

The Garden Corner

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Master Gardeners of Johnson County Missouri

It's here! High heat and humidity. I always wish it wouldn't happen and yet, it always does: July! And August. This is a good month to slow down. Work in the morning and late evenings if possible. Try watering in the morning to allow for less evaporation. Do you have any shade? Work in the shade too. We have gotten tons of rain and the results in the flower and vegetable beds are bursting with color and all sorts of great stuff to eat. As springs go, this one past was pretty special. We set an all-time record in amount of rain for a season. What does all this good news mean to the gardener? A whole host of outdoor activities; like, deadheading, mowing, harvesting, replanting, pruning, splitting, and weeding to mention a few.

The weeds and unwanted grass in the cracks have gone wild along with the rest of nature. What do you use to kill it? Roundup? Before a Tennessee cousin made me wise in the world of weed killing, I used Roundup. We were told it was safe, right? And, it works. Guess what? That gallon jug of white vinegar at the grocery store works just as good and (I think) quicker. For the weeds and grass that can't be sprayed, there's that old time standby called weeding. It works every time. ☺

If you have bushes, and haven't taken a look at them in a while, be prepared to be shocked! Every kind – store bought to native – every bush has taken the relatively cool temperatures and ample rain to add new growth. In some cases, the new growth is too much and needs to be removed. Don't forget to take out the dead and crossing branches while you're working. When it comes to pruning, there is this rule: Never take more than a third of the bush/tree at one time. There is so much new growth, I've had to keep that rule in mind so as to not overdo the pruning.

Driving around town, I've seen some of the gardens and how well everything looks. Quite a few places have perennials (hosta, day lilies, Black eyed Susan) that could stand to be split. Now is a great time to do it.

Ideally, you will have a spot – their new home - already prepared before actually splitting anything. If not, potting works too. Often times the hosta I sale at our Plant Sale are split this time of year, potted, and banked in heavy layers of wood mulch for the winter.

If you just can't slow down and still need something to do, then grab a bucket and a pair of scissors and go deadheading. Just about anything that produces a bloom will rebloom if the old bloom is removed – just about. For anything else write: 370 NW 121 Rd., Warrensburg, MO 64093 or email: maandpak@embarqmail.com and I'll get right back with you. Seriously, slow down – it's too hot out there.