

Timely Tips for August Gardeners from Calloway's and Cornelius

August is here and needless to say, it is HOT! However Fall is right around the corner and here are a few tips to get you through the scorching days of August and into the "Second Spring" of the South – Fall. This is usually one of the driest months for our region, and rainfall may be sparse. With new watering restrictions in place, when and how you water becomes even more important.

Make the best use of the water you have by watering early in the morning before the wind speeds pick up. Otherwise, much of the water will evaporate before the plants get to use it. To further avoid excess evaporation, use a sprinkler that produces large drops of water instead of a fine mist. Plants need about one inch of water each week during this long summer period. If you have heavy clay soil adjust the timing of the irrigation zones to make sure water is not running off the landscape. Your irrigation schedule should be adjusted to allow for slow infiltration of the water. Be a WISE – keep water on the landscape.

Soil that is exposed can heat up to more than 100 degrees Fahrenheit. This is hot enough to kill those tender root hairs near the surface. Three to four inches of mulch can make the soil 10 to 20 degrees cooler. Besides reducing soil temperature, mulches also conserve water by reducing evaporation, often up to 65 percent.

August is the last month to plant a new lawn before winter temperatures arrive. Newly-installed lawns need at least six to eight weeks to establish a healthy root system.

Prune roses back, but do not remove more than one-third of the plant. Prune and remove spent blooms on annuals and perennials to encourage continuous blooming well into fall.

Tomato and Peppers planted earlier this year will not set fruit during the heat of the summer, even though they may still be flowering. If the plants remain healthy, they will set fruit again once the temperatures stay below 90 degrees. Sidedress established healthy plants with fertilizer and keep watered to encourage new growth. Set out tomato transplants; look for early maturing variety (65 to 75 days). Our average first freeze is mid-November and tomato maturity slows down as the days get cool and cloudy.

There are no Clinics scheduled for August – Stop by your nearest Calloway's or Cornelius Nursery for friendly expert advice from one of our Texas Certified Nursery Professionals.

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