

Gardening Calendar for June

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June is the major tomato harvesting month. If your plants are infested with leaf-footed bugs or other stinkbugs you may have to spray with malathion. Because of their size and mobility, stink bugs are difficult to control. If you use malathion read the label closely and comply with the application and days before harvest requirements. If you didn't harvest your onions and potatoes in May, do so this month. The onion foliage lays down when it is time to harvest the bulbs. The harvested bulbs should be allowed to dry out and store them in mesh bags in an air-conditioned room to have them last through Thanksgiving. The potatoes will not store as long. Use them this summer as new potatoes.

There is still time to plant peppers as transplants. Bell peppers are a challenge to grow but the banana peppers are crispy and mild for salads, fresh-eating and in recipes. Plant okra and southern peas with seed. Look for the local Oscar okra seed at your favorite nursery.

May was a good month for peaches and the June peaches could be just as successful if you kept up your spray program and were able to keep the birds and other wildlife at bay. Late peaches are higher quality (sweeter and freestone) but they are more difficult to protect from pests.

The zinnias should be in full bloom now. You have several choices in their management. Keep the blooms harvested as cut flowers or deadhead spent blooms and the bed will remain full of fresh blooms. If you allow some blooms to brown and drop their seeds, you will have new plants germinate all summer and into the late fall. Either option will be appreciated by the butterflies and hummingbirds that obtain nectar from the blooms.

For an interesting blooming plant that is also a favorite of the nectar seekers, plant some porter weed. The plant has a weeping shape with red (dwarf) or purple blooms that move up the stems. The small but showy flowers apparently offer a high potency nectar that stimulates competition between butterflies and even the hummingbirds.

For color in the shade use penta, coleus, caladium, or begonias. Moss roses work very well in hanging baskets and other containers in the sun.

It is best to mow your lawn every week. Mow zoysia grass at 2 inches, St Augustine at 3.5 inches, buffalo grass at 5 inches and Bermuda grass at 1.5 inches. Bermuda grass, buffalo grass and zoysia can be allowed to go dormant in the summer if the rains stop. They will green up without damage when the rains resume. If you want to supplement the rain with irrigation to maintain a green lawn, sign up to receive the SAWS weekly email with irrigation recommendations. It is free, and you don't need to be a SAWS customer. Visit GardenStyleSA.com to sign up for the information.

Early June is the time to apply a soil insecticide to the lawn if you had grubs or chinch bugs last summer. Follow label instructions.