



HORTICULTURE TIPS



Division of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources * Oklahoma State University

AUGUST 2014

GARDEN TIPS FOR AUGUST!

David Hillock

Vegetables

- August is a good month to start your fall vegetable garden. Bush beans, cucumbers, and summer squash can be replanted for another crop. Beets, broccoli, carrots, potatoes, lettuce, and other cool-season crops can also be planted at this time. ([HLA-6009](#))
- Soak vegetable seed overnight prior to planting. Once planted, cover them with compost to avoid soil crusting. Mulch to keep planting bed moist and provide shade during initial establishment. Monitor and control insect pests that prevent a good start of plants in your fall garden.

Fruit and Nut

- Continue protective insect applications on the fruit orchard. A good spray schedule is often abandoned too early. Follow directions on last application prior to harvest. ([EPP-7319](#))

Flowers

- Towards the end of the month, divide and replant spring-blooming perennials like iris, peonies, and daylilies if needed.

General

- Water compost during extremely dry periods so that it remains active. Turn the pile to generate heat throughout for proper sterilization.
- Always follow directions on both synthetic and natural pesticide products.
- Watch for high populations of caterpillars, aphids, spider mites, thrips, scales and other insects on plant material in the garden and landscape and treat as needed. ([EPP-7306](#))
- Water all plants thoroughly unless rainfall has been adequate. It is better to water more in depth, less often and early in the morning.

Trees and Shrubs

- Discontinue deadheading roses by mid-August to help initiate winter hardiness.
- Watch for second generation of fall webworm in late August/early September. Remove webs that enclose branches and destroy; or spray with good penetration with an appropriate insecticide.

Lawn and Turf

- Grassy winter weeds like *Poa annua*, better known as annual bluegrass, can be prevented with a pre-emergence herbicide application in late August. Water in the product after application. ([HLA-6420](#))
- Areas of turf with large brown spots should be checked for high numbers of grubs. Mid-to-late August is the best time to control heavy white grub infestations in the lawn. Apply appropriate insecticide if white grubs are a problem. Water product into soil. ([EPP-7306](#))
- Tall fescue should be mowed at 3 inches during the hot summer and up to 3½ inches if it grows under heavier shade. ([HLA-6420](#))
- For areas being converted to tall fescue this fall, begin spraying out Bermuda grass with a product containing glyphosate in early August. ([HLA-6419](#))
- Irrigated warm-season lawns can be fertilized once again; apply 0.5 lb. N/1,000 sq. ft. in early to mid-August.
- Brown patch of cool-season grasses can be a problem. ([HLA-6420](#))

Pecan Crop Load

Becky Carroll

Although pecan crops may be short in some areas due to late freezes and drought conditions, other pecan growers with improved varieties should be checking crop loads to determine if they need to mechanically thin their pecans. On large fruited pecans such as Mohawk and Maramec, only about 50% of the terminals should have clusters. On smaller varieties, 60-70% of terminals can be fruiting. If more terminals are fruiting than recommended, the pecans should be thinned.

Crop load thinning is usually done the first week or two of August or more specifically when the pecans are in the water stage when the ovule has expanded between 50-100%. Just as peaches and apples are thinned, pecans will greatly benefit from crop load management. Thinning the fruit will increase fruit quality, help reduce alternate bearing, as well as reduce the possibility for and severity of winter freeze damage.

Pecans can be mechanically thinned with a conventional shaker fitted with donut pads. Be sure to keep the underneath of the flaps on the donut pads greased to help limit barking the trees. Fact Sheet [HLA-6251](#) Pecan Crop Load Management details the procedure.

Weevils

Becky Carroll

Weevil traps should be placed in the orchard at this time. The Circle trap is the preferred trap for monitoring weevil emergence. Fact Sheet [EPP-7190](#) Monitoring Adult Weevil Populations in Pecan and Fruit Trees in Oklahoma explains how to construct and when and where to place the traps. With the recent rains, weevil will be emerging and feeding on nuts until the dough stage when they start laying eggs in the pecans. Have a plan for weevil control and be ready to spray to prevent losses. When pecan crops are small, weevil feeding will add to the reduction in the crop. When weevils feed on the nut early, the nuts usually fall to the ground. Growers will need to assess when they should start protecting their crop. Each orchard will be different. With heavy crops, weevil feeding may not be too detrimental during the water stage, but once the fruit begins to change stages, growers will want to try to eliminate the egg laying phase that will reduce quality and prices.



Performance of Determinant Tomato Varieties for Hot Weather Production

Danielle Williams, Lynn Brandenberger, Brian Kahn

Tomatoes are a “must-have” for Oklahoma consumers that want locally-grown fresh produce. Tomatoes are not only popular, but they are also a high maintenance crop. Oklahomans have grown tomatoes as long as they have gardened and each year battle hot, dry summers and arduously tend to this high maintenance vegetable crop. Great detail goes into managing this crop including planting, watering, and managing nutrient levels, but nothing can be done to lower Oklahoma summer temperatures. Utilizing methods such as mulch, drip irrigation, shading, and plasticulture help growers manage soil temperature and moisture levels, but it still is not

enough in intensely hot years such as 2011 and 2012. Growers have difficulty growing tomatoes in Oklahoma summers when temperatures in June and July, and many times August, exceed the optimum range to encourage fruit set. Farmers continually request assistance in growing tomatoes in such conditions; varieties that exhibit superior heat capabilities may make this possible.

Not all flowers result in fruit. Daytime temperatures between 70-84°F and nighttime temperatures 65-68°F are the optimum temperature ranges for pollination. Poor fruit set occurs above 90°F; tomato plants will flower, but the pollen and stigma dry out quickly preventing pollination or fruit set. During June-September 2011 there were 99 days above 90°F in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and 68 days in 2012. Growing practices such as plasticulture, organic mulches and shading may help maintain plants until fall when temperatures drop to the optimal range for fruit set, but this does not help a farmer during the summer market season. To address this problem selected tomato varieties with potential heat-set capabilities were grown in replicated trials at two locations in Oklahoma in 2012, and four locations in 2013.



Results and further details are available in the [2012](#) and [2013](#) *Vegetable Trial Reports* (MP-164). After analyzation of data and growers' feedback was attained from 2012, selections of varieties to be grown in 2013 expanded trials were made. Twelve varieties were again chosen and grown in four locations in 2013. All locations utilized plasticulture except *Tulsa*, which used permaculture.

Temperatures and growing conditions varied between the two seasons: 2012 was much hotter while late frosts, hail storms, and a warm fall were experienced in 2013. Despite lower temperatures and higher rainfall than 2012 there were common results for several of the varieties. Solar Fire, Bella Rosa, Tribeca and Tribute stood out in top marketable yields. Solar Fire produced in the top three at all locations in 2013 and one location in 2012. Bella Rosa and Tribeca were both in the top five producing varieties at three locations in 2013 and one location in 2012. Tribute was in the top five at two locations in 2013 and also in 2012.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

GardenFest

September 20, 2014; 10 AM – 4 PM

The Botanic Garden at OSU – Stillwater, OK

The Botanic Garden's Annual GardenFest brings together individuals from across the state with a common interest in gardening and sustainable living for a day of educational workshops, tours and activities for the whole family. It is also a wonderful opportunity to view the beautiful landscapes and innovative demonstrations throughout The Botanic Garden at OSU while experts are on hand to answer questions. Live music and vendors will be featured along with our educational programming.

Global Horticulture Conference

November 6, 2014

Wes Watkins Center – Stillwater, OK



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