

JULY

Practice plant succession in the vegetable garden. For instance, when early radishes are pulled out or cool season arugula, lettuce, and cilantro start bolting (flowering and going to seed), replace with frost sensitive plants such as tomatoes, peppers, basil or beans; when broccoli is done producing in August, plant carrots, arugula, and lettuce for a fall/winter harvest.

Fertilize the vegetables in the garden with an organic fertilizer such as seaweed and fish emulsion. Bushes, trees, perennials, and herbs will not ordinarily require extra fertilizer if compost was added when they were originally planted.

Deadheading (pinching or cutting off the flowers that have finished blooming before they produce seeds) can stimulate some ornamental plants such as coreopsis, balloon flower, everblooming roses, and many annuals to produce flowers again. It also keeps the plants vigorous because energy is not used by the plant to produce fruit and seed. You can also achieve this effect by cutting flowers with short stems for indoor bouquets. Be sure to consider whether you may want some of the plants to self-seed for next year's garden.

AUGUST

Harvest the produce from your vegetable garden and dry, can, freeze or give away extras to lucky neighbors. Now is a good time to try some vegetarian recipes.

Buy locally. Carry your reusable bags to farmer's markets or farm stands to purchase the fresh bounty of summer and fall. Locally grown food tastes better, requires less energy for transport, and is healthier. Fewer pesticides are used on small family farms with their diverse plantings than on large commercial farms where plants are grown in monocultures (for instance, all corn or all spinach) on an industrial scale; and you can ask the farmer directly whether or not she uses pesticides and what kinds.

Stop pruning woody evergreens. The new growth that will be stimulated won't have time to harden (mature) and may die back in Winter.