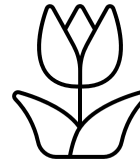
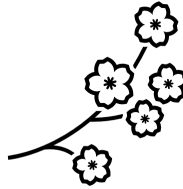

WHAT ARE OUR STAR GARDENERS DOING IN AUGUST?



Janet Schulz: Weed, water if the rain stops, keep a journal as to what annuals did fine and which did not. Order spring blooming bulbs. Some of the best are sold out quickly. Continue to fertilize annuals. Try to find some shade to relax in and enjoy the fruits of your labors whether visual or edible. There are no mistakes in gardening, just other opportunities to try something different or do things a different way.

Sharon Ma: With the heat, many potted containers needed to be watered everyday and sometimes twice a day. I put a tray under the container to hold water, so they are not as stressed. I sprinkle some mosquito granules, a BT that kills larvae, into the tray to control mosquitoes from breeding.

August is the prime time to divide Bearded & Siberian iris. Here is tips from Bruce Crawford, Manager of Horticulture, Morris County Parks Commission:

When lifting Bearded Iris, check the rhizomes to make certain they are solid. Divide the rhizomes into sections that each contain one fan of foliage, cutting the foliage back to 4-6". Let the wounded or cut end of the rhizome callus over by letting it sit in the sun on a table for 2-4 days before replanting. When replanting, make certain the upper 1/2 of the Bearded Iris rhizome is above the soil and exposed to the sun. Also, orient the fan or growing point of the rhizome in the direction you wish the plant to expand or grow in the years to come. For fibrous rooted Iris, like Siberian Iris discard the central and oldest portion of the crown and cut the remainder into 4 to 6 pieces before replanting.

Paul Sisko: This weather is extremely stressful for almost all our plants. Check your watering system to make sure all heads are spraying where you want them to water. Don't water during the day. Very early morning is best. Use timers if you don't like getting up before sunrise. :). Deadhead regularly to encourage new growth on flowers. Prune shrubs new shoots when they get too long and are way beyond the shape you want the shrub to be.

From now to frost is when you'll see how large a lot of plants have grown so make notes as to what to either cut back, transplant or separate in the fall. I like to make notes on white plastic stakes and hide them within the shrubs so when I'm cutting things back it acts as a reminder to do the things I need to do.

If you grow veggies it is better to pick on the side of being a bit smaller than larger. With tomatoes, pick a bit earlier than fully ripe on the vine. The cow birds only like real ripe fruit / veggies. Watch for discoloration of leaves and remove them as that could be a sign of some form of disease.

I have a lot of Spotted Lantern Fly Nymphs. I have not found a spray yet to kill them instantly but am in touch with people who are experimenting with different natural solutions. When I get more news, I will share it.

A lot of my new plants are doing very well and am even seeing Asters starting to bloom. My later blooming Rudbeckia are going to give me color as some others die off.

All in all, a very busy but pretty summer in the garden.

Keep Blooming,

Nancy Blasius: For those with more tomatoes than you can eat , put excess tomatoes in freezer bags, cutting out stem ends before you do. You can then cook with them as needed throughout the winter. When you thaw them , the skin slips right off, eliminating the need to dip in boiling water first. I make several batches of sauce with them when I am ready to cook. I freeze it in recycled yogurt containers. I also keep some tomatoes whole to use in soups or other recipes requiring canned tomatoes.

I also make lots of pesto with basil ends I cut off plants to keep from flowering . This pesto I freeze in jelly jars, easy to thaw in the microwave for use on pesto toast, sandwiches, pasta, etc. I have learned not to just pinch out the flowers but to cut down several nodes on each flowering tip. This makes for bushy plants. Just pinching the flower off makes the plant want to produce more flowers.

What a relief to finally be able to spend hours outside in comfort again!

Joan Rottkamp: Joe Pye weed, anise hyssop, and mountain mint are blooming in our yard right now. Pollinators just love them and so do we! Anise hyssop and mountain mint are in the mint family and deer have never eaten ours. Do you know that most mints have square stems?

