

Horticulture Hints



Summer 2009



Landscape Gardening and Ornamentals

Planting Hummingbird Gardens

For many people, attracting hummers is as easy as hanging a feeder. But, that is not always successful because many hummingbirds are not accustomed to using feeders. I know from experience how frustrating it can be to put out a feeder and never see a hummingbird.

Numerous people have found that planting a garden full of hummingbird-attracting plants, in addition to maintaining feeders, is a more reliable method for successfully attracting hummingbirds. Be patient if you don't see them the first year. Remember, a hummingbird garden is an invitation to these delightful creatures, not a command performance. The longer you stick with it the more likely they are to show up.

A well-chosen variety of flowering trees, shrubs, vines, annuals and perennials can produce an excellent supply of nectar over a long period and beautify your landscape at the same time. Insects living in the plants and nectar from flowers provide hummingbirds with a complete, balanced diet. Since they obtain nearly all of the water they need from their foods, it is not necessary to provide them with drinking water.

Typical hummingbird flowers are red, have a tubular shape and have no strong scent. However, there are several notable exceptions to this general rule. Many plants with red flowers do not contain very much nectar, and not all good nectar producers have red flowers. Roses, petunias, geraniums and zinnias have brilliant colors but little nectar.

Plants that produce an abundance of flowers over an extended period of time and those that require little care are good choices. When several color varieties of a plant are available, choose the brightest red.

Pesticides should generally not be used. If absolutely needed, they should be used sparingly and only on non-flowering plants. Stick to pesticides low in toxicity such as horticultural oils, insecticidal soaps and BT (these should not be used if the planting is also for butterflies). Never use systemic insecticides or rotenone on plants where hummingbirds may feed.

Recommended Plants for Hummingbird Gardens

Trees: Crybaby tree (*Erythrina crista-galli*), Japanese plum or Loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*), Mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*), Citrus



Shrubs: Turk's cap (*Malvaviscus arboreus*), Pagoda plant (*Clerodendrum speciosissimum*), Mexican cigar plant (*Cuphea ignea* and *C. micropetala*), Shrimp plant (*Justicia brandegeana*), Firespike (*Odontonema strictum*), Hibiscus (*Hibiscus* spp. and hybrids), Lantana (*Lantana camara*), Bird of paradise (*Strelitzia reginae*), Azalea (*Rhododendron* spp. and hybrids), Pentas (*Pentas lanceolata*), Red buckeye (*Aesculus pavia*)

Vines: Coral honeysuckle (*Lonicera sempervirens*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), Cape honeysuckle (*Tecomaria capensis*), Cypress vine (*Quamoclit pinnata*), Bleeding heart vine (*Clerodendrum thompsoniae*), Trumpet Creeper (*Campsis radicans*)

Annuals and perennials: Salvia (*Salvia splendens*, *S. coccinea*, *S. greggii*, *S. leucantha* and many others), Pineapple sage (*Salvia rutilans*), Iris (*Iris* spp. and hybrids), Red hot poker (*Kniphofia uvaria*), Impatiens (*Impatiens walleriana*), Coral plant (*Russelia equisetiformis*), Cardinal flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*), Gilia or Standing cypress (*Ipomopsis rubra*), Bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*, *M. didyma*).

Beware the Heat

Working outside in especially hot weather places extra stress on the body. Gardeners working outside may lose up to 2 quarts of water each hour. To prevent dehydration, drink before, during and after working outside. It is best to bring a container of cold water out with you and keep it with you. You are more likely to stay properly hydrated if you have water with you and don't have to stop what you are doing to go back into the house.

Drink before you're thirsty and drink cold liquids because they are absorbed by the body faster. Drink water. If you choose other liquids, make sure they contain only a small amount of sugar, as it slows down liquid absorption by the body. Avoid beverages containing alcohol and caffeine.

Work in your garden in the early morning or late afternoon when it is cooler and stay in shady areas as much as possible. Follow the shade in your landscape as the sun moves across the sky; leave areas as they become sunny and move into areas as they become more shaded. Since we will tend to work in the cooler early morning and evening hours, don't forget to apply a mosquito repellent. West Nile virus is still a concern.

Wear a hat that shades your ears and the back of your neck in addition to your face, loose, comfortable clothing and use sun screen. Also, take frequent breaks and try not to stay outside in the heat for extended periods.



Reducing Summer Pest Problems

It is important to remember that the use of pesticides is only one method for controlling pests. Gardeners should use other techniques that can help prevent the severe infestations that make the use of pesticides necessary. Minimizing the use of pesticides, whether they are chemical or organic, is always a good idea.

Make it a point to inspect your landscape frequently for developing problems. Weed control is a prime example where early intervention is far easier and more effective than letting a situation get really bad before taking action.

One of the best defenses against pest problems is to keep your plants in tiptop condition through good cultural practices. These include giving your plants proper spacing, soil, mulch, drainage, water, light and nutrients.

An excellent way to avoid insect and disease problems is through plant selection. Simply do not plant those plants known to be prone to insect or disease problems. Instead, choose plants well-adapted to our climate and those not generally prone to major problems. If you have a plant or plants that constantly seem to have something attacking them despite your best efforts, consider removing them and replacing them with plants that are more carefree.

Planting the same type of plants in the same bed year after year in flower or vegetable gardens can cause a buildup of disease organisms in the soil that use that plant as a host. Try to plant different things in your garden in different places every year whenever possible.

Proper sanitation is another important factor in controlling insect and disease problems. Fruit and fallen leaves infected with disease should be raked up, bagged and thrown away. Never leave rotten vegetables and leaves on the ground in your vegetable garden.

The application of mulch to soil under plants can reduce incidence of some diseases. This is especially helpful when growing fruit and vegetable crops like tomatoes, squash and strawberries. Mulches are the best way to save work and reduce the use of herbicides to control weeds in beds.

When problems do occur, proper diagnosis is critical to deal with the situation. Agents at your local LSU AgCenter extension office can help you identify problems and recommend solutions.



Guidelines on Using Color

Creating an attractive, colorful look with bedding plants is easier than ever, but it's a good idea to do a little thinking and planning before you go to the nursery, and you will generally be more pleased with the results.

Lots of warm-season bedding plants are added to landscapes in April and May to provide color through the summer months. Now, and through the summer, you can evaluate the colors you chose and where you used them. If the color scheme isn't as great as you thought it would be, it's only there for a season. You can always try something different next time. Here are some basic guidelines for using color in the landscape.

Combine cool colors together (reds with a blue tint, burgundy, rose, pink, magenta, purple, violet, lavender, blue, navy, green and any variations of those colors) or warm colors together (reds with an orange tint, orange, gold, yellow, rust, peach and any variations on these colors) for reliably harmonious results.

Use color where you want to focus attention, such as at your front door. Never use color to "beautify" an unattractive feature in your landscape such as a trash can area. You will simply make sure everyone notices it.

Generally, reduce the number of colors you use for best results. In other words, use the colors you like in combinations that you like, but don't use every color you like at the same time in the same bed.

It is also important to plant individual colors in masses or groups, especially if the bed will be viewed from a distance (as in a front bed being viewed from the street).

Use pastel colors in area that will be viewed primarily in the evening as they show up better in low light. Pastel colors make a space look larger and more open and tend to create a serene, restful mood. Vibrant, rich colors, on the other hand, energize the landscape and can help make a larger area seem smaller and more intimate.

The large amount of green foliage that appears in the landscape makes it more forgiving of wild color combinations, but it's best not to push it too far.

Longer Life for Cut Flowers

This time of year our flower gardens are producing an abundance of flowers for our enjoyment. One of the great pleasures of flower gardening is bringing the beauty indoors in arrangements of cut flowers. You can enjoy flowers more with them in a vase in the kitchen than in a bed in the front yard. The following tips will help your cut flowers last as long as possible.

1. Before cutting, select flowers that are not fully open so they will last longer.
2. Cut flowers using a sharp knife or scissors.
3. Strip away the foliage from the lower one-third to one-half of the stem and immediately place in a deep container of warm water.
4. Before going inside, wash off the flowers and foliage with a gentle spray of water to remove dust, insects, etc.
5. Store freshly cut flowers in a cool location for several hours prior to arranging them, if possible, to allow them to take up plenty of water.
6. As you arrange them, recut the stems making the new cut while holding the stem under water.
7. Keep the water fresh and clean by changing it every couple of days if the design of the arrangement permits it.
8. Do not place fresh flower arrangements where they will receive direct sun or heat.



Checklist for Summer

- If needed, control thrips, aphids, cucumber beetles and spider mites on roses by using a recommended insecticide or miticide. Also continue black spot control on highly susceptible types of roses by using a recommended fungicide at seven- to 10-day intervals.
- When irrigating, water the soil area thoroughly. Try to irrigate less often, but irrigate well each time. Light, overhead sprinkling is not the best way to water.
- Continue to plant warm-season bedding plants. These include coleus, angelonia, caladium, impatiens, celosia (cockscomb), periwinkle (vinca), blue daze, scaevola, zinnias, melampodium, portulaca and begonias.
- Lantanas can still be planted. They thrive in Louisiana's hot summers. Try lantanas in containers, too.
- Dig and store gladiolus corms in a well-ventilated, Freeze proof place for planting next spring. Also, remove old foliage on caladiums.
- Plant sunflowers in late summer for fall flower arrangements. Flower colors include yellow, orange, red, bronze, white and combinations of these. It usually requires about 60-80 days from sowing seed until first flower color.
- Prune azaleas no later than mid-July. Pruning azaleas after early to midsummer may remove next season's developing flower buds. This applies to most spring flowering shrubs as well as hydrangeas and gardenias.
- In early summer, gardenias may have aphids, whiteflies and the associated black sooty mold. For optimum plant performance, control the insects with Orthene or a summer horticultural oil spray.
- Camellias and azaleas need care to set a good crop of flower buds for next year. Healthy, vigorous plants will set buds, but weak plants may not. If plants lack vigor, fertilize them, provide moisture during stressful periods and control pests. Remember that these acid loving plants need a pH of 5.5. Submit a soil sample to your parish LSU AgCenter extension agent's office if you are unsure of your soil situation.
- Louisiana irises are semi-dormant in the late summer. Prune off seedpods and yellow or brown foliage to help keep the plants more attractive. You may transplant or divide Louisiana irises beginning in August.
- Cut faded flowers from flowering annuals and perennials to encourage new growth and flowers. Old blooms and seed heads left on the plants can retard continued flower production.
- Finish any pruning you may need to do to shrubs in the landscape, particularly those that bloom in winter or spring. Pruning later (after June) may interfere with flowering.

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Fruits and Nuts



Pecans

Leaf drop and twig dieback sometimes occurs on pecan trees in late May and June due to the formation of galls on new twigs and leaf petioles by pecan phylloxera. The galls of these small aphid-like insects can damage tree appearance and reduce tree vigor; however, they rarely kill a tree, unless the tree has other major problems.

Spraying for phylloxera after the galls split will kill some of the insects; however, control at gall split is not very effective because of the extended period over which the galls release insects. Phylloxera only feed during April and early May; therefore, spraying in June will not reduce any current injury to the tree.

Insecticide applications are most effective in controlling phylloxera in early April when approximately one-half to three-fourths of an inch of new bud growth occurs.

Insecticides such as Provado and Warrior have produced good phylloxera control. Only those trees previously infested and pecan trees nearby should be sprayed. Spraying yard trees is difficult for homeowners because of the size of most pecan trees and the availability of the insecticides in small quantities.

Considerable nutlet drop often occurs in June and early July. The drop can be caused by lack of pollination. These nutlets have few, if any, blemishes. Hickory shuckworm and pecan nut curculio also can cause nut drop in June and July. A puncture can normally be seen on nuts damaged by insects. A white blotch can frequently be seen around the puncture made by shuckworm. A tobacco type of stain is usually seen around the puncture of a curculio. Malathion and Carbaryl can be used to control shuckworm and curculio.

Spraying for control of scab disease is usually not economical for yard trees since four to six fungicide applications are often needed to obtain control of scab disease. The scab fungus requires moisture on the leaves for infection to occur. Removing low limbs and providing good air circulation around the tree can reduce scab infection.

One way homeowners can improve pecan production on their trees without spraying is to provide adequate water for the trees during dry periods. Nuts on pecan trees rapidly increase in size during June, July and early August. Drought at this time can cause pecans to be smaller than normal.

Filling of nuts occur in August and September. Inadequate water at this time will decrease quality of pecans. Soak trees weekly if it doesn't rain 1 to 2 inches a week. For deep penetration, let a hose drip under the trees for 8 to 10 hours.

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Growing Strawberries



Strawberries have traditionally been a popular fruit for fresh use, freezing and processing. They can be grown successfully by homeowners, but they require greater care and maintenance than some other fruit crops.

Matted Row System

The matted row system consists of rows 12 to 24 inches wide that are allowed to fill in or be renewed with runner plants. Plants in new plantings should be spaced 18 to 24 inches apart in the row. For maximum yield in the first fruiting season, cultivars with low runner-making ability should be set at 18 inches, while most cultivars may be set 24 inches apart. Narrow beds (12 to 18 inches) should be 36 to 42 inches between beds.

In the matted row system, growers strive for three to four profitable crops from a single planting. With this system, either fall or spring planting dates can be used. Most nurseries dig matted row plants while they are dormant and hold them until planting time in cold storage at a temperature of about 30 degrees F. Traditionally, early spring planting has been used for the matted row system and should be completed as early as possible to allow plants to become established before hot weather. Flowers should be removed the year of planting to allow plants to use food reserves for top and root growth.

Fields are renewed or renovated each year. If properly renovated and maintained, fields planted in the matted row system generally produce three to four profitable crops. If disease, insects, or weeds heavily infest a planting, renovation may not be economically justified. Locate new plantings on a clean site.

Renovation

With proper annual renovation, matted row strawberry beds can be maintained and remain productive for several years. Renovation is essential because older plants have reduced vigor and overcrowding occurs within the beds, which results in lower yields. Fruit size, quality and yield decrease when the plant population becomes too great. Only five or six plants per square foot are needed in the spring for best yields. Disease problems also increase when plantings become too dense, making foliage and fruit slow to dry after rains and more difficult to adequately spray. Renovation thins the beds and invigorates the remaining plants. Thinning to control plant density is important because beds that retain too many plants yield small berries that are difficult to find under the dense foliage. The cost of renovating is considerably less than the cost of setting a new field. The renovation process should begin immediately after harvest is complete. A suggested program includes the following steps:

Controlling Weeds at Renovation. Check for pre-renovation herbicide application recommendations. It is typical to wait five to seven days after herbicide application, then mow off plant tops 1 to 3 inches above the crown without damaging the crown. Set your mower height so that the old leaves are removed but the new expanding leaves are not cut. A rotary mower does a good job. If thin areas are in the rows, train runners into them before narrowing the rows.

Fertilizing the Planting. A soil test taken several weeks before harvest ends will help determine phosphorous and potash needs. Application of 25 to 40 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre may be made before plants are mowed.

Narrowing Rows. Shortly after mowing (allow the tops to dry), narrow the rows that have become rather wide. Do this by using discs to remove plants from both sides of the row or by using a rototiller with the middle tines removed. Narrow the beds and remove plants, leaving one side of the row so that young daughter plants are retained instead of the older mother plants in the center of the row. Where supplemental irrigation is available to stimulate runner plant development during the summer, rows are commonly narrowed to 6 to 12 inches. If rows are not to be irrigated during the summer, they should be narrowed to a width only slightly less than desired for picking. With plantings that have fruited two seasons or more, growers often cut narrow "slots" in row middles with tiller blades. Because more "quality" berries are usually produced at matted row edges, cutting narrow slots in row centers helps thin middles and gives desirable extra edges.

Thinning Plants. For best production, do not have too many plants in the rows. A heavy plant stand should be thinned enough to allow newly formed plants to be about 5 to 6 inches apart.

Cultivating. Throw a limited amount of soil over the row by cultivation. The controlled application of 0.5 to 1 inch of soil over the plant bed will help produce replacement roots at the very top of the root zone on older plants and help provide a rooting medium for new runner plants.

Irrigating. Water is needed to activate weed control materials, to incorporate fertilizers and to make plants grow. Do not let plants go into stress during summer months. Cultivate to reposition runners into rows until plant stand is sufficient. Aim for production of four to six plants per square foot of row. An eventual row width of 15 to 24 inches will likely provide more marketable fruit than wider plantings.

Matted Row Weed Control. Weeds must be controlled for successful strawberry production. Weed competition can affect both berry size and number, which may severely decrease yields. Weeds also make it harder to pick strawberries and detract from the appearance of the planting. Begin a carefully scheduled herbicide program at planting. Preemergence weed control by herbicide application should begin immediately after renovation.

Controlling Insects and Diseases. Pest control with crop protectant sprays will be important in controlling fungal diseases, insects and mites in the strawberry planting.

David Himelrick

Vegetable Gardening

Vegetables to Plant ■ ■ ■

- **In June** – Transplant heat-set tomatoes for fruit production in August through October. Plant collards, cucumbers, melons, cantaloupes, okra, southern peas, pumpkins and summer squash. Transplant eggplants, all the peppers and sweet potato slips. Start seed of fall tomatoes and bell peppers. Good pest control practices are necessary because of the high pressure of insects and diseases now.
- **In July** – Transplant tomatoes and bell peppers in mid-July for fall production. Also, plant okra, southern peas, cucumbers, squash, cantaloupes, pumpkins and watermelons.
- **In mid- to late July** – Seed broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, cabbage, collards and winter squash; transplant bell peppers and tomatoes.
- **In August** – This very hot time may experience damaging droughts. Start bush snap beans and bush limas. Plant seed for cucumber, collards, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, summer squash, southern peas, mustard and green shallot sets.
- **In mid-August** – North Louisiana can plant Irish potatoes and start seed for head lettuce and beets. Transplant broccoli and Brussels sprouts.
- **In Late August** – South Louisiana now can do the above (mid-August).



Crop Highlights

Broccoli and cauliflower. Both can be direct-seeded beginning in mid-July through September or transplanted from early August through early September. It takes four to six weeks to produce transplants from seed. In general, broccoli and cauliflower will require 5 to 6 pounds (or pints) of a complete fertilizer such as 8-24-24 per 100 feet of row. These crops, especially cauliflower, require fast, continuous growth for proper head development. Keep them well watered and fertilized. Sidedress plants with three-fourths pound (1 ½ cups) of ammonium nitrate per 100 feet of row three to four weeks after transplanting and again in 14 days.

Varieties that will produce in about 60 days from transplanting reduce the chance of cold-weather damage. Recommended varieties are:



Broccoli

Arcadia
Gypsy
Everest
Diplomat
Greenbelt
Patron
Triathalon
Windsor
Premium Crop
Packman
Comet

Cauliflower

Majestic
Wentworth
Candid Charm
Cumberland
Incline
Snow Crown
Freedom
Symphony



Snap beans. Late August through early September is the best time to plant. Normally 50 to 55 days are required from planting until harvest. Don't let beans suffer from drought. Choose Provider, Bluelake 274, Roma II, Derby, Ambra, Magnum, Valentino, Festina, Bronco, Royal Burgundy, Green Crop, Hialeah, Strike, Caprice, Greenable, Lynx, Nash and Shade. For a yellow wax bean, choose Golden Rod Wax. Bush beans usually will produce more successfully than pole beans in the fall because of their earlier maturity.

Butter beans. This crop is harder to produce in the fall than are snap beans. Plant early enough to produce before frost and late enough so they're not blooming while temperatures are too high for fruit set. Plant early August through about mid-August. Plant bush beans for fall production (Henderson, Fordhook 242, Thorogreen, Jackson Wonder, Dixie Butterpea).

Irish potatoes. Plant small whole potatoes saved from the spring crop from about mid-August to early September. Good soil moisture is essential. The seed potatoes may not sprout readily after planting because of a physiological rest period of about 90 days that they have to go through after harvesting in the spring. After this rest period is satisfied, the tubers should sprout. Fall yields are lower than spring yields. Use seed potatoes for seed pieces, not market tubers.

Cabbage. Plant seed beginning in mid-July, and seed through September. You also may transplant beginning in early August through mid-October. Fertilize the same as broccoli and cauliflower. Space cabbage, cauliflower and Chinese cabbage about 12 to 14 inches apart and broccoli 6 to 12 inches apart. Double drills (two drills of plants spaced 10-12 inches apart on single row) will help maximize yield. Try Rio Verde for late plantings. Recommended early maturity varieties include Platinum, Dynasty, Gold Dynasty, and Stonehead (AAS). Maturing a little later are Rio Verde, Solid Blue 780, Red Dynasty, Emblem, Blue Dynasty, Thunderhead Royal Vantage, Silver Dynasty, Blue Thunder, Cheers, Vantage Point, Savoy Ace (AAS) and Savoy King (AAS).

Squash and cucumbers. These two crops can be planted in June, July and August. Summer plantings will normally be ready to begin harvesting after about six weeks. Yields are usually lower than spring plantings. A fall crop of yellow summer squash, zucchini and cucumbers can be grown by planting seed in August. Squash vine borers may be a more severe problem in fall than in spring, so be prepared to control them with an insecticide. Viruses are a problem in the

fall, so spray regularly to control insects that transmit them.

New cucumbers for 2009 are Daytona and Stonewall. New squash are Medallion, Fortune, Lioness, Justice, Lynx and Leopard.

Pumpkins. Pumpkins for Halloween should be planted in early to mid-July. Apply 3-5 pounds of a complete fertilizer for each 100 feet of row before planting. Plant five to six seed in hills about 4 to 5 feet apart on rows 6 to 8 feet apart. Thin to one or two plants per hill. Apply a sidedressing of 1 pound (1 pint) of ammonium nitrate per 100 feet of row when vines begin to run. Keep soil moist for best production. Howden and Biggie are excellent varieties to grow for Halloween. The Connecticut Field is an old popular variety. Recommended varieties of giant pumpkins are Big Moon, Full Moon, Big Max, Atlantic Giant and Prize Winner. The medium-size varieties that have done well in research trials are Spirit, Lumina, Big Autumn, Gold Rush, Autumn Gold, Gold Bullion, Howdy Doody, Gold Medal, Merlin and Sorcerer. Frosty, Big Autumn, Neon, Magic Lantern and Aspen produce a dwarf vine that should be tried in home gardens. Many ornamental pumpkins like Jack-Be-Little, Baby Bear, Munchkin, and Lil Ironsides can be planted.

Greens. Begin planting greens, mustards, turnips and collards during August. Keep the soil moist to ensure a good stand. Try some of the white turnips, like White Lady, Tokyo Cross and Shogoin for roots and Seven Top, AllTop, Topper and Southern Green for greens. Also good are Just Right, Royal Crown, Purple Top WG and Red Giant.

Shallots. Dry sets of shallots can be planted from August to April. About 50 to 60 days from planting, tops will be ready to harvest.

Fall bell peppers. If plants from the spring are still in good condition, they can be nursed (sprayed or dusted and watered) throughout summer. They will set fruit again as the temperatures become more favorable. If seeds of bell peppers haven't been planted by early June, buy transplants.

Fall tomatoes. Transplant fall tomatoes in July. Be prepared to spray with insecticides and fungicides; insect and disease pressure is usually worse in the fall than in the spring. The heat-set varieties that have produced well in recent trials are Sun Leaper, Florida 91, Sun Master, Solar Fire, Taladega, Sun Chaser, Phoenix, Solar Set and Heat Wave II. These varieties have the ability to set some fruit in high temperatures, allowing the fruit to mature before cool weather. Row covers, which protect the plants from the first frost, have prolonged the harvest period, and they enhance fruit maturity. Also worth trying in fall are Bingo, BHN 216, Spitfire, Mountain Crest and Mountain Fresh Plus or cherry tomatoes.

Since fall tomatoes are such an unsure crop, it's interesting to try several early varieties. Certain varieties may produce better in some parts of the state than others because of the variation in climate and soils. Start early, and get a strong bush.

Lettuce. Head lettuce can be grown in Louisiana in late August. A common mistake is planting the seed too deeply. Lettuce seed require light for germination,

so scatter the seed on the row and lightly rake into the soil. Plant leaf lettuce in September. Keep the soil moist until the seeds have germinated and are well established. Head types are tougher to grow. Keep lettuce growing actively to keep it from becoming bitter.

Recommended varieties of lettuce are: head lettuce – Summertime, Mighty Joe, Ithaca, Mavrick and Great Lakes 659; leaf lettuce – Slobolt, Red Salad Bowl,

Grand Rapids, Red Fire, Tango, Red Sails, Salad Bowl, Sunset, Simpson and Elite; romaine lettuce – Parris Island, Ideal, Green Forest and Green Towers; butterhead or bibb lettuce – Buttercrunch, Ermosa, Esmerelda, Nancy, Oak Leaf; batavia types (leaf lettuce with a unique flavor) – Nevada, Sierra.

Thomas Koske

Turfgrass and Lawns



Turfgrasses

Turfgrasses need to make good growth during this time. If they don't make it now, don't push them in the fall when they need to store carbohydrates for the winter. Keep up a good fertility program through August only, then slow down. Water deeply only once or twice a week as needed.

Watch for chinch bugs in St. Augustine and Bermuda grasses. There's still time to dethatch through July if it's needed. Water and fertilize after dethatching.

Centipede should receive its second and last fertilizing in late July or August. It needs the most moisture of all the turfgrasses. On centipede, apply only one-half pound of nitrogen per 1,000 sq ft as a complete turf fertilizer or 17-0-17. Other types of grasses can use about twice this rate. A slow-release turf blend fertilizer is best and worth the extra cost. Carpet grass only needs one fertilizing in spring.

If your last fertilizing is in early September rather than August, add some potash with or shortly after only a light (one-fourth pound) nitrogen application. You will need about 1 pound of potash (K_2O) equivalent per 1,000 sq ft. You can apply this as 1 ½ pounds muriate of potash. Apply all granular materials on a dry lawn, and water in. A winterizer fertilizer should be low in nitrogen and high in potassium, or just use 0-0-60 (muriate of potash). Don't just go by the name "winterizer," because it may be a northern type of fertilizer for fescue blend.

Except for Bermuda or zoysia lawns, postemergence weed control should not be attempted any more until the grasses are near dormant (winter) or in the midspring growth season. High temperatures can cause excessive herbicide damage on permanent grasses, even if they are listed on the herbicide label as tolerant. On Bermuda and zoysia, try MSMA, DSMA, 2-4, D three-way "zone" types or Image herbicides now before mid-September. Delay this if very hot and dry.

Thomas J. Koske

