

The Flower Garden

Deadhead perennial plants such as delphiniums and lupins once they finish flowering to promote a further flush later. Deadhead roses for a similar reason.

Deadhead azaleas, camellias, rhododendrons, lilacs and hydrangeas but do not cut too far back or you will damage next year's buds.

Cut fast growing perennials such as hardy geraniums and oriental poppies hard back to encourage new foliage and hopefully more flowers.

Do your very best to remove all weeds as they grow. Annual weeds can be cleared by hoeing but perennial weeds such as dandelion must be dug out taking all the root.

Keep hostas and other yummy (from a slug and snail point of view) plants safe from slug and snail damage. This is not an easy job but you can use an organic slug and snail killer sparingly although I prefer to handpick or use beer traps, crushed egg shell or similar methods..

Watering is going to be very important as we move into a dry period of time. Hanging baskets, containers and pots must be watered regularly and in very hot weather possibly twice a day. All newly planted perennials, shrubs and trees must be watered regularly although this is something you will not need to do in future years. Newly sown or turfed lawns will need regular watering to allow the roots to become well established.

Mow your lawn often which usually means at least once a week ensuring you use a grass box to collect the mowings. Keep lawn edges well-trimmed as they will grow quickly in warmer weather

And thinking about mowing if you want a perfect lawn without daises and buttercups you can still use a lawn weed and feed if you want to but you will probably need to water this in.

Fruit and Vegetables

If you are growing strawberries on the ground you will need to lay a protection of either the traditional straw or the more modern equivalent of black polythene sheeting to protect them from rain created splashes of earth and snails and slugs.

If you are growing soft fruit such as red and white currants, gooseberries, strawberries and raspberries you are far more likely to get a crop if you can cover your plants with netting. A fruit cage would be ideal but if that isn't available sheets of netting can be used mounted on sticks to left the covering high enough to prevent long beaks entering! I don't include blackcurrants as they are generally unloved by birds!!

During June and early July you will get a natural drop of apple fruitlets. If the remaining fruitlets seem crowded thin them to about 3 inches (75mm) apart to encourage size and prevent the tree from over bearing.

Ensure that rhubarb sticks are pulled regularly to prevent the plant from going seed.

If you are growing summer fruiting raspberries and blackberries train all new canes by tying them onto wires set away from the canes fruiting this year. At the end of the year the current fruiting canes will be cut down and removed.

Keep an eye on your potatoes. First and second early varieties will soon be ready for digging as and when you require them. I always dig them over a period of several weeks. Maincrop ones will need earthing up as soon as the growing tubers start to push up the earth.

You can continue to sow quick cropping salading vegetables such as lettuce, carrots and radish in succession through this month and next.

If you are training tomato plants up strings as they grow pinch out the side shoots which grow between the stem and the leaf. Removing these will ensure the growing fruit will get maximum benefit.

Broad bean plants can become very floppy so support them with string as they grow and pinch out the growing tips to discourage black fly.

And, of course, keep all vegetable growing areas free from weeds!

Enjoy!

Take time out not only to walk round the garden hopefully every day to keep an eye on everything but most importantly sit and take in the benefits of your labours!!

Gerry Edwards

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