

Gardening Calendar for August

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We finally received some rain in July. It greened up the lawns and encouraged lots of weeds to germinate in all the bare soil areas. Use Over the Top, Weed be Gone and other 2-4-D products for broadleaf weeds. Use Grass-be-Gone, Ornamec and other grass specific contact herbicides for the grassy weeds such as Bermuda Grass. Note on the labels where the herbicides can be applied without hurting your ornamentals. Follow label instructions in all cases.

At the end of the month is a good time to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent the germination of the winter weeds. Products like Dimension and Amaze will prevent rescue grass, annual bluegrass, bedstraw, dandelions, beggar's lice and other winter weeds.

The purple martins have packed up and are assembling for their trip down to South America. In my neighborhood that translate to increased pollinator and butterfly action. Zinnias, porter weed, mistflower, milkweed, mint marigold, fall aster, Mexican flame vine, duranta, penta, and lantana can be planted to provide immediate and fall nectar producing blooms.

There is still time to plant fall tomatoes in early August. Prepare the bed by incorporating 2 inches of compost and 10 cups of slow release lawn fertilizer (19-5-9) per 100 sq. ft. of bed. Watch for Surefire and Roma Surprise tomato transplants. They are determinate and produce tennis ball size fruit very quickly. The cherry tomatoes Ruby Crush and BHN 968 will also reliably beat the cold weather. For larger tomatoes Tycoon, Red Deuce, Phoenix, HM 1823, 444, 602, Celebrity, Bobcat, Valley Cat, and Sunbrite are good choices. Sometimes you can find transplants in gallon containers at the nursery which will increase the chances that your harvest will beat the arrival of cold weather. Celebrity, Valley Cat, Tycoon, and BHN 968 are nematode resistant.

Spider mite pressure will be less as we move into the fall and cooler weather, but it is useful to use a preventative spray of 2 tablespoons of seaweed extract per gallon of water applied under the leaf surfaces every week in August and September. The spray interferes with the spider mite reproduction.

The fall okra harvest will begin in August. Remove the mature pods even if you won't be able to use them so that the plants keep producing new pods. To eliminate fire ants on the plants, apply a bait like Amdro outside the garden or a product with spinosad in the garden. A water spray will work to clear the plants in the short term until the baits eliminate the mounds.