

Helpful hints can save lawns and gardens now

To keep lawns and gardens in good shape follow these timely tips from Extension specialists at Michigan State University.

Remember at all times to use pesticides as directed on the label and to store them where children and pets can't get to them.

Do not use lawn weed killers when air temperatures are over 75 or 80 degrees F. except when specified otherwise on the label.

- During dry periods, thoroughly water trees, shrubs, grasses, flowers and vegetables once a week to a depth of six inches.
- Annual bluegrass will be dying out of turf areas because of the warmer weather and less rainfall.
- Warmer weather might also activate dollar spot on the lawn. If present, treat with a turf fungicide.
- Keep a lawn mower sharp. Dirty mowers will not cut uniformly and will cause the turf to

brown because of tearing instead of cutting.

- Control weeds and poison ivy in the lawn with recommended weed killers.
- If planning to seed a new lawn this fall now is the time to begin preparing the soil and eliminating perennial weeds.
- Prune most lateral tomato suckers now.
- An all-purpose insect spray will control the insects which spread mosaic on cucumbers and melons.
- Spray tomato plants with maneb to control early and late blight and anthracnose.
- Continue spraying apples with an all-purpose fruit spray at seven to 10-day intervals. Spray peaches, pears, cherries and plums at two-week intervals.
- Sow seed of beans, carrots, leaf lettuce and radishes.
- Mulching will regulate soil moisture and control blossom end-rot on tomatoes.

- Aphids and hornworms might be damaging tomato plants. Pick hornworms off and spray with malathion to control aphids.
- Remove fruit from plants as soon as they are ready to keep vegetables producing throughout the summer.
- Plant cool season vegetables now. These include: beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, kale, kohlrabi, lettuce, onions, peas, radishes and spinach.
- Apply a summer mulch to the rose bed.
- Pick faded blooms from snapdragons, phlox and delphinium for continuous bloom.
- It's not too late to propagate shrubs from softwood cuttings in a cold-frame or greenhouse.
- If you have a greenhouse, cuttings taken now from chrysanthemums and carnations will bloom in the fall and winter.
- Check andromeda and azaleas for lacebug damage. If present, spray the underside of the leaves with malathion or Sevin.
- Check taxis for mealybugs. If present, spray with malathion.
- Cut back the strong shoots on wisteria to encourage flowering next year.
- Sow seed of perennials.
- To promote new growth, prune climbing roses immediately after flowering.
- Shrub and flower borders should be mulched by now.
- It not too late to take poinsettia cuttings for Christmas bloom.
- Now is the time to sow seed of English daisy, forget-me-not and pansy.
- Prune evergreen shrubs if the job hasn't been done earlier this spring. Cut each branch individually.
- To control mildew on chrysan-

themum, dahlia, delphinium, phlox, zinnia, honeysuckle, ivy, lilac and privet, apply sulphur, Kathon, Piron or Actidione PM through September.

- Check evergreens for spider mites by shaking the branches over white paper. If spider mites are present, spray with Kelthane, Pentac or Dimitec.
- Check flowers for aphids and if present spray with lindane or malathion. Aphids are especially attracted to chrysanthemums and nasturtium.
- Pinch back dahlias and tie the shoots as needed.
- Divide Oriental poppies and bleeding hearts after the foliage dies down.
- Check spruce and hemlock for damage due to spider mites. A thorough application of Kelthane will control them.

- If aphids and leafhoppers are present on maples, treat with malathion and Sevin. These insects suck juices from the leaves and secrete honeydew.
- Check ornamental shade trees for inchworms. If present spray with malathion or Sevin.
- Check sycamore foliage for damage caused by the caterpillar of the tussock moth. Spray with Sevin as soon as evident.

Geraniums fill yards with color

A sunny corner of a yard or patio can be a riot of color filled with geraniums.

Geraniums like a location with lots of sun, says William Carpenter, horticulture specialist at Michigan State University. Because they can be grown in containers, they are favorites with apartment dwellers and people with limited yard space.

The best soil for geraniums is a loam soil, not too sandy or heavy. A mixture of one part each of soil, sand and peat moss is excellent.

"If you're growing geraniums in pots, remember that they bloom better if they're not in too large a container," Carpenter says. "Also be sure there are drainage holes in the container to prevent the soil from staying soggy."

Geraniums should be watered thoroughly after planting and whenever the soil is dry. Avoid getting the foliage wet—wet leaves are prone to attack by disease.

Fertilizer applications should be at the rate of one-fourth teaspoon of 12-12-12 or 5-10-5 fertilizer per

plant or two pounds per 100 square feet. Excessive fertilizer, Carpenter cautions, can kill the plants.

Geraniums are easy to propagate, the specialist says. Take five- to six-inch cuttings off of healthy plants and place them in a cool, dry, shaded spot for a few days so the ends of the stems can heal over. This prevents them from rotting when you place them in moist soil for rooting.

After the new plants are well rooted, transplant them into containers or garden space.

Vegetables can be ornamental

It seems that everyone is growing vegetables to eat this year, but have you given any thought to planting vegetables for their ornamental value?

"There are a great many vegetable varieties that can be raised for their attractive and unusual foliage, fruit or flowers," says Robert Herner, extension horticulture specialist at Michigan State University. "They make a handsome addition to flower or vegetable gardens and can also be grown in containers on patios and balconies."

Grow, but it can cross-pollinate with sweet corn, Herner cautions. If this occurs, the edible quality of the sweet corn will suffer. If you want the variety of rainbow ornamental corn, with its yellow, red and white kernels; or strawberry corn, which has a sweet corn that pollinates either before or after the ornamental you choose, Herner advises.

That way you can have your corn and eat it, too.

But that you can have your corn and eat it, too.

If mosquitoes are a problem around the home, Michigan State University entomologists recommend attacking them where they lay their eggs—in stagnant water.

The best way to control or prevent mosquitoes from breeding in the yard is to remove all unused water containers—in cans, buckets, glass jars, broken toys—and other water-holding devices. Periodically examine swimming and wading pools for larvae and clean

as necessary. Change the water in bird baths at least once a week and clean out roof gutters.

It takes community action to rid the area of mosquitoes, so encourage neighbors to follow the same routine.

ADEQUATE screens on windows and doors will control mosquitoes indoors. Screen doors should open outward and close automatically. Dichlorvos (Vapona) strips hung in enclosed areas of the home will control mosqui-

toes, but aerosol sprays containing dichlorvos or pyrethrins containing piperonyl butoxide are preferable when doors and windows are kept open.

When planning a camp-out or picnic, repellents applied to the skin and clothing will prevent mosquito bites for two to 12 hours. Spraying or fogging the grasses, weeds, trees and shrubs in the yard will provide temporary relief from mosquitoes and will help you to enjoy your summer outdoors.

Mosquito controls urged

Add a little color to your life with peppers, Herner suggests. Golden calwonder is golden yellow at maturity, and bell boy hybrid and midway are red. Banana peppers grow to about seven inches long and one to two inches across and change from yellow to red as they ripen.

"THREE VARIETIES of cauliflower with unusual head colors are sometimes grown for their ornamental value," the specialist says. "Purple head and royal purple are tinged with lavender when mature. Greenball is green."

Yellow pear tomatoes produce small, yellow pear-shaped fruits. Yellow plum produces many plum-sized yellow fruits. Pixie is a tomato variety that yields small cherry tomatoes. It is an especially good variety for container gardening, Herner notes. He also recommends patio and small fry.

Flowering cabbage and kale are very showy plants, the specialist says. Their leaves are tinged with red, pink and purple after exposure to cool temperatures in the fall.

For an attractive border for vegetable or flower gardens, try Ruby and Red Salad Bowl leaf lettuce. Both are red and grow from seed quite quickly.

Ornamental corn can be fun to

up to 10 new Eisenhower dollars, depending on your deposit.



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Tips to keep cut flowers freshened

Garden flowers will stay fresh looking longer following these tips from William Carlson, extension horticulture specialist at Michigan State University.

Flowers should be cut early in the morning or late in the evening when their stems are full of water, he advises. Flowers that haven't fully opened are best when cut on a slant with a sharp knife or shears.

All broken or bruised parts of the stems and leaves should be removed and foliage cut off on the lower one-third to one-half of the stem so that no foliage is below the water.

As soon as the flowers are cut, they should be placed in warm water (110° F.) for a couple of hours. A clean container and a flower preservative available from a florist or garden center prevent the growth of bacteria and fungus. In addition to the unpleasant odors these organisms can produce, they can cause the flowers to wilt by preventing the passage of water up the stem.

If unable to locate a flower preservative, mix one pint of water and one pint of Sprite or 7-Up and ¼ teaspoon bleach and place the flowers in it. This solution will keep the flowers looking fresh several days longer than plain water.

"Your flowers will stay fresh looking longer if you place them out of drafts and direct sun and away from electric lights," Carlson says. "At night, put them in a cool spot."

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