



August 2018

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Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

We are enjoying a beautiful and busy summer at The Gardens at Elm Bank. Perhaps you were able to join us at one of our free events in July- Free Fun Friday, Shakespeare on the Lawn (which moved off the lawn for fear of rain), or Arts on the Green. Staff and volunteers have been working hard to offer these fabulous events, and we're so glad to have welcomed thousands of participants!

There is still time to take in a summer event! On Thursday, August 16, we'll be hosting the fourth annual Goddesses in the Gardens. This fun event celebrates the harvest, with veggie tastings, kids activities, and live music. Bring your friends and a picnic. The event is free, and we'll be selling beer, wine and other beverages. In the gardens, 5:30-8 p.m. (Rain date is August 23)

Thank you to all of our members who supported us through The Boston Globe GRANT program. Over \$2,000 worth of vouchers were redeemed, which we can use to promote our mission and events!

My gratitude also goes to everyone who has visited and who has brought friends and family to The Gardens at Elm Bank this season! The gardens look better than ever, and I hope you spend some time here to enjoy them, and to share them with our growing community.

Warm regards,

Kathy

Upcoming Classes & Events:

[Fall Planting Workshop](#)

Saturday, August 4
10:30 a.m. - noon

[Photography Stroll](#)

Thursday, August 9
7 - 8:30 p.m.

[Meditations in Ink with Bruce Iverson: Asian brush painting workshop](#)

Sunday, August 12
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

[Goddesses in the Gardens](#)

Thursday, August 16
5:30 - 8 p.m.

[Perennial Plant Symposium](#)

Tuesday, August 21
9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

[Garden Stroll](#)

Thursday, August 23
11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

[The Sunday Sweat](#)

Sunday, August 26
9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.



Goddesses in the Gardens

Thursday, August 16, 5:30 - 8 p.m.

Join us in the gardens for an evening of music, harvest tastings, and garden tours.

Bring a picnic and friends and enjoy a summer evening surrounded by the beautiful gardens. Kids can discover Weezie's Garden for Children and everyone can try something fresh from our Seed to Table vegetable garden! Live music by: What's Goin' On: R&B, Soul, Blues, and Jazz, Featuring vocalist **Nicole Webster**. **Free to all!**

Wine, beer, and other beverages will be sold.

For questions about the event, please visit: [our website](#) or email: arodrigues@masshort.org

Announcing: 2018 Northeast Region's Perennial Plant Symposium Lineup

Tuesday, August 21, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Presented by Massachusetts Horticultural Society & the Perennial Plant Association, the regional PPA symposium is open to all levels of gardeners and professionals. This year's symposium includes four presentations led by some of the perennial industry's best! **Sign up by August 12 to get Early Bird pricing.**

Attendees may receive 1 MCH credit, 4 APLD CEUs, or Master Gardener continuing education hours.



Bobbie Schwartz, Owner Bobbie's Green Thumb:
"Garden Renovation: Transform Your Yard into the Garden of Your Dreams"

Landscapes, just like houses, sometimes need makeovers but homeowners are often stymied about how and where to begin. They need to know how to evaluate what they have, decide what they want, and put together a plan of action. This talk guides them through the process, offering strategies and advice: How to start, what questions to ask, setting goals, priorities, and budget,

evaluating the existing landscape, balancing time vs. money, and discussing whether to hire a professional in order to actualize one's vision. In addition, some success stories demonstrate what can be accomplished.



C.L. Fornari, Author and Host of GardenLine and Plantrama podcasts:
"Shade Gardening"

Successful gardening in shady locations is a matter of knowing the best plants, making good design decisions, and getting creative with assorted colorful solutions. The talk addresses all three with emphasis on underused plants and the recognition that each shady garden is unique.



Deborah Trickett, Owner of The Captured Garden:
"Power Couples: Perennial pairings for attention-getting gardens and containers"

Perennials are perfect for adding beauty to gardens and containers. But are there some perennials that work better together than others? Are there some pairings that, like the power couples of Hollywood and industry, just naturally cause heads to turn? Join Deborah Trickett, owner of The Captured Garden, as

she shares some of her favorite Power Couples - perennial combinations that will get your gardens and containers noticed.



Nancy Lawson, Author of The Humane Gardener: Nurturing a Backyard Habitat for Wildlife:
"The Humane Gardener: Nurturing Habitat for Wildlife"

Why do we call some insects "beneficial" while others are "pests"? Why are some plants considered "desirable" while others are "weeds"? In this myth-busting talk, learn how common growing methods divide the natural world into false dichotomies and

perpetuate misperceptions about the wild species living among us. Discover practical ways to put humane gardening philosophies into action by protecting wildlife nurseries, eliminating unintended hazards, nurturing plants that provide food and shelter, and humanely resolving conflicts with mammals and other commonly misunderstood creatures.

Early Bird Registration is Open until August 12: \$99 before August 12, \$125 after

[**Learn More and Register Here**](#)

August Education Programs



This summer we have several classes intended to help you appreciate the gardens and plant world for their artistic design and beauty, we hope to see you in the gardens!

On Thursday, August 9, at 7 p.m. take a tour with Garden Educator Melissa Pace, and learn how to use your phones and tablets to capture breathtaking photos of plants and landscapes! Join us for a **photography stroll**, and [**register today!**](#)

On Sunday, August 12, Bruce Iverson will lead a six-hour workshop on the art of **Asian Brush Painting** and focus on the orchid. This workshop is for those interested in learning and using traditional tools and techniques.

Iverson will lead step-by-step demonstrations and hands-on brush painting projects to help you explore this ancient and elegant art and leave class with two completed works. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. [**Must pre-register.**](#)

Finally, on Thursday, August 23, join Gardens Curator, David Fiske, for a mid-day **walk through The Gardens at Elm Bank**. He will introduce you to the garden beds, and open your eyes to design

elements that you could adopt in your own landscapes. He will also take time to identify some of the plants and help you to understand their growth habits and what we take into consideration to make them thrive. Only \$5 per member, [let us know you're coming!](#)

From the Stacks:

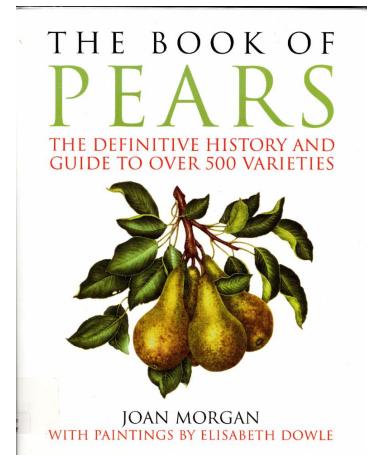
By Maureen T. O'Brien,
Library Manager

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

- Miles Kington (1941-2008)

Fruit heralds our seasons, starting with fresh local strawberries in spring, followed by melons, peaches, pears, raspberries, and blueberries in summer. Autumn brings us a bounty of apples, pears, grapes and cranberries. In winter, we are left to scour our pantries and freezers for preserved fruit or roam the grocery aisles for imported varieties, especially citrus.

What is a fruit? Botanically speaking, a fruit is a seed-bearing structure that develops from the ovary of a flowering plant, whereas vegetables are all other plant parts, such as roots, leaves and stems. However, many plants that are botanically speaking fruit are considered vegetables in the culinary world, including tomatoes, eggplants and bell peppers. This paradox was addressed by the Supreme Court in the 1893 case of [Nix v. Heddon](#). The court adopted the ordinary (culinary) meaning of the word “tomato” and declared for tariff purposes that a tomato is a vegetable thus giving credence to our lay characterization of tomatoes today.



Fruits have been valued throughout history, from offerings to gods, a lover or as a special treat. It symbolizes youth, abundance or fertility. In other contexts, fruit represents earthly pleasures, carnality, gluttony and temptation. Fruit is a frequent subject in art dating back 3000 years and the subject of legend, e.g., the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden, the magic apple in *The Arabian Nights* and the apple in “The Odyssey.” Prominent poets such as [Robert Frost](#), Emily Dickinson, [Robert Campion](#), [D.H. Lawrence](#), [Seamus Heaney](#) and [Rudyard Kipling](#) all wrote poems about fruit.

Regardless of what we call them, one thing we do know is that fruit is good for us. It is an excellent source of vitamins and minerals, and plays a role in preventing vitamin C and vitamin A deficiencies. People who eat fruit as part of an overall healthy diet have a reduced risk of chronic diseases.

Featured Book

The Library has many books and folios that feature fruits. In fact, the founders of the Society considered fruit horticulture to be one of the primary purposes of its mission. At its founding in 1829, the first Standing Committee created by the Society was “on fruit trees, fruits, etc.”

To have charge of whatever relates to the multiplication of fruit trees and vines, by seed, scions, buds, layers, suckers or other modes; the introduction of new varieties; the various methods of pruning and raising them, and whatever relates to their culture, and that of all other fruits; the recommendations of objects for premiums, and the awarding of them.

This month's featured book is [The Book of Pears: The Definitive History and Guide to Over 500 Varieties](#) by Joan Morgan (White River Junction: Chelsea Green Publishing, 2015). It is beautifully illustrated with 40 watercolor paintings by Elisabeth Dowle, who is one of the world's most respected botanical artists and an expert in depicting food plants, particularly fruit. Morgan's book covers everything you would want to know about pears and more. It includes a detailed history of the pear, a directory of pear varieties and summary information on growing and cooking with pears.

While the book is a scholarly study of the genus pear (*Pyrus*), there is plenty to keep the lay reader

engrossed. Its approachable and engaging prose is illustrated by its opening lines

Pears, at their most perfect are sweet, juicy and perfumed. Their 'buttery' flesh, which melts in our mouth like butter, glistens with juice; it can be sugary yet lemony, and scented with fragrances reminiscent of rosewater, musk, vanilla and other aromatics.

Doesn't that make you want to go eat a pear?

In the Windows – Fruit!

This month the Library windows feature books on fruits.

At the Society's Gardens at Elm Bank, we have both cultivated and wild fruits. As our horticulturist Hannah Traggis reminded me

...every flower that gets pollinated produces a fruit! But fruit in the traditional culinary sense, we also have! The Herb Society has a beautiful fruiting quince tree. The children's garden has a Montmorency cherry and mulberry tree and a strawberry patch. There are wild mulberries growing behind the mansion as you go down Mansion Road and the vegetable garden has several potted fruit trees, including two espaliered pears and two espaliered apples.

The next time you visit, plan to go on a fruit exploration of our grounds. Check out the cherry, peach, and nectarine trees planted along the soccer fence last year. There are wild blackberries in the hedgerows all around the property. While you are here, visit the Library and check out a book on fruit!

Our Collections are Growing...

Since its inception in 1829, the Library relied on the generosity of its members to build its Collections. We thank the estate of the late Mollie Traggis (Hannah's mother) for its generous donation of periodicals focusing on flower arranging. Why would the Library collect books and periodicals on flower arranging? It is an art form that utilizes horticultural materials and dates back to at least the Egyptians in 2800 B.C. Since its inception the Society has been interested in floral arrangements and display. Its first anniversary celebration in 1930, was "tastefully ornamented" with festoons of flowers, plants, bouquets and baskets of fruit. These periodicals will inspire current and future arrangers as well as serve as a useful historical reference.

Mollie Traggis loved flowers, plants and gardening. She pursued the art of horticulture in all its forms, studying many schools of Japanese and American floral design, landscape design and the cultivation of plants specializing in hostas, daylilies, and herbs. Mollie was an active member in many societies and clubs including the Garden Club Federation of Massachusetts, National Garden Clubs, Inc., the Southeast Design and Horticulture Study Group, Creative Flower Arrangers of America, World Association of Flower Arrangers, Ikebana International, Ikenobo and Sogetsu Ikebana Societies, and the Wareham Garden Club.

The Library is open on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., at other times by chance or appointment. Before you venture over, we suggest you email mobrien@masshort.org or call 617-933-4912 on days the Library is not open. A benefit of membership allows members to borrow our recent books. You may return your borrowed books at the Visitors Center.

Volunteer with Us!

Check out our other [volunteer opportunities](#) for the summer. We hope you can join us!

Is your business or group looking for nonprofit volunteer opportunities? We invite you to join Mass Hort for a [team building day](#) in The Gardens at Elm Bank.

To learn more, contact:

Amy Rodrigues, Volunteer Engagement Manager, arodrigues@masshort.org,



Sweet Pepperbush

By R. Wayne Mezitt

Mass Hort Trustee Chairman



Among my favorite summer pleasures, golfing, bicycling or walking in the woods, is experiencing the heady, honey-peppery perfume of *Clethra alnifolia*, commonly and aptly known as sweet pepperbush or summersweet. In bloom from late July and well into August, individual white florets open progressively along the 3-6" upright spikes (technically "racemes"), permeating the air. *Clethra* in the wild is often camouflaged by the forest canopy, so becoming engulfed by such a uniquely enchanting aroma can be an inspiring mystery, particularly enjoyable on those oppressively-humid

midsummer days.

A densely-branched, deciduous and suckering shrub, *Clethra* is native to swampy woodlands and moist areas along the coast and inland from Maine to Florida. Generally maturing at 6 feet or more, its flowers attract pollinators like butterflies, bees and hummingbirds, and it is resistant to deer browsing. Late to leaf-out in spring, often waiting until May, the glossy dark green 3-4" summer leaves take on attractive shades of yellow to golden brown in autumn before dropping. Its "pepperbush" name derives from its numerous 1/8" diameter dark brown seed capsules which persist into winter.

Although it prefers moist soil conditions, *Clethra* and its cultivars adapt well in most local gardens (as long as the soil doesn't dry out), full sun or partial shade, even tolerating roadside and seaside conditions. Because it forms flowers on new growth, it can be cut-back most anytime, ideally in late fall or early spring, without sacrificing bloom. The species and many cultivars tend to be stoloniferous –spreading by underground stems – especially in moist locations, and this can be a benefit as they are easily maintained in your garden.

In addition to the species, several recent *Clethra alnifolia* cultivars offer features compatible for many gardens. '**Paniculata**' is similar in most aspect to the species, but with larger and more abundant flowers. The cultivar '**Vanilla Spice**' grows to about six feet tall and 3-5 feet wide, featuring large, very fragrant flowers. '**Ruby Spice**' is a **Cary Award** winning selection, reaching 5-6 feet high and wide with fragrant, rosy-pink flowers, the darkest yet available.

Several more compact-growing cultivars are especially suitable for smaller gardens. '**Hummingbird**' matures at about 3 feet high and wide and blooms more profusely than the species. Heavy-flowering with stiff upright flower racemes, '**Sixteen Candles**' grows in a compact mound shape half the size of the species, with dark green leaves and less tendency to spread underground. Even more compact, '**Sugartina**' grows to less than three feet high, and wider than high. Try some of these cultivars and bring the fragrant enjoyment of "summer-in-the forest" into your own yard!

R. Wayne Mezitt is a third generation nurseryman and a Massachusetts Certified Horticulturist now chairman of Weston Nurseries of Hopkinton and Chelmsford, MA and owner of "Hort-Sense", a horticultural advisory business. Wayne currently serves as Trustee chairman for Massachusetts Horticultural Society.

Midsummer Musings

Reviewed by Patrice Todisco

As we enter the dog days of summer relax with a Pimms and a trio of recently published books from Great Britain.

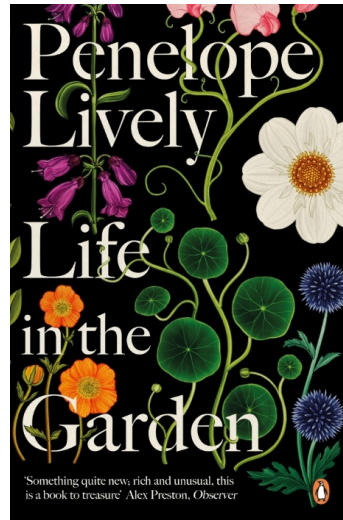
Life in the Garden

by Penelope Lively

Fig Tree Press: An Imprint of Penguin Random House UK, 2017

There is a longstanding tradition of writers who write about gardens and the role that gardening has played in their creative lives. To this canon add Booker Prize-winning novelist Penelope Lively, whose two central activities in life alongside writing have been reading and gardening.

Lively's childhood was spent in Egypt where she grew up in an extensive English-style garden inspired by one created by her grandmother in Somerset. Enriched by spending time in both, she finds herself genetically predisposed to garden. That her current London garden is but a small urban space is irrelevant. For Lively, gardening is a particular and essential passion and she has acquired both a gardening persona and the vision that goes with it.



Combining garden history and personal musings, *Life in the Garden*, uses fictional gardens as prompts to determine what gardens and gardening have meant over time for Lively and other writers. It is divided into five sections "Reality and Metaphor," "The Written Garden," "The Fashionable Garden," "Time, Order and the Garden," "Style and the Garden," and "Town and Country." Each chapter is an independent essay, to be savored on its own accord.

Lively is, at best, a realist who takes great delight in debunking the myth of gardening as a privileged pursuit. As a self-professed "amateur" she sees the world through what she describes as garden time, be that time spent "hands-on in the garden, gardening in the mind, planning for the future, (or) conjuring up virtual gardens."

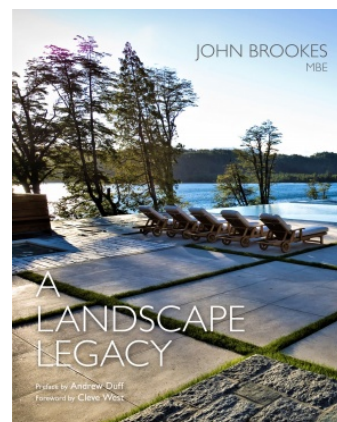
Whatever gardens and gardening mean to you Lively most likely has it covered in *Life in the Garden*. And according to her, you'll not only be happier but will live longer, too.

A Landscape Legacy

by John Brookes

Pimpernel Press Ltd, London 2018

Many years ago, during my first year of graduate school studying landscape architecture, I wrote John Brookes MBE a letter. At the time I was trying to determine how (and if) my studies related in a meaningful way to gardening and garden design. While he did, much to my surprise, write a thoughtful response, I did not solve this particular dilemma, and to my enduring regret never found time to accept Brookes' offer to take a class at Denmans, his gardening school in West Sussex.



Regrettably Brookes, who for more than 50 years, taught garden design and horticulture passed away this year. During his remarkable career, Brookes, described as the man who made modern garden, traveled the world designing thousands of gardens (and

landscapes) and sharing his philosophy and design methodology through teaching and the publication of more than 25 books.

A Landscape Legacy, his last, traces the arc of his career and serves as a personal reflection of his life as a garden (and landscape) designer. Its sixteen chapters follow Brooke from his childhood in Durham (where he predictably gardened with his family and developed a keen affinity for the landscape) through his education in horticulture at Reading University.

An apprenticeship with Sylvia Crowe and Brenda Colvin followed and in 1962 Brookes, now on his own, won a competition to design the first garden at the Chelsea Flower Show that was about design and not just horticulture. Brookes' career was launched, and it is safe to say he never looked back.

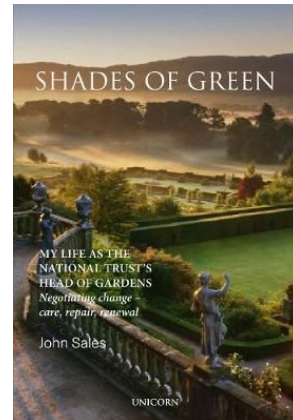
Brookes' many influences included twentieth-century art and experiencing different cultures and landscapes through travel. In *A Landscape Legacy* he invites the reader to share in his personal journey with the gardens and landscape he designed serving as a guide.

Shades of Green: My Life as the National Trust's Head of Gardens

by John Sales

Unicorn Publishing Group LLP, London 2018

John Sales has had a fortunate life which he generously shares in his book, *Shades of Green: My Life as the National Trust's Head of Gardens*. A memoir of his tenure overseeing the cultivation, management and conservation of all of the gardens and landscapes within the Trust's portfolio, it is both practical and philosophical, providing an engaging first-hand look at fifty individual properties and the extraordinary range of people dedicated to their care.



Sales career spanned the arc of change and development in the field of horticulture, the elevation of landscapes and gardens as important places in their own right and the acknowledgement of garden history as a unique discipline. Beginning with a profile of Westbury Court in Gloucestershire, the first full-scale restoration of a garden ever undertaken in Britain, *Shades of Green*, chronicles Sales' triumphs and tragedies, including the irrevocable impact of the devastating storm of 1987 upon Britain's great landscapes.

Throughout it all, Sales is a knowledgeable guide (despite the fact that covering less than a third of the properties owned by the Trust, Sales makes it clear that this is not a guidebook) willing to share humorous insights about his well-known counterparts as well as patrons to whom an entire chapter, "Encounters with Donors", is dedicated. Ever the realist, he willingly acknowledges that garden restorations "say as much about the time they are carried out as of the history of the garden and its makers."

Engagingly written, *Shades of Green*, is an important record of both a patient student and effortless teacher whose pleasure in his work shines through on every page. If you have ever wondered why they kept all of those rhododendrons at Stourhead or what exactly Churchill was doing at Chartwell, Sales will fill you in.

Patrice Todisco writes about parks and gardens at the award-winning blog:

www.landscapenotes.com



The Squash of August

By Neal Sanders,
Leaflet Contributor

I swear it wasn't there yesterday morning. I picked our garden thoroughly and, especially,

the zucchini. I harvested six perfect squash which we used ourselves and shared with our neighbors.

What remained on our four plants were a dozen 'fingerlings' – zucchinis roughly two or three inches long. Cute little baby squash, still with their fading yellow flowers at one end. They lay, swaddled among the leaves of their mother plant, in a kind of nursery. All that was missing were little signs saying *'come back in a few days...'*



This morning, I returned to the garden and there it was. This behemoth. The Gargantua of the plant kingdom. A zucchini so preposterously large it couldn't be real. Yet, there it was.

For several years, we played a cute trick on our neighbors. They had a tiny vegetable garden growing by their front door... in too much shade. It included a lone squash plant that barely flowered and never produced fruit. And so, every morning as we returned from our own, sun-filled garden laden with veggies, we 'salted' their garden with some of our surplus. Our neighbor's two daughters would venture out each morning and squeal with delight at the bounty, never noticing that the tomatoes, beans, and squash were not attached to any plant.

But this guy was still firmly on the vine. While not exactly requiring the Jaws of Life to extract it, there was considerable grunting (on my part) involved to twist it out of its position without also removing much of the plant. The other zucchini had grown by a predictable rate and will be a respectable seven inches long with a six- or seven-inch circumference when picked. 'Big Boy' is 16 inches long and eleven inches around. Per the photo, it weighs in at a hulking 3.4 pounds. If it could box, it would be classified as a super-heavyweight.

I'm sure that many of you reading this are thinking to yourselves, *'for heaven's sake, he just missed it... let it go already...'*. To which I respond that *I swear it wasn't there yesterday*.

And science backs me up on that. Or, at least it sort of backs me up. According to the SF Gate website, given an inch of water a week, a zucchini can grow two inches a day. And that's in cold, damp San Francisco where the sun hasn't been seen since the Giants moved from the Polo Grounds. Meanwhile, here in eastern Massachusetts, we were awash in rain in July, and the typical dewpoint for the past two weeks has been in the 70s, meaning you can wring water out of the air at will. What should that do to a zucchini's growth rate? Triple it? Quadruple it? Easily, I think.

Finally, according to *Food and Wine* magazine, August 8 is **National Sneak Some Zucchini Onto Your Neighbor's Porch Night**. We're already stockpiling bags of the stuff. 'Big Boy' is going to find an appreciative home.

Neal Sanders is the author of twelve mysteries, most with horticultural themes. His latest, Fatal Equity, was published in March and is available at Amazon and at bookstores. You can read more of Neal's writing at www.thehardingtonpress.com.



August Horticultural Hints

*by Betty Sanders,
Leaflet Contributor*

Spring Bulbs. Even as 2019 mail order catalogs arrive, spring bulbs are starting to show up in nurseries. It is much too early to put bulbs in the ground now. You need to wait until the ground has cooled off in October – or even November – to plant. If you chose to buy from a nursery, store your bulbs in a cool dark place until soil temperatures are appropriate.

Catalogs offer a far larger selection and the bulbs won't be sent to you until close to planting time. Every year I find unfamiliar bulbs that stretch the bulb season with both earlier and later blooms. Many of these bulbs can thrive in those hard-to-plant areas that are too shady or too wet for the more commonly used ones.

Summer Harvest. Pick frequently now because between heat and higher-than-normal rain, baseball-size squash and fat-thumb-sized green beans will be the less tasty result if you don't get at them.

If you planted onions and garlic in the spring, the harvest begins now. Pull garlic as soon as the stalk has turned brown and bent over. Pull the cloves and dry them thoroughly in the sun – or under cover if there's any chance of rain. Once dry, hang them in mesh bags where they will get good air circulation.

Onions can be pulled now also. Leave the tops on and place them in a warm dry place. They are ready for storage when the skin feels dry and the tops have withered. Any onions with thick stalks (necks) will not store as well so use them first. Store onions and garlic where it dry and there is good air circulation.

Replant your vegetable garden It's August and your lettuce and spinach went to seed weeks ago, the beets and turnips are long gone, and the bean beetles finished off the green beans. So it's time to replant. It's a great time to put in peas (yes in August), lettuce, spinach, arugula, and beets.

Wait to do anything to your lawn July's heavy rains mean your lawn is likely still green, and not stressed this summer. Don't start any fertilizing or reseeding until the weather cools in September or even October. Grass does not like the heat, but many of the common lawn weeds do and will use the fertilizer to get a jump on the grass.

Survey your garden. Did everything pretty much bloom in April, May and June? Long-blooming summer plants such as monarda (bee balm), nepeta (catmint), veronica, coreopsis and shasta daisies will look great through the summer heat as well as attracting pollinators such as butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard.

And don't forget some 'vertical' flowers. Native honeysuckle blooms all summer long as do many clematis. Native oak-leaf hydrangeas bloom in July-August. Summersweet bushes (*Clethra alnifolia*) are in bloom now and will follow up with great fall color. Oxydendron trees push out panicles that, after the white flowers are gone, look like decorations in winter.



Betty Sanders is a widely known speaker and writer on gardening topics. You can read more of her horticultural advice at www.BettyOnGardening.com

Connect with us



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