

# NORTHWOODS YARD & GARDEN

Weekly Column

July 22, 2024

## Midseason in Yards & Gardens

Like it or not, days are already starting to shorten, and we have advanced into the second half of the growing season. Late July gardening calls for some planting and adjusting maintenance practices on some plants.

With lots of rain and cool weather to start the season, some crops did not fare well or perhaps were not planted at all. There is still time for planting numerous vegetables. Beets, carrots, lettuce, snap beans, spinach, summer squash, and radishes are among the crops that can be planted now for late summer and fall harvest. Seeds germinate rapidly since soils are warm and early plant development is usually fast. As always, water if the conditions are dry.

Tomatoes typically flourish in warm late summer weather and as fruit starts developing, watch for blossom-end rot, which was quite common last year. Fluctuating soil moisture levels results in the bottom end of the tomato turning black and rotting. Reduce this by maintaining consistent soil moisture via regular watering and mulching the soil.

Our wet growing season has been favorable for tomato leaf diseases such as Septoria leaf spot and early blight. Leaves on lower branches develop dark brown or blackish spots and then turn yellow or brown.

Remove infected leaves promptly to help reduce spread. Mulching reduces soil splash onto the plant, which can reduce leaf diseases. Fungicides can also provide some protection, but do not cure the problem. Look for fungicides labeled for tomatoes; read and follow product labels carefully.

Now is a good time for some annual flower maintenance to keep them showy for the balance of summer. As flowers fade, remove (deadhead) them so plants keep producing more. Pinching back often rejuvenates annuals, resulting in more tidy growth and increased blooms. Apply some balanced garden fertilizer, especially for hanging baskets and containers. Water as needed to keep plantings colorful.

As days continue to shorten, trees and shrubs are already starting the dormancy process and preparing for winter. Although still green, the most significant growth for 2024 is over and new growth should not be stimulated. This means avoiding major pruning and fertilizing practices for the balance of summer. There is still time for planting trees and shrubs, however.

Finally, if you have not yet addressed lawn renovation plans, it is best to hold off. Lawn grasses do not actively grow in hot weather. Late August is better as grass develops best under cooler conditions of September. Watch for a lawn renovation column here very soon.

Interested in learning more about  
Horticulture in Iron County?  
Feel free to contact:

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