

Garden Line - August 2010

by Brent Moon - HPARD Urban Garden Manager

Everything that applied to gardening in July applies to August, as well. Work early and late in the garden when possible, keep your plants mulched and well-watered, and watch out for pests. Some might consider August a good month to stay inside and monitor your garden from the windows of your nice, cool house. While that might work for awhile, the elements and the bugs will eventually get the best of your garden, so slather on your sunscreen, grab your water bottle and mosquito spray, and head out there!

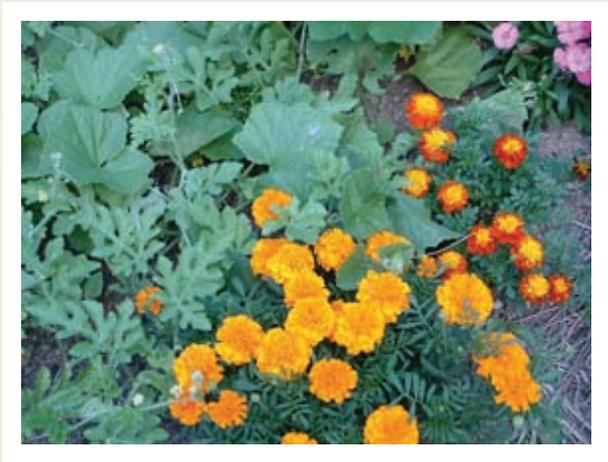


Fall veggie crops to start now include green beans, snap beans, lima beans (aka butter beans), sweet corn, cucumber, cantaloupe, and squash. If you enjoy growing plants from seed, now is a good time to start such crops as broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, and kohlrabi for this fall/winter. Seed potatoes can also be planted now for a harvest later this fall.

On the ornamental side, August is typically when we cut back and divide our iris, which can multiply rapidly. It needs to be divided every few years when you notice them getting crowded or having fewer blooms. Divide them and replant in a sunny location. Consider sharing extras with a friend, or move them to a new area in your landscape.



For those of you who enjoy growing from seed, flowers you can start now include cornflower, larkspur, California poppy, snapdragon, sweet alyssum, blanket flower, calylophus, calendula, and delphiniums, among others. Think cool season ...if it's a cool season flower, now is the time to get your seeds sown.



If some of your summer annuals are starting to look tired and worn out, consider removing them, adding a bit of fresh compost, and planting some marigolds in their place. Marigolds do wonderfully for us in the Houston Parks and Recreation Department from late August all the way up to pansy and viola planting season. Often, they are not plagued by spider mites as they are if planted in the spring and summer. We've had some amazing displays of marigolds in Hermann and Memorial Parks over the past years, and luckily they come in all the shades we associate with fall: yellow, orange, and burgundy. Some varieties to look for include Bonanza,

Discovery, Antigua, and Inca. Don't even think about wasting your money on mums in Houston's climate! Plant some marigolds and you'll never go back to mums again.