



Home Gardener's NEWSLETTER

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What to do in June

- 1. Water deeply** and less frequently to promote deeper rooting. Tomato roots, for instance, can grow an amazing 6 feet deep. Don't just wet the surface. Dig down a few inches with a hand trowel to see if the soil is too wet or too dry.
- 2. Feed your flowers** regularly with *Gro-Power Plus* to prolong and improve blooming. In addition, for roses and many other plants, snipping off spent blooms helps stimulate the plants to produce more flowers.
- 3. Mulch** around plants if you didn't last month, to reduce moisture loss and help keep down weeds.
- 4. Feed your vegetables** with *Gro-Power Plus* for a bumper crop of tasty, healthy food!
- 5. Remove shoots** from the base of grafted plants like roses and fruit trees.



Red, White & Blue

Independence Day is a great time for outdoor activities. Why not start celebrating now by planting in the 4th of July theme colors of red, white and blue? One spectacular design idea is to plant red and white flowers in bright blue pots. You can also blend all three colors in single pots, or fill individual pots with separate colors. Most of the following flowers will give you instant color and bloom beautifully through fall.

Brilliant **red** flowers are produced by geraniums, salvia, verbena, impatiens, gaillardia, zinnias, celosia, and petunias. Plants with red foliage include caladium and begonias.

Impatiens, vinca, alyssum, nemesia, verbena, zinnias, geraniums, and petunias are just a few of the many **white** flowers available. Also try plants with white or variegated foliage such as dusty miller, lambs ear, lamium, cerastium (snow-in-summer), and liriopse.

Blue/purple-hued flowers include lobelia, perennial salvia, cornflower, felicia, ageratum, agapanthus, petunias, scabiosa, baby blue eyes (nemophila), verbena, and nierembergia.

Enjoy the fireworks as your garden explodes with color!

Colorful Foliage for Pots & More

Hey, what's new? Well, look around and you'll see **H**more and more planting beds and containers filled with color—not blooming flowers, but colorful foliage.

Colorful foliage plants have many benefits. They provide instant color and remarkable leaf shapes and textures. They exhibit a lively multi-hued display as soon as they are planted. Foliage plants last longer than many flowering plants and provide a greater volume of color as they grow throughout the season. Another advantage is that most foliage plants require less frequent watering than flowering annuals, and very little deadheading is needed.

Heuchera, flax (phormium), large-leaf begonias, coleus, artemesia, lamium, Persian shield, lime licorice plant, Ipomoea (sweet potato vine), bananas, cannas, caladium, and ornamental grasses are just a few plants you can mix and match to create your original foliage display. Grouping several containers of different sizes makes a strong design statement.

When selecting plants for your foliage container, be sure to consider the color of your house and other permanent plantings. For instance, use lots of burgundy foliage if your house is a sandy color and offset it with a few lime green-leaved plants. Or if something like a brick walkway is the focal point of your yard, repeat the color with rusty-red foliage.

Many indoor plants have interesting foliage—try some outdoors until cold weather comes.



Basil is Everyone's Favorite!

Using herbs in favorite recipes can make the difference **U** between a good dish and a delicious, savory one. Sweet basil is the perfect ingredient in tomato and most pasta dishes, and it must be fresh for the best flavor—so grow your own!

Give basil a warm, sunny garden location, well-drained soil, and ample water. If the soil dries out and the plants begin to droop, water thoroughly and they will revive quickly. Feed basil only occasionally with fertilizer diluted at half strength and pinch the plants often to encourage more growth.

Basil makes a perfect container plant on a deck or patio because of its wonderful fragrance and shallow root system.



SUMMER SALE!

Large 5 gal size \$10.00 each or 3 for \$25!

Agapanthus, Canna Lilies, Society Garlic,
Shrub Roses, and Yellow Daylilies! Mix & Match!

Thru June only—don't miss out!

Plants as Windbreaks



If you find that a type of plant does well in one part of your garden but not in another, check the *wind factor*. Studies at the University of Nebraska showed that drying winds decrease crop yields and seriously affect plant growth. For example, a 15 mph wind delays the maturity of marigolds and reduces their flower size by 50%.

The researchers, using cantaloupe, tested three methods of preventing reduced growth in a windy area: 1) spraying plants an anti-transpirant, 2) dipping plant roots in water-holding polymers, or 3) planting in the lee of a windbreak. Although the first two methods helped, the wind-sheltered plants grew 2-3 times larger than plants in exposed areas.

Contrary to what you may think, solid walls don't make good windbreaks—they cause extensive turbulence on the lee side. Plants, however, make excellent windbreaks, providing protection for a downwind direction equal to 5-7 times their height.

Create a windbreak using plants, using 4-5 rows of deciduous plants or 2-3 rows of evergreens. Place windbreak plantings on the windward side, away from your house, to establish a wide pocket of windless space that acts like insulation. The plants you select should be dense to the ground or underplanted with shorter evergreen shrubs.



Dandy Dandelions

To fill your daily quota of vegetables consumed, look no farther than your own lawn—dandelions!

For years dandelions have been recognized as a valuable food in Europe and parts of Asia. They are extraordinarily rich in vitamin A and other vitamins and minerals. Plus the entire plant is useful in cooking. *Young leaves* can be used in salads or cooked in soups and stews; *mature leaves* make good tea. Use the *flowers* for garnishes, or in making wine. They're also tasty deep-fried treats. Chop and steam, or stirfry, *young roots*. Roast and grind *older roots* to make a caffeine-free coffee.

Believe it or not, some seed companies actually list dandelion seeds in their catalogs, along with growing instructions!

Fruit Trees Not Bearing?



Nearly everyone has been disappointed with a fruit tree that bears little or no fruit. While some trees do not need the help of honeybees to set fruit (these include most citrus, quinces, sour cherries, apricots, peaches, European-type plums, and Italian prunes), most fruit trees require bee pollination. If bees are not present during bloom (continuous rain or unusually cool, cloudy weather can prevent bee movement), fruit set is poor.

Another reason for poor fruit set is that some varieties do not accept their own pollen; they require pollen from another variety in order to bear. If you have the only apple tree in your neighborhood, for instance, you may always get a poor crop until you plant a different variety nearby.

Kiwis and avocados make up another category of plants. These are either male or female, and you must plant both to get a crop.

Other reasons a fruit tree might bear poorly:

- ✓ The tree is too young. Some trees take up to 4 years after planting before they begin to bear fruit.
- ✓ The tree is biennial bearing. Heavy crops one year, when unthinned, weaken the tree and result in light crops the following year. Apricots are a good example.
- ✓ The tree receives too little sunlight or improper moisture or fertilizer.
- ✓ Disease (brown rot or fireblight) killed the flowers, especially in wet springs. Spray at the proper time to prevent this.
- ✓ Poor weather conditions (either frost killed the open blossoms, or in mild-winter areas some varieties don't receive enough chilling).
- ✓ The tree was pruned incorrectly so that the bearing wood was trimmed off.



Pasta Salad with a Twist

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| 1½ cups spiral pasta, cooked | ½ cup carrots, sliced |
| 1 can (8oz) unsweetened pineapple chunks, quartered | ½ cup cucumbers, sliced |
| 1 cup fresh snow peas | 1 Tbsp fresh cilantro, minced |
| | ¼ cup Italian salad dressing |

Drain pineapple, reserving ¼ cup of the juice. In a large bowl, combine pineapple, snow peas, carrot and cucumber slices, and reserved pineapple juice. Mix in pasta, drizzle with salad dressing. Sprinkle on cilantro and toss to coat. Chill and serve this fresh-tasting attractive salad with a fruity twist.

Did You Know?

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? Many plants are referred to as "heirloom plants". These are dependable, tried and true garden plants, usually with an interesting history and desirable qualities that make them cherished by many generations of gardeners. Heirlooms are open pollinated, non-hybrid plants that come true from seed (meaning the seeds produce an exact copy of the original). They must be at least 50 years old from the date they were first introduced—but who's counting??

? The bunchberry dogwood has been declared "the fastest plant on earth" by Williams College researchers. The scientists found that the flowers of this groundcover opened in less than half a millisecond, and shoot their pollen at 800 times the force that astronauts experience at liftoff!

? Sauerkraut and other fermented cabbage products seem to deactivate the avian flu virus in both people and chickens, according to Seoul University in South Korea.

