

Horticulture Tips

August 2010

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

GARDEN TIPS FOR AUGUST!

David Hillock

Vegetables

- August is a good month to start your fall vegetable garden. Bush beans, cucumbers and summer squash can be replanted for another crop. Beets, broccoli, carrots, potatoes, lettuce and other cool-season crops can also be planted at this time. ([HLA-6009](#)).
- Soak vegetable seed overnight prior to planting. Once planted, cover them with compost to avoid soil crusting. Mulch to keep planting bed moist and provide shade during initial establishment. Monitor and control insect pests that prevent a good start of plants in your fall garden.

Fruit and Nut

- Continue protective insect applications on the fruit orchard. A good spray schedule is often abandoned too early. Follow directions on last application prior to harvest. ([EPP-7319](#))

Flowers

- Towards the end of the month, divide and replant spring-blooming perennials like iris, peonies and daylilies if needed.

General

- Water compost during extremely dry periods so that it remains active. Turn the pile to generate heat throughout for proper sterilization.
- Always follow directions on both synthetic and natural pesticide products.
- Watch for high populations of caterpillars, aphids, spider mites, thrips, scales and other insects on plant material in the garden and landscape and treat as needed. ([HLA-7306](#))
- Water all plants thoroughly unless rainfall has been adequate. It is better to water more in depth, less often and early in the morning.

Trees and Shrubs

- Discontinue deadheading roses by mid-August to help initiate winter hardiness.
- Watch for second generation of fall webworm in late August/early September. Remove webs that enclose branches and destroy; or spray with good penetration with an appropriate insecticide.

Lawn and Turf

- Grassy winter weeds like *Poa annua*, better known as annual bluegrass, can be prevented with a preemergence herbicide application in late August. Water in the product after application. ([HLA-6420](#))

- Areas of turf with large brown spots should be checked for high numbers of grubs. Mid-to-late August is the best time to control heavy white grub infestations in the lawn. Apply appropriate insecticide if white grubs are a problem. Water product into soil. ([EPP-7306](#))
- Tall fescue should be mowed at 3 inches during the hot summer and up to 3 ½ inches if it grows under heavier shade. ([HLA-6420](#))
- For areas being converted to tall fescue this fall, begin spraying out bermudagrass with a product containing glyphosate in early August. ([HLA-6419](#) & [HLA-6421](#))
- Irrigated warm-season lawns can be fertilized once again; apply 0.5 lb N/1,000 sq ft in early to mid August.
- Brown patch of cool-season grasses can be a problem. ([HLA-6420](#))

Staking Trees

David Hillock

Staking newly planted trees can be beneficial in providing support to the trees until they develop strong enough root systems to stand on their own. However, not all new trees need to be staked. If it is a small tree and in an area protected from high winds then it probably does not need to be staked. If it is a larger tree and/or one with dense foliage that may catch the wind or is planted in a windswept area then it might be a good idea to stake the tree.



The material used to attach the tree to the stake should be broad, smooth and somewhat elastic. Do not stake the tree too rigidly. Always allow for sway. Too tight or prolonged staking results in an overall weaker tree and is more subject to girdling of the trunk. Triple staking provides more protection against strong winds and lawn mowers. Support stakes and guy wires generally should be removed after one growing season. If staking material is left in place for more than two years the tree's ability to stand alone may be reduced, and the chances of girdling injury are increased.

So, the best thing to do is assess the situation and stake only when necessary and briefly. Prolonged staking can have a detrimental effect on the development of the tree. Too often, staking materials end up injuring or girdling the tree because they are left on longer than necessary.

Lawn Drought Stress and White Grubs

Justin Quetone Moss and Eric Rebek

During the late summer, irregular brown patches may show up in the lawn due to a combination of stress factors. These brown areas in the lawn where turfgrass leaves turn straw colored are typically due to lack of sufficient water to the turfgrass plant. This may be attributed to abiotic

factors such as lack of irrigation water, uneven distribution of lawn irrigation or excessive thatch layer. Biotic factors such as insect damage and diseases can also contribute or exacerbate summer stress symptoms in the lawn.

The combination of drought stress and insect damage from white grubs can cause turf loss and unsightly brown patches in the lawn during August. White grubs refer to the larvae of certain species of scarab beetles (Figure 1). White grubs damage turfgrasses by feeding directly on grass roots below the soil surface. If white grub populations are large enough, the turfgrass root system can be completely severed from the grass plant. Thus, turfgrasses with significant white grub damage can be easily pulled up from the ground, almost like a piece of new sod. Above ground, turfgrass leaf blades will turn brown and appear wilted. Severe white grub damage may be masked or confused with turfgrass drought stress during summer months. Certain species of white grub larvae become very active in August, especially those of southern masked chafer and Japanese beetle. In addition, August is typically an extremely dry month in Oklahoma. Therefore, initial damage to turfgrass roots from white grub larvae can be exacerbated by drought conditions, which can quickly lead to plant death. White grub populations should be monitored in areas where damage is suspected or has occurred historically by cutting and rolling back several blocks of turf measuring 1 square foot and counting the number of grubs encountered. If an average of five or more white grubs are found per square foot, treatment may be warranted. During August in Oklahoma, you may want to double check those brown patches in your yard for signs of drought stress and white grub damage. If you believe you have a white grub problem in your yard, contact your local OSU County Extension Educator for treatment and management options.

Figure 1. White grubs in soil. Photo courtesy of Dr. Tom Royer, Professor, OSU Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology.



Camp T.U.R.F. at OSU – Stillwater Shelley Mitchell

From June 20 to July 2, 2010, 22 Oklahoma high school students had the opportunity to stay at OSU and spend their days learning about careers in horticulture and landscaping. This was the first year for Camp TURF (Tomorrow's Undergraduates Realizing the Future), a summer academy funded by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. The purpose of the summer academies is to give first-generation college students the confidence to attend college. It works – 50% of Oklahoma high school graduates go to college; 80% of summer academy attendees go on to college after high school.

The students spent time in many different settings, experiencing a multitude of activities. Some of the activities included making herbal container gardens at TLC in OKC, touring the Will Rogers Gardens, climbing trees, exploring the Bixby and Perkins Field Stations, learning about zoo horticulture at the Tulsa Zoo, filming a segment of *Oklahoma Gardening*, and hands-on pruning at the OSU Botanic Garden. Students also learned about the traditional uses of plants on a wildcrafting walk in Coyle, cut their own cups into a golf green, grafted plants in the OSU teaching greenhouses, tried their hand at landscape design drawing, made flower arrangements, toured the OSU sports fields, assembled irrigation systems, and had a hands-on session at the OSU Insect Zoo.

Evening and weekend activities included tours of local museums, bowling, glow-in-the-dark mini-golf, a local production of *Little Shop of Horrors*, swimming, and a visit to the OSU Observatory (we saw Saturn!). Judging by evaluations, the students had fun, made new friends, and learned a lot about horticulture and landscaping careers. Hopefully the next Camp TURF will be just as successful.

I would like to thank the people and organizations who led a session for Camp TURF 2010:

TLC Florist & Greenhouses	Dr. Peter Shull, OSU Physics
Will Rogers Gardens	Dr. Janet Cole & Katie Fine, Rachael Pepin
Eshleman Tree Care	Dr. Mike Schnelle
Jo Kahn, CareerTech	Cathy Allen, Oklahoma 4H
Dr. Brian Kahn	Dr. Lynn Brandenberger
Mark Linholm, Tulsa Zoo	Georgia Muenzler
Dr. Andrine Shufran	Joanna Rasp, Sylvan Learning Center
Dr. Doug Hamilton	Kim Rebek and Kevin Gragg
David Hillock	Jackie Dill
Dr. Justin Moss	Dr. Bruce Dunn
Dr. Paul Hsu	Bonnie Hammond, Flourishes
Dr. Dennis Martin	Becky Carroll
Dr. Lou Anella	Susan Holman
OSU Camp Redlands staff	

If anyone would like to be a part of future Camp T.U.R.F. summer sessions, feel free to contact me at 405-744-5755 or shelley.mitchell@okstate.edu.

Urban Friendly Trees

David Hillock

Many of our urban and suburban landscapes don't leave us a lot of room for large shade trees. And unfortunately, the most commonly sold landscape trees are usually the very large and fast growing species that grow too big for the typical landscape, and because they are fast growers, often have weaknesses.

For example, I live in a neighborhood that was established in the mid 80s. The developers wanted fast growing shade trees so they planted species such as silver maple, cottonwood, sycamore and Bradford pears (half of the pears in the neighborhood have now fallen apart); all great trees but they belong in a park setting or a large estate. Our properties are hardly bigger than the houses themselves. Large trees like those mentioned have aggressive roots, are weak wooded, and can be quite messy. When we bought our house we had a cottonwood growing about two feet from the water meter and only about 6 feet from the house – that was the first thing to come down!

So what types of trees might be better suited for a smaller residential neighborhood? How about some small to medium-sized trees? There are many species that have wonderful ornamental characteristics and still provide shade and privacy. Here are a few to consider:

Small Trees (10-25 ft tall)

Amur Maple (*Acer tataricum* spp. *ginnala*)
Buckeye (*Aesculus* spp.)
Chastetree (*Vitex negundo*)
Crapemyrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*)
Deciduous Holly (*Ilex decidua*)
Desertwillow (*Chilopsis linearis*)
Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)
Hawthorn (*Crataegus* spp.)
Japanese Maple (*Acer palmatum*)
Oklahoma Redbud (*Cercis canadensis* ssp. *texensis* ‘Oklahoma’)
Rose-of-Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*)
Saucer Magnolia (*Magnolia x soulangiana*)
Serviceberry (*Amelanchier* spp.)
Shantung Maple (*Acer truncatum*)
Smoketree (*Cotinus* spp.)
Star Magnolia (*Magnolia stellata*)
Winterberry (*Euonymus bungeana*)
Witchhazel (*Hamamelis* spp.)
Yaupon Holly (*Ilex vomitoria*)

Medium Trees (25-40 ft tall)

American Hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*)
Cedar Elm (*Ulmus crassifolia*)
Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)
Chittimwood (*Bumelia lanuginosa*)
European Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*)
Goldenraintree (*Koelreuteria paniculata*)
Hedge Maple (*Acer campestre*)
Ironwood (*Ostrya virginiana*)
Japanese Pagoda tree (*Sophora japonica*)
Washington Hawthorn (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*)

Western Soapberry (*Sapindus drummondii*)
Whiteshield Osageorange (*Maclura pomifera* 'Whiteshield')

Upcoming Horticulture Events

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

January 14-15, 2011

Horticulture Industries Show
Fort Smith, Arkansas

April 14, 2011

Gardening with Disabilities
Stillwater, OK

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