HORTICULTURE TIPS

Division of Agricultural Sciences & Natural Resources * Oklahoma State University **July 2016**

GARDEN TIPS FOR JULY

David Hillock

Vegetable Garden

- Make fall vegetable garden plantings in late July. Fact Sheet HLA-6009 gives planting recommendations.

Lawn

- Brown patch disease of cool-season grasses can be a problem. (HLA-6420)
- Meet water requirements of turfgrasses. (HLA-6420)
- Fertilization of warm-season grasses can continue if water is present for growth. (HLA-6420)
- Vegetative establishment of warm-season grasses should be completed by the end of July to ensure the least risk of winter kill. (HLA-6419)
- Mowing heights for cool-season turfgrasses should be at 3 inches during hot, dry summer months. Gradually raise mowing height of bermudagrass lawns from 1½ to 2 inches.
- Sharpen or replace mower blades as needed. Shredded leaf blades are an invitation to disease and allow more stress on the grass.

Tree and Shrub

- Control bermudagrass around trees and shrubs with products containing sethoxydim, fusilade or glyphosate herbicides. Follow directions closely to avoid harming desirable plants.

Fruits

- Continue insect combat and control in the orchard, garden, and landscape. (EPP-7306, EPP-7313, EPP-7319)
- Check pesticide labels for "stop" spraying recommendations prior to harvest.
- Harvest fruit from the orchard early in the morning and refrigerate as soon as possible.

Flowers

- Divide and replant crowded Hybrid iris (Bearded Iris) after flowering until August.

General Landscape

- Water plants deeply and early in the morning. Most plants need approximately 1 to 2½ inches of water per week.
- Providing birdbaths, shelter and food will help turn your landscape into a backyard wildlife habitat.
- Insect identification is important so you don't get rid of the "Good Guys." (EPP-7307)
- The hotter and drier it gets, the larger the spider mite populations!
- Expect some leaf fall, a normal reaction to drought. Water young plantings well.

Pecan Leaf & Grape Petiole Sampling for Fertilization Recommendations

Becky Carroll

Grape, pecan and tree fruit growers have an easy to use and inexpensive way to monitor the fertility needs of their plants. Although fertilizer is applied in the springtime, mid-July is the time to determine what grape, pecan, peach or apple trees require for best health and production. Tissue analysis is a reliable management tool used to indicate the fertility needs. Soil samples indicate what nutrients are in the soil, but tissue samples reflect what the plant is able to take up from the

soil. Pecans and fruit trees can be monitored by collecting leaf samples while grapevine monitoring requires collection of leaf petioles.

Mid-July is the time frame for sampling pecan leaves. Grapevines should be sampled during veraison (berry color change), which varies greatly within types and varieties of grapes but is normally around mid- to late July. Pecan and fruit tree leaf samples are collected according to fact sheet HLA-6232 Fertilizing Pecan and Fruit Trees or the simplified instructions located at http://okpecans.okstate.edu/news/pecan-leaf-samples-instructions. Grapevine petiole sampling procedures can be found at http://www.grapes.okstate.edu/news/july-is-grape-petiole-sampling-time.

Results will only be as accurate as the sample collected so it is advised to follow the directions. Once the leaves are sampled, they should be submitted to the local county extension office. The cost for tissue analysis is $20. The extension office will send the samples to the OSU Soil, Water, and Forage Lab. The results will be returned to the extension educator for interpretation and then shared with the grower. Interpretation guidelines are available on the OSU SWAFL website http://soiltesting.okstate.edu/soil-test-interpretation-program.

Fertilizer recommendations will be provided for the following spring application. Frequently growers find out that they are applying unnecessary nutrients and can reduce their costs of fertilizing. The fee for a tissue sample can be an inexpensive tool to determine shortages or excesses before problems develop.

Summer is for Fall Harvest

David Hillock

Summer may not seem like the best time to be thinking about a fall garden, but in actuality July through September is the time to start planting several vegetable varieties in order to have a fall harvest. Some tender vegetables that can be started in July and August and harvested before fall frosts include beans, cilantro, sweet corn, cucumber, pumpkin, and summer and winter squash. Be sure to choose varieties that mature early and are disease resistant. Some semi-hardy plants, those that may continue to grow and be harvested after several frosts, include beet, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, garlic, leaf lettuce, parsnip, and radish.

Climatic conditions of July and August involve high soil temperature, high light intensity, and rapid drying of the soil, resulting in an increase in the problems of obtaining a uniform stand of plants. Achieving a full stand of plants in the heat of summer may require special treatments. This might include shade over rows when seeded and supplemental watering to reduce soil temperature and aid in seed germination.

Insects and weeds can be more prevalent this time of year so check frequently for insect activity and weed growth and use appropriate control measures. For more information on planting a fall garden see OSU Extension Fact Sheet HLA-6009 Fall Gardening.

Establishing Turfgrasses

David Hillock

Warm-season grasses such as bermuda can be established by seed or vegetative means such as sod, sprigs or plugs. Seeded varieties should be planted by July 1 in order to establish in time for winter. If establishing by sod, sod should be in place about one month before the first frost in order to allow enough time for adequate rooting. Sprigging and plugging should be done at least two months before the first frost in order to allow for adequate spread and rooting.

For areas being converted to cool-season grasses this fall, the area should be sprayed late July/early August with a product containing glyphosate to kill bermudagrass and other tough perennial weeds.

Cool-season turfgrasses germinate optimally when daily mean temperatures of the upper soil surface range from 68 degrees to 86 degrees Fahrenheit. Thus, the ideal time to seed Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass or tall fescue is in

late September and October. Fall plantings of cool-season turfgrasses are superior over spring plantings because there is more time for plant development prior to heat and drought conditions of summer.

Landscaping a Slope

David Hillock

Dealing with sloped areas in the landscape can be challenging. Long, gentle slopes are often planted in turfgrasses successfully. However, the steeper and larger the slope is, the more difficult it is to maintain. Larger slopes may best be maintained using retaining walls or terraces to slow down erosion and to make the area more functional. Smaller slopes can be protected with plants and mulch. It is important to choose plants that are adapted to the conditions of the sight, such as soil type, exposure, and temperatures. In addition, there are several other characteristics that are important when choosing plants for a sloped area.

Plants that have deep root systems are generally best for slopes because the deep roots help stabilize the soil and keep it from sliding away. Plants that spread and form dense canopies help reduce erosion by protecting the soil and slowing down water movement allowing for water to soak into the hill instead of running off. Plants that spread by underground stems or form colonies can be excellent choices too. There are some plants that root where the branches touch the ground forming additional support to the slope.

There are many plants to choose from including perennial groundcovers and other perennials, as well as small woody shrubs. Native trees with deep root systems can also be used.

At The Botanic Garden at OSU we have a hillside that was developed into a rock garden. In addition to plants, there are native boulders buried in the hillside to represent a natural outcropping and the boulders help direct the water back into the hillside creating cool moist areas for plant roots. Some of the perennials and groundcovers growing here include winecup or poppy mallow (*Callirhoe involucrata*), which has a beautiful wine-red colored flower, a deep carrot-like tap root, but does spread somewhat aggressively from seed. Myrtle euphorbia (*Euphorbia myrsinites*) and lavender cotton (*Santolina chamaecyparissus*) are good drought tolerant plants growing in the rock garden. Woody plants include some dwarf chamaecyparis, a mugo pine, spreading juniper, and yucca, which is a great plant for western Oklahoma.

In another area of the garden we have sumac, many of which are native to Oklahoma and have excellent fall color. These include smooth sumac (*Rhus glabra*), staghorn sumac (*R. typhina*), and aromatic sumac (*R. aromatic*). These plants spread by underground stems, sending up suckers to form colonies. Another plant that does this is chokeberry (*Aronia melanocarpa*, black chokeberry and *M. arbutifolia*, red chokeberry). Chokeberries have white spring flowers, fruit that are either red or black, and excellent fall color. An excellent shrub that roots where the branches touch is the winter jasmine (*Jasminum nudiflorum*), which has yellow flowers in late winter, from late January to March.

Additional plants to consider:

Ornamental grasses

Blue Dune lyme grass, *Elymus arenarius*
Blue grama grass, *Bouteloua gracilis*
Buffalo grass, *Buchloe dactyloides*
Little Bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*
Monkeygrass or lilyturf, *Liriope* spp.
Switch grass, *Panicum virgatum*
Woodland oats grass, *Chasmanthium latifolium*

Groundcovers & Perennials

Asters, *Aster*
Candytuft, *Iberis sempervirens*
Carpet bugleweed, *Ajuga reptans*
Creeping Jenny, *Lysimachia nummularia*
Creeping mahonia, *Mahonia repens*
Creeping phlox, *Phlox subulata*
Daylilies, *Hemerocallis* hybrids
Evening primrose, *Oenothera speciosa*
Frog fruit, *Phyla nodiflora*
Hardy heliotrope, *Heliotropium amplexicaule*
Hardy plumbago, *Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*
Lamb's ear, *Stachys* spp.
Beardtongue, *Penstemon* spp.
Sedums, *Sedum* spp.
Sweet flag, *Acorus* spp.
Wirevine, *Muehlenbeckia* spp.

Shrubs
Buttonbush, *Cephalanthus occidentalis*
Coralberry, *Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*
Cotoneaster, *Cotoneaster* spp.
Creeping junipers, *Juniperus* spp.
Forsythia, *Forsythia* x *intermedia*
Glossy abelia, Abelia x *grandiflora*
Ninebark, *Physocarpus opulifolius*
Red yucca, *Hesperaloe parviflora*
Roses (shrub and groundcover types), *Rosa* spp.
Spirea, *Spiraea* spp.
St. Johnswort, *Hypericum* spp.
Sumacs, *Rhus* species
Summersweet, *Clethra alnifolia*
Viburnums, *Viburnum* spp.
Virginia sweetspire, *Itea virginica*
Winter jasmine, *Jasminum nudiflorum*
Yucca, *Yucca* spp.

Master Gardener Fall Classes

David Cantrell

The 2016 Master Gardener Classes for Pittsburg County will begin Thursday, September 8th and run thru December 8th from 6-9 pm at the OSU Extension Office, 707 W. Electric Ave, McAlester, OK 74501, 918-423-4120. Class is limited to the first 20 paid registrants. In the event the class fills we will have a waiting list in case of a cancellation. Cost for the class is $125.00 which covers the price of materials and food. We look forward to seeing you there.

The *Horticulture Tips* newsletter is distributed monthly (except January) by the following:

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
707 West Electric Avenue
McAlester, OK 74501
918-423-4120 www.oces.okstate.edu/pittsburg

This newsletter is one way of communicating horticultural information to those interested.

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