

## August in the Tallahassee Garden

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**W**e all know that August will be hot and most gardeners will be tempted to stay in and let the landscape fend for itself. But there are a number of things that should be done this month. Lawns need to be mowed and monitored for pests and some plants should be pruned this month. It's also time to get to work in the vegetable garden since fall is a very productive time for vegetables and herbs.

**Trees and Shrubs:** This is really not a good time to be planting but if you intend to plant trees or shrubs this month follow a few simple steps to minimize transplant shock. Purchase healthy container grown plants but avoid plants in cell packs until its cooler. Check the roots. They should be well-developed but they should not completely fill the pot. Dig the planting hole about twice as wide as the container and to a depth so that the plant will be not quite as deep in the ground as it was in the container. Water after planting and regularly when the soil is dry. Mulch around the base of the plant but not touching the stem.

**Annuals and Perennials:** Purple cone flower, rudbeckia and Shasta daisy all tolerate hot conditions. They tolerate planting shock this time of year better than many other plants. Cosmos, zinnia, Mexican sunflower and cleome seeds can be sown directly in the garden.

**Bulbs, Corms, Rhizomes and Tubers:** Crowded iris plants should be divided now. Cut the leaf blades into a small fan shape and reset the divided clumps in a sunny, well-drained location. Plant the rhizomes no deeper than one inch. Transplanting now give the plants time to establish new roots before winter. Late in the month begin dividing daylilies, amaryllis and crinum if they need it.

**Roses:** For better flower production in the fall, prune modern roses, such as hybrid teas, grandifloras and floribundas. This is especially important if the roses have not been deadheaded on a regular basis. Cut back large varieties to 30-36 inches above the ground.

Lower growing roses can be cut back to about half their height. Make cuts above outward facing dormant buds. Apply a slow release fertilizer after pruning. Clean and weed rose beds. Also continue a preventive spray program for blackspot and be on the lookout for aphids, thrips, spider mites and other insect pests.

**Vegetables and Herbs:** Plant tomatoes. If your summer tomato plants are still green and healthy pinch off the suckers to root as new plants in a well watered part of the garden. If buying transplants look for cultivars that have been bred to set fruit in the heat such as Heat Wave, Sunchaser, or Florida 91. Plant deeper than usual, about six inches deep. Remove any leaves that would be underground. Roots will form along the buried stem. Mulch well. Also plant peppers and eggplant. In mid to late August plant carrots, beets, collards, mustard, snap beans, broccoli, cabbage, okra, cucumbers, southern peas, squash, cantaloupes, watermelons, pumpkins and cauliflower. Sow seeds for chives, parsley, cilantro, sage, thyme and dill.

**Lawn Care:** August is prime time for lawn problems. Be on the look out for spittlebugs in centipede and cinch bugs in St. Augustine lawns. A few of these bugs is not a problem. But if you see lots of them an insecticide labeled for lawn insect control may be needed. Also fungal diseases thrive in hot wet weather. When treating your lawn for any type of pest or disease follow label directions carefully. In some cases only the damaged areas and a ten to fifteen foot buffer around it will require treatment. There often is no need to spray the whole

August in the

lawn.

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