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August Gardening

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Since August brings us such hot temperatures try to spread the work out so that you can work outside in the early morning and/or evening hours. If you are planning to grow a vegetable garden this fall, now is the time to start preparing for it. Here are some ideas of things to do this month.

- * To prepare for the prime vegetable gardening season that is just around the corner remove any spent vegetable plants. Then add a 4 inch layer of compost or aged manure over the entire garden area to enrich the soil.

- * This month you can plant the following vegetables; pole beans; broccoli; celery; collards; sweet corn; eggplant; onion - bunching and multiplier; sweet potatoes; peppers; pumpkin; summer squash; okra; Southern peas and watermelons.

- * Fertilize your peaches, apples, and grapes.

- * The following vegetable seeds can be sown now for a September planting; lima, pole, snap and shell beans; sweet corn; cucumbers; eggplant; peppers; Southern and English peas; summer squash; tomatoes; broccoli; cabbage; celery; collards; endive/escarole; lettuce; turnips and mustard.

- * Immediately after fruiting, both blueberries and blackberries need pruning. All the pruning should be done fast - by early August! Thin out the blueberries and trim the plants back to around 4-6 feet (depending upon the variety.) Trim blackberries all the way down to the ground. The new shoots that grow will become next years fruiting canes.

- * Check the mower blades and sharpen them if necessary. While you're at it, you may want to change the oil and air filter too.

- * Prune back overgrown pentas. Root the clippings in water to start new plants.

- * Prune off seed heads from crape myrtles to encourage more blooms.

- * Transplant your rooted poinsettia cuttings into a six inch pot. Begin fertilizing weekly with a half strength houseplant fertilizer.

- * Remember – DO NOT prune your gardenias, camellias, or azaleas this late - you will be cutting off the flower buds that will bloom next spring.

- * Want to add some flowers to a sunny spot then try; wax begonias, coleus,

impatiens, marigolds, celosia, gazania, gallardia, cosmos, purslane, sunflower and salvia.

* Some herbs that can be planted this month include; chives, mints, oregano, cardamom, ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), Mexican tarragon and rosemary.

* Bulbs, for sunny areas, that you can plant now include; African iris (*Morea* spp.), Aztec lily (*Sprekelia formosissima*), Snowflake (*Leucojum* spp.), Spider lily (*Hymenocallis* sp.) and *Watsonia*.

* Bulbs for full sun to partially shady areas include; amaryllis, white butterfly ginger (*Hedychium coronarium*), Calla (*Zantedeschia* spp.), *Narcissus*, Shell ginger (*Alpinia zerumbet*) and rain lily (*Zephyranthes* spp.)

* Finish up the pruning of Wisteria by the end of this month.

* This is the last month to prune poinsettias this year. Make sure the leaves are a deep green so they can produce beautiful winter color.

* If your bougainvillea is too large then, now is a good time to prune them.

* Want colorful plants for a shady area then try impatiens, crossandra, coleus, angelwing begonias or caladiums.