

Horticulture Tips

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Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

GARDEN TIPS FOR JUNE!

David Hillock

General Landscape

- Find someone to water plants in the house and garden while on vacation. Harvesting vegetables and mowing the lawn are a must and imply that someone is home.
- Mulch ornamentals, vegetables, and annuals to reduce soil crusting, and to regulate temperatures and moisture during hot summer months. Mulching will reduce about 70 percent of the summer yard maintenance.
- Remain alert for insect damage. Add spider mite to the list. Foliage of most plants becomes pale and speckled; juniper foliage turns a pale yellowish color. Shake a branch over white paper and watch for tiny specks that crawl. Watch for first generation fall webworm. ([EPP-7306](#))

Turfgrass

- Fertilize warm-season grasses at 1 lb. N per 1,000 square feet. Don't fertilize fescue and other cool-season grasses during the summer.
- Dollar spot disease of lawns can first become visible in mid-May. Make certain fertilizer applications have been adequate before applying a fungicide. ([EPP-7658](#))
- Seeding of warm-season grasses should be completed by the end of June (through July for improved varieties such as Riviera and Yukon) to reduce winterkill losses. ([HLA-6419](#))
- Brown patch disease of cool-season grasses can be a problem. ([HLA-6420](#))
- White grubs will soon be emerging as adult June Beetles. Watch for high populations that can indicate potential damage from later life cycle stages as grubs in the summer.

Fruit and Nut

- Renovate overgrown strawberry beds after the last harvest. Start by setting your lawnmower on its highest setting and mow off the foliage. Next thin crowns 12 to 24 inches apart. Apply recommended fertilizer, preemergence herbicide if needed and keep watered.

Trees and Shrubs

- Vigorous, unwanted limbs should be removed or shortened on new trees. Watch for forks in the main trunk and remove the least desirable trunk as soon as it is noticed. ([HLA-6415](#))
- Pine needle disease treatments are needed again in mid-June. ([EPP-7618](#))
- Remove tree wraps during the summer to avoid potential disease and insect buildup.
- Softwood cuttings from new growth of many shrubs will root if propagated in a moist shady spot.
- Protect trees from lawnmowers and weed eaters by mulching or using protective aerated covers.

Flowers

- Pinch back leggy annuals to encourage new growth. Fertilize and water appropriately.
- Feed established mums and other perennials.
- When picking fresh roses or removing faded ones, cut back to a leaflet facing the outside of the bush to encourage open growth and air circulation.
- Stake tall perennials before toppling winds arise.

Spider Mites

David Hillock

Spider mites can be real pests as the weather turns hot and dry. They often attack my marigolds each year, but they have rarely done significant damage and only once did I opt to control them, and even then it was only with a hard stream of water, which did the trick.

Hosts: Some species of spider mites are restricted to one or a few kinds of host plants while others feed on many different kinds of plants. Tomatoes and marigolds are probably most commonly attacked in Oklahoma, but very few plants are completely immune from all the species of spider mites that will attack plants.

Symptoms: Damage occurs when the mites suck plant juices with their small, needle-like mouthparts. Light infestations leave a pattern of small, pale spots on the infested plant. With heavier infestations the individual spots run together and can cause the death of a leaf or needle. This type of damage is often the only sign of an infestation in species which do not spin webs. One way to check for the presence of mites is to shake the plant over a white piece of paper. If you see tiny specks begin to move on the paper, they are likely mites.

Life Cycle: Some species overwinter as adults and others overwinter as eggs. They hatch or become active as the weather warms in the spring. Hot, dry weather is favorable for most spider mites and during the summer months they can complete a generation in 7 to 14 days. Females lay as many as 300 eggs in their webs or on plants. Therefore, mite infestations can increase rapidly and cause extensive damage to plants in a short time. Infestations usually decline as the weather becomes cooler and wetter in the fall.

Description: Spider mites, often called red spiders, are very small, barely visible to the naked eye. The newly hatched mite has 6 legs but all other active stages have 8 legs. They are related to spiders and ticks and are not insects. We have several different species in Oklahoma. Some are reddish in color but others are brownish or pale greenish. Some have two or more darker spots on the back. Several common species spin fine, irregular webs over the infested parts of plants but other species spin little or no webbing.

Control: Spider mites are relatively easy to control with a strong stream of water (syringing) that knocks them off the plant. This method also conserves their natural enemies. There are numerous predators of mites (lacewings, lady beetles and predatory mites). Practices that encourage predators to the garden help reduce the need for chemicals. Most spider mites can be controlled with insecticidal oils and soaps if necessary; these are often referred to as the “soft pesticides.”

The oils, both horticultural oil and dormant oil, can be used. Other chemical controls include miticides. Spider mites are usually not killed by regular insecticides, so be sure to check the pesticide label to see if "miticide" is present. Pesticides claiming "for mite suppression" are usually weak miticides and will not perform well.

Pretty Much Picasso™ Petunia

David Hillock

Definitely one of my favorite petunias, Pretty Much Picasso™ also seems to be a crowd pleaser.

A Supertunia® by the producers of Proven Winners, this fantastic and vigorous grower produces unique flowers that are violet purple edged in a lime-green accent. The flowers are not huge, but produced abundantly all summer long.



Pretty Much Picasso is self-cleaning so no deadheading is necessary, unlike many other petunias. In fact, about the only care it needs are regular fertilizing and a light trim just after the first of July. Once established this petunia is also quite drought tolerant.

I really like its low, trailing growth habit. It works great as a groundcover, not reaching much more than 8" tall in our gardens, and is fantastic in hanging baskets, containers, or spilling over the edge of a retaining wall.

Safe Application of Lawn Fertilizers

Justin Quetone Moss

Local television meteorologists sometimes recommend that viewers should fertilize their yards before a storm system moves across the state during the growing season. While this strategy seems reasonable, it could result in off-site movement of fertilizers through leaching or runoff. In addition, off-site movement of fertilizers due to heavy rainfall results in wasted time, effort and money. In order to ensure that lawn and landscape fertilizers stay on-site for plant use, follow these helpful tips:

- Always base fertilizer applications on yearly soil test results.
- Based on soil test results, apply lower fertilizer rates more frequently rather than a single, high fertilizer rate, especially on sloped areas.
- Do not fertilize immediately before heavy rain or irrigation.
- Lightly water-in fertilizer applications with 0.25 inches of water.
- Use fertilizers that contain slow-release nitrogen sources.
- Sweep-up fertilizer that is accidentally spread on impervious surfaces such as sidewalks or driveways.

- Maintain a non-fertilized buffer (15-25 ft) with higher cut turf or native grasses (>6 in) around water bodies such as creeks, streams, ponds or lakes.
- Maintain and mow turf areas at the higher end of recommended mowing heights.
- Mulch landscape areas with a 3 inch layer of natural mulch.
- Fill-in bare soil areas with turf seed or sod.

Third Annual Oklahoma Organic Workshop and Field Day

Jim Shrefler, Area Extension Horticulturist

The 2010 Oklahoma Organic Workshop and Field Day will be held Thursday, July 22, 2010 at the Lane Agricultural Center at Lane, Oklahoma in Atoka County. The event is sponsored by Oklahoma State University, USDA Agricultural Research Service, South Central Agricultural Research Laboratory, The Oklahoma SARE program, Kerr Center for Sustainable Agriculture and the Atoka County Extension Office.

An afternoon workshop focusing on insect, disease and weed pest issues will begin at 2:00 p.m. John Damicone, Professor of Plant Pathology at Oklahoma State University, will discuss foliar disease control for organic vegetable production. Donn Johnson, Professor of Entomology at the University of Arkansas, will talk about integrated pest management for vegetable and fruit production. Dr. Charles Webber, III, Agronomist with USDA – ARS and Jim Shrefler, Area Horticulturist with OSU, will address weed control issues and options for organic vegetable production and plan to have available for viewing plots in which weeds will be treated with herbicides developed for organic uses.

Following the workshop there will be a meal and time to visit with scientists and fellow growers. Following the meal we will tour research and demonstration field projects and scientists will talk briefly on project goals and results. The program should be completed at about 8 p.m.

The Lane Agriculture Center is Located at Lane, OK which is 10 miles east of Atoka, Oklahoma on State Highway 3 (or 24 miles from Antlers, Oklahoma). If travelling from McAlester, take US Highway 69 to Atoka. For directions, call 580-513-5544.

For professional agriculturists who are responsible for teaching and training others about organic agriculture there will be a special morning session on the same day of the workshop. If you think this applies to you, please call Janelle Malone at 405-744-3669 for details.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

June 12, 2010

Summer GardenFest

Botanic Gardens at OSU, Stillwater, OK

For more information, please visit the following website:

<http://www.oklahomagardening.okstate.edu/events/gardenfest/index.htm>

September 8, 2010

Turf and Nursery/Landscape Field Day
Botanic Gardens at OSU, Stillwater, OK

October 13-14, 2010

Ornamental Plant Materials Conference
Wes Watkins Center, Stillwater, OK

November 3, 2010

Tree Care Conference
Botanic Gardens at OSU, Stillwater, OK

December 9, 2010

Global Horticulture Conference
Stillwater, OK

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or stephanie.larimer@okstate.edu.