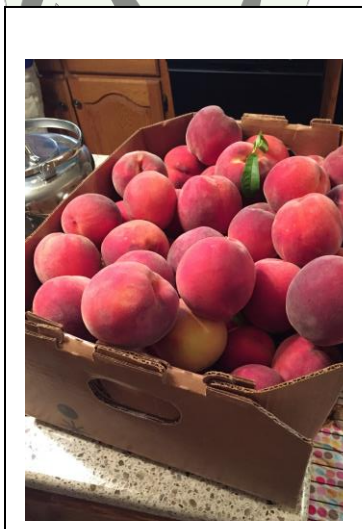


The Magnolia Chronicle

The newsletter for Pulaski County Master Gardeners



U of A

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE

RESEARCH & EXTENSION

University of Arkansas System



Fresh Peaches! What a wonderful summer treat!

Aug/Sept 2019

Presidents Corner

"We can complain because rose bushes have thorns, or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses."

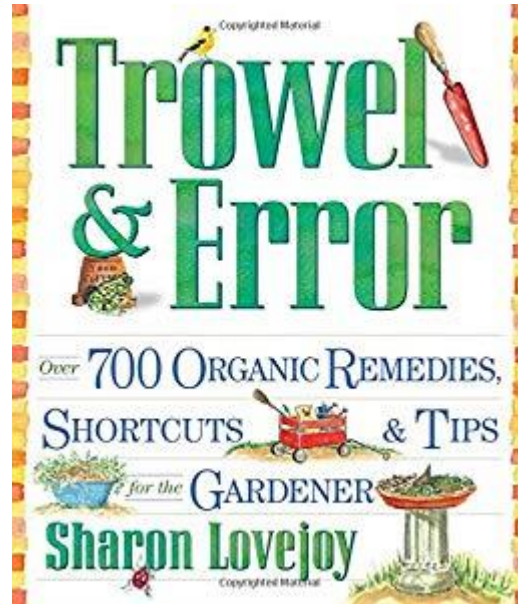
Abraham Lincoln

Welcome to August—the dogdays of summer, named by the Romans after their emperor, Augustus Caesar. The plants we so lovingly planted and nurtured in earlier months are now falling prey to thrips, aphids, lace bugs, vine borers, a host of caterpillars including hornworms, and four legged pests like deer and raccoons, not to mention drought and very hot temperatures, all of which I have recently experienced in my own garden. Gardening is not nearly so fun this month!

The saving grace of August is fresh picked AR peaches! This year's crop has been delicious and I have found, readily available. Peach cobbler with ice cream is truly a summer treat. I use a recipe that has been passed down for more than 200 years and is oh so easy to make. Bring slowly to a boil, one or more quarts of peaches (or other fruit works, too, but blackberries turn the crust blue), $\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter and a little water if needed. With a spoon, stir together in the bowl you will be using to bake your cobbler, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk, 1 tsp baking powder and a dash of salt. Pour the prepared fruit on top, do not stir, and bake at 350 degrees 45 minutes or until crust is golden. Enjoy hot with ice cream on top! Peach cobbler makes the summer heat and pests all worthwhile.

Looking forward to getting back together for our September meeting. Hope to see you then.

Suzanne Potts, PCMG PRESIDENT



Collected together in a book of invaluable information and charming illustrations, here are hundreds of tips and homespun remedies that come only from season after season of gardening experience. Born of necessity and ingenuity and honed through years of “trowel and error”, these helpful hints include environmentally friendly ammunition against weeds and pests, shortcuts for cultivation and propagation, and clever uses for curious household items.

Some of the tips:

- Sprinkle baby powder on seedlings to deter rabbits.
- Cure plant viruses with milk.
- Take a shower with your houseplants.
- Recycle an old wheelbarrow into a movable flower bed.
- Use empty citrus fruit rinds as seedling pots.

(The above information is an excerpt from the book’s back cover)

NOTE: This book is a “keeper” for future reference and household pest relief without using harmful chemicals. Information on the next page is from her book.



Lemon seedling in lemon rind. Plant rind and plant in the garden.



Plants in old wheelbarrow – move throughout the yard to obtain the best sunny location

Home made potions for your garden

Cinnamon powder – antifungal and anti-ant

Corn gluten meal – inhibits germination of weeds

Baking soda – prevents fungus spores from invading plants

Aspirin – (uncoated) dissolved in water – fights mildew, black spot, and more (2 aspirin tablets – 325mg plus 1 quart of water)

Fish emulsion and kelp – natural organic fertilizers that promote healthy soil and plants

Isopropyl rubbing alcohol (70%) – desiccates and destroys insects.

Vinegar (apple cider and white) fights fungus gnats, kills weeds and destroys pests

White glue – seals small pruning cuts – great for roses

Epsom salts – provides a quick shot of magnesium and promotes growth of flowers and foliage

Rose tonic

Treat powdery mildew and black spot. 2 t baking soda, 2 qt water, ½ t liquid soap (or Murphy's Oil soap). Shake well before using – put in spray bottle

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Arkansas Extended Learning Center 666-0759 www.extendedlearning.org

Fall Bulb Blast

Oct 24

**Christmas wreath & centerpiece
workshop**

Dec 3 & 10

**Garden Design Toolbox - March 12, 19, 26, and
April 2**

Note: All provided by Mary Evans, PCMG

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Central Arkansas Iris Society

Annual IRIS Rhizome and Plant Sale

Saturday, August 31st

8 am until "sold out"

Grace Lutheran Church – Kavanaugh Street

(next to Mount St. Mary's School)

www.CentralArkansasIris.org or call Phyllis 501-626-7258

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER GARDEN CALENDAR

By Carol Randle

AUGUST CHECKLIST

None of us prefer to garden in the 90-degree weather, but we have had to do that some this summer. The heat index has many times been in the 100 degrees area. We don't like to get up early to be at the project by 7:30 a.m., but sometimes it is necessary. We loved those few weeks that had cool weather (70 to 85 degrees).

VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

Tomatoes have started to slow down in production. When temperatures exceed 95 degrees during the day or stay above 75 degrees at night, they quit ripening and setting fruit. If your cucumbers are bitter, they are getting stressed by water. Harvesting in the cooler times of the day improves flavor on many herbs and vegetables. Keep picking your cucumbers as they mature because letting old fruit stay on the vines will slow down future production. Knowing what to look for in your vegetable garden can ensure that you get the most from your garden. Sweet corn is ripe when the silks begin to turn brown and dry. Look at one or two of the ears by pulling back the shuck and pressing into a kernel or two. If it gives off a milky liquid and the ear is fully formed, it is time to harvest. The quicker you can go from garden to table, the sweeter the corn will be. Okra is best if picked when pods are small, no longer than two or three inches. The bigger they get, the tougher the pods are. Even though it isn't ideal gardening weather, this is the time to start replanting for a fall garden. Mulch well and water, and you will be harvesting well into fall. Cantaloupes and watermelons tend to be at their sweetest if it is a bit on the dry side during harvest. Too much rain could dilute the sugars. Ripe watermelons will have a dry, curly brown tendril at stem end, a dull sheen on the fruit and a white to yellow underbelly. When cantaloupes are ripe, the stems should easily separate from the vine. The fruits should develop a light tan webbing pattern, and the blossom end should be slightly soft and smell like cantaloupe.

ROSES

If blackspot has reared its ugly head on your roses or if you have blackspot-susceptible plants, continue to spray with fungicides. You do not have to use fungicides on the earth kind of roses like "Home Run," "Knock Out" and "Flower Carpet." If your roses are looking a little leggy, try giving them a light pruning now and fertilize. Pruning may reduce some flowers in the short term, but most roses could use a bit of a nip right now to regroup, fill out and be able to give you a great fall display. Of course, water is always important.

ANNUALS

There are so many outstanding summer annuals that we often have trouble picking the ones we want to plant. When we see new annuals in the stores, we want to try some of them in our own flower beds. Look at your flower beds and make notes on which ones are taking the heat. Lantana loves heat and seems to explode when it gets hot. If they have stopped blooming, give them a haircut, fertilize and water, and they should rebound with flowers through frost. Angelonia, sweet potato vine and some of the new cupheas are outstanding. Supertunias are also outstanding. Remember that annuals are usually around for only one season, so keep up with watering and fertilizing. If they look bad, pinch them back or start over. Most nurseries today keep annuals in stock almost year round, so replanting is a possibility. When we have a mild winter, many of our annuals act like perennials, and we have great plants. Deadheading is important... removing the spent flowers after they bloom, pruning back leggy plants, fertilizing and watering can keep these plants lush and full of flowers. If you have annuals that are not doing anything and seem to not recover from the heat, pull them and replace them with plants that will add to your fall color. Ornamental peppers can take the heat and give you

colorful fruit up until frost. Zinnias come in a range of colors. Many have shades of orange and white, which blend well with fall. You can also find some great bargains at nurseries and garden centers on tropical foliage and flowers. They have months of color to give and can perk up a heat-stressed landscape.

TROPICALS

Hand in hand with summer annuals are the summer tropicals. Hibiscus, bananas, mandevillas, and plumerias will make our yards look terrific whether they are in containers on the patio or porch or set out in the garden. A great trait they share is they like heat and humidity. They do, however, like to be watered and fertilized. If you are growing them in containers, you are constantly watering to keep them alive. Water leaches out the nutrients so once every week or two, we need to fertilize with a water-soluble fertilizer. Keep a careful watch out for pests. Make sure there is ample water in the containers when using any pesticide or fertilizer when it is hot and dry. If the plants are stressed, they may get burned with any extra additions.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Trees and shrubs are setting their flower buds now for next year's blooms. Don't let them get too dry now, or it could impact your flowers next spring. To have great blooms next year, do not prune these plants anymore this season. For most trees and shrubs, all you should be doing now is making sure they have water when it is dry. Fertilizations should have occurred in the spring, and we will be good to go until next spring. We have now entered the period of watering as maintenance for our shrubs. The exceptions are gardenias and bigleaf and oakleaf hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla* and *Hydrangea quercifolia*, respectfully). These three summer-blooming shrubs set flower buds in late August and September. If they have overgrown their location or need some general shaping, early July is the LAST time to do it. Deadhead spent flowers to ensure more blooms. *Hydrangea macrophylla* on the left (below) and *quercifolia* on the right (below). The oakleaf is "Ruby Slippers", a dwarf variety.

LAWNS

At this time of year mowing the lawn is a chore that we don't enjoy. Keeping the lawn healthy with regular watering is important. You can often tell who is and isn't watering by the look of the lawn. Daily watering is never good but do make sure that an inch to an inch and a half are put down weekly. In late August to September one last application of fertilizer can be applied to Bermuda, St. Augustine and Zoysia lawns. Don't fertilize Tall Fescue or Centipede now. Pay attention to the weather. Applying fertilizer when it is extremely hot and dry can burn the grass. The main thing we are concerned with in our lawns is mowing and watering. If you have an automatic sprinkler system, you are probably watering the lawn more than it needs to keep up with flower and shrub irrigation. While we may all want a lush, bright green lawn, lawn grasses can get a bit dry in between watering and still survive. If you are having problems in your garden and can't figure out what is causing the problem, take some good pictures and a plant sample to your local county extension office. If they can't identify it, they will send it to the disease diagnostic lab for a correct diagnosis.



SEPTEMBER CHECKLIST

Janet says that September is a critical month for preparing plants for the winter ahead. Water is still a primary concern, so monitor local rainfall amounts. Spring-blooming plants are setting or have set flower buds for next spring's display, so no more fertilization is needed. If you fertilize now, you may encourage new growth too late in the season.

BULBS

Spring bulbs are showing up at local nurseries. It is time to buy them to get the best selection, but don't plant until it gets cooler. Keep them in a cool place for another few weeks before planting. If you plan to dig up and store your caladium bulbs, make sure you are fertilizing them now. The more energy they can store in their roots, the larger the bulb will be and the bigger your plants next year. Make sure you dig them up prior to a killing frost.

VEGETABLES

If your vegetable garden is still producing, then you are properly maintaining it. Vegetable gardens quickly turn to ruin if left untended. Fall gardens are by far the most difficult to manage, since insect and diseases have had all season to thrive and multiply. We are still growing peppers, eggplant and harvesting melons. Now is a great time to replant. You can still plant some fall crops including lettuce, radishes and fall greens. Water is a vital component for survival, and mulch is always a plus.

FLOWERS

If early season perennials such as peonies and lilies are looking ragged, don't wait for a killing frost to begin cleanup. Start cutting them back now. They have finished their life cycle and will be heading into dormancy. The key to gardening success now is to clean up and water. Mid-September through October is the ideal time to divide peonies. Herbaceous crowns are set one to two inches below soil level. Now is also the time that many perennials can be divided. Mulch is important the first winter after division to prevent the plants from heaving out of the ground. If your garden needs late-summer color, consider planting some late summer bloomers. Perennials include Japanese anemone (*Anemone hupehensis*), turtlehead (*Chelone* spp.), toad lily (*Tricyrtis*) and Joe Pye Weed (*Eutrochium purpureum*). Ornamental grasses are beginning to set their plumage and will continue to grace our fall and winter landscapes. Wait to get pansies until the temperatures begin to cool off. Pansies that get exposed to warm weather tend to stretch and get leggy, resulting in weaker plants all winter. Calendula, snapdragon, calibrachoa, flowering kale and cabbage, dianthus, asters and chrysanthemums are all blooming now.

HERBS

Fresh herbs are showing up in flower gardens, containers and stand-alone vegetable gardens. If you have annual herbs such as basil and dill, harvest them regularly to keep them producing foliage. As we near fall, be a bit more sparing in your pruning of the perennial herbs such as rosemary, thyme and sage. They can continue to be harvested and used in cooking, but don't butcher them since they are permanent plants in the garden and won't put on a lot of new growth this late. Unless you want to have an abundance of garlic chives in your garden, you may want to deadhead these plants now, as they can be quite aggressive. If you don't have herbs growing in your garden, they can be planted now. Don't forget to water to get them established.



INDOORS

Dig up your begonias now and bring them indoors as a houseplant. They will bloom all winter, so you can use the cuttings outdoors next spring. Feed your houseplants less frequently as the days get shorter. Houseplants that have had a summer siesta outside need to be prepared for the move back indoors. Late summer to early October is the ideal time to do so. Clean up the pots, check for ants and other insects. Spray as needed with insecticidal soap before you bring them in and once again after they are in to control hitchhiking bugs. Moving them in before cool weather starts will be an easier transition for them. Cut back on the amount of water you give them and don't be alarmed with a little leaf dropping.



Japanese anemone is probably our most underutilized perennial – They bloom in August. These beautiful flowers are available in shades of pink and white. Easy to grow and multiple every year.

BLACKBERRY LILY



Blackberry lily, also referred to as leopard lily and several other common names, is a short-lived perennial native to eastern Russia, China and Japan. The dried rhizome has long been used medicinally in Eastern Asia for a variety of ailments.

This plant is not a true lily, but is a member of the iris family (Iridaceae) with the name *Belamcanda chinensis*. However, recent evidence suggests it is more closely related to *Iris*, and should actually be placed in the genus *Iris*. Because of taxonomic priorities, the name *I. chinensis* is already taken, and the new name of *I. domestica* was proposed in 2005, but the old name is still in general use. Forms with pure yellow flowers are sometimes listed as another species, *B. flabellate*, but there is only one recognized species in the (former) genus *Belamcanda*. Despite the fact that some reputable references suggest it is hardy only in zones 8-10, it survives and flowers reliably in zone 4.

Regardless of its correct botanical name, this plant is very similar in appearance to an iris plant, with flat, sword-like leaves arranged in a fan on a small tuberous rhizome. The foliage grows to 18" tall and the plants produce many offsets. The flowers, however, are very different in appearance from typical iris flowers. They are borne on 2-3 foot tall slender stems in loose, branched spikes. The tall flower stems sometimes flop or are blown over in strong winds, so they may benefit from staking. The flowers are 2" wide with 6 flaring petals of equal size. Flower color in the species ranges from yellow to orange, with darker (often crimson) speckles on the petals. Individual blooms are short-lived – generally lasting only a day – but the plants produce a succession of flowers over a period of several weeks in summer.

The flowers are followed by pear-shaped seed capsules that fade from green to tan. These eventually open to reveal the round, shiny black seeds arranged in clusters resembling large blackberries that give rise to the common name. The seeds remain on the stalks for several months. When left standing, the seed heads offer good winter interest, especially when viewed against a backdrop of snow. The seed heads are also a unique addition to dried flower arrangements.

Grow blackberry lily in full sun or light shade. It prefers well-drained, moderately fertile loamy soil, but does just fine in sandy or clay soils. It will be shorter when grown in poor, dry soil, and taller if the soil is rich and moist. Deadhead to prolong blooming (and prevent self-seeding). Even in colder climates it does not need winter protection.

NOTE: Information provided by the Master Gardening Program, Division of Extension, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

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