freeze, you'll have replacements to set out in the spring.

Late summer and early fall is an ideal time to lift daylily clumps, divide, and replant them. The objective is to get the new divisions to establish a good root system during the fall and late winter period. The transplanting process is relatively easy. Divide the clumps, retaining as many of the roots as possible with each division. Prior to planting the division, cut back the foliage to 1/3 its original height. Daylilies should not be planted too deep. Set the new divisions no deeper than they grew originally.

**Larry Williams is an extension agent in the University of Florida IFAS Extension in Okaloosa County. Photo to be credited to David W. Marshall, UF-IFAS Extension*

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