

June

Your garden growth shifts into high gear this month! The air is hot and the soil is warm. Plants are settled in and well on their way toward strong growth, many blooms, and delicious harvests!

What to plant this month:

Summer beans; bush, snap and runner types. If you're planting climbing varieties, remember to put the supports in first. A "bamboo teepee" is a great way to support beans. Plant one start per stake or space them 6-8 in apart along rows of netting or wire. Bush varieties require similar spacing, but no supports.

Sweet corn; plant starts now and water soil thoroughly before planting. Pollination is vital for full ears, so plant in blocks with plants 18 in apart each way. This makes wind pollination more effective.

Peppers; both sweet and hot, plant in full sun and support with stakes. Peppers love heat!

Zucchini, cucumber and squash; these related crops are hungry plants, so work in plenty of compost when you plant out. Zucchini need plenty of space, so position each plant 36 in apart. Cucumbers and squash can be trained on a trellis. Keep them well watered and fed.

Eggplant; eggplants are also heat-loving. Keep well watered and support with stakes.

Melons, pumpkins, heat-tolerant and bolt-resistance lettuces, okra; all need plenty of compost when planting, water them in well and keep well fed throughout the growing season.

At exactly 12:00 noon on June 15, set your sundial for 12:00 to get the most accurate time reading throughout the summer!

The most time-consuming activity in a garden is harvesting-it requires twice as much time as weeding. But then, harvesting is so much more enjoyable than weeding!

For greater yields, feed plants when they blossom. An excellent "garden tea" to assure a plentiful harvest is a mixture of one tablespoon fish emulsion, one-half teaspoon seaweed or kelp, and one gallon water. Spray this on leaves, and pour the remainder in a ring around the plant at the drip line. Repeat every two weeks throughout the growing season. It will help increase plant vigor and reduce insect damage.

General Garden Maintenance:

Deep soak and fertilize fig and avocado trees; mulch heavily to protect shallow roots.

Lightly prune, feed, and water roses on a weekly or bi-weekly basis to encourage them to flower continuously into the late fall. Trim faded blooms down to the first five-part leaf to gently shape the plant.

Set out shallow dishes of water to attract butterflies to your garden.

Your tomatoes will be heading skyward, so continue to tie them loosely to sturdy stakes or wires and pinch out side-shoots. Continue to watch for insect or disease damage throughout the garden. Take necessary steps to control the problem. Spotting pests early, before they have a chance to multiply and damage plants, is key to keeping problems under control.

Get rid of weeds! With hotter days approaching, now is the time to wage war on garden weeds. Pull weeds in the morning when the ground had been moistened by dew. If soil is dry, thoroughly water and loosen with cultivator so roots can be easily pulled up.

Change the water in your bird bath and garden fountain regularly. Standing water may become a breeding ground for mosquito larvae.

Watering Tips:

Water your garden deeply every week or two, depending on how consistently hot the weather has been. Tomatoes and other large plants in clay loam soil use about one foot of water in three days of hot, dry weather. Some wilting of foliage at the end of the day is to be expected, but wilting through to the following morning indicates the immediate need for a deep watering for the roots.

Refrain from overhead watering when the evenings remain warm, especially when leaves can't dry off by sunset. Fungal diseases thrive when air temps remain between 70 and 90 degrees. Some diseases only need two to four hours of moist, warm conditions to develop.

Happy Gardening!

If you have any questions please contact us at: communitygardensofsc@gmail.com