

August Gardening Tips

Compiled by the Fairfax County Master Gardeners from the Monthly Gardening Tips on the Virginia Cooperative Extension web site, <http://www.ext.vt.edu/resources/>

Now is the time to **decide on your garden plan for next year**, since fall is the best time to plant or transplant most bulbs, perennials, shrubs, and trees. Place catalog orders now for fall planting.

Common pests: (1) Spider mites thrive in hot, dry weather. They feed on plant juices, leaving webs on the underside of leaves and laying their eggs in the webs. The simplest control is to hose them off the foliage. For severe problems, spray with an approved chemical according to label directions; call our horticulture help line (703-324-8556) for current recommendations. (2) If your euonymus is dropping leaves, check the stems and undersides of the leaves for tiny, needle-like, white insects and a scattering of small, brown, shell-like shapes. This is euonymus scale (males are white; females brown). Again, call our horticulture help line for recommendations.

Pull out and dispose of **dead or dying plants** to prevent a build-up of disease and insect problems. The longer they stay in the garden, the greater the chance for carrying over problems to next year.

Many **plants look wilted** on hot afternoons because their roots can't take up water fast enough to compensate for the water evaporating from the leaves. If there is enough soil moisture, they will recover by late afternoon. If they don't, water deeply first thing next morning.

If **azaleas** look yellowed or pale, check the soil pH -- they need acid soil because alkalinity locks up iron needed for green color. Get a **soil test kit** from any County library or from one of our Master Gardener plant clinics across the County, and get a soil analysis from Virginia Cooperative Extension.

Preserve **summer herbs** by chopping them into an ice-cube tray; cover with water and freeze. Store the cubes in plastic bags in the freezer, and add them to dishes as you cook. Let your favorite herbs in the garden self-sow for next year, or collect and save the seeds for spring planting.

For **dried winter arrangements**, bright yellow, orange, pink and blue flowers retain the best color. Red and purple flowers darken; white flowers usually turn buff or tan.