

## The Garden Corner

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Master Gardeners of Johnson County Missouri

August is probably my least favorite month of the year. The grass is turning brown, most everything in the garden is going to seed, and a lot of perennials and annuals have given all their blooms for the season. Throw in the high heat and humidity and you've got a recipe for hatching a plan to escape to anywhere but here! If you are lucky enough to take a well-deserved vacation now – enjoy yourself - see you when you get back. For all the rest of us, this month is perfect for several chores to keep our gardens in great shape and prepare for next year. Here are a few of the activities on our schedule you might want to include on your own calendar.

Mid-August to mid-September is the perfect time to reseed areas where you have lost grass or are intending to renovate your lawn. I'm not much on the use of chemicals; but, the only way to get a lawn totally free of weeds is to spray. My product of choice is Weed-b-Gone. If you decide to go after the weeds in your lawn and spray to eliminate them, allow at least two weeks before you reseed. For a problem free, well established lawn remember to raise your mower height to a minimum of three inches to allow the grass to grow higher and provide some much needed relief from the hot and dry conditions.

What about the vegetable garden? Starting in August, you can replant short maturing crops to get a second chance at some of your favorite veggies. If you are not going to replant, sowing a cover crop of rye grass will help improve the health and condition of the soil.

As you are walking around surveying your estate, pay particular attention to your bushes and trees. Dead and diseased branches should be pruned. The same goes for suckers – I call them water sprouts. If you have been fertilizing all summer long, stop! Any new, tender growth will not have time to “harden” off before winter. And, as always, keep deadheading your bloomers to get a few more flowers. For your “cane” crops of blackberry and raspberry that have stopped producing their tasty treat, now is a good time to go through your patch and prune out the “fruiting” canes before you forget which ones had the fruit.

A good early morning chore before the sun gets too high is the old standard of weeding. I have yet to encounter a serious gardener who excitedly looks forward to weed control. The good news is: The more you get now before they set seed the less you will have next year – got to look on the bright side! Have you gotten all your beds mulched? If not, why not? This practice is the best, hands down way to keep weed populations under control and to conserve water and save money on your bill. Speaking of watering and your bill, remember your beds and your lawn needs at least an inch of water per week. Planters and pots need to be attended to more often.

Now is a great time to split some of your perennials; especially those that are not performing as well as they have in previous years. Not knowing what you have in your garden makes it difficult to make a specific recommendation. Here at Hidden Harbor we will be splitting day lilies which have

become overcrowded. If you're not sure what can and cannot be split and either potted or planted, contact me and I'll do my best to help you decide.

Just when you were getting tired and beginning to drag around the place doing your best to keep up with the power of the sun there comes news of more work that needs to be done! You're welcome! If you accomplish all these chores and are looking for more to do, give me a holler at 370 NW 121 Rd., Warrensburg, MO 64093 or email at: [mandpak@embarqmail.com](mailto:mandpak@embarqmail.com) and we will come up with a few more ideas. Be sure to drink plenty of water and take breaks – your family would like you to be here come Thanksgiving.