**Hortibull June Gardening Calendar**

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It is time for the hot weather to arrive. Be careful with your gardening. Do as much as possible in the morning. Wear a hat and loose clothes, and drink lots of water.

The lawn did some serious growing and filling in during May. If you did not fertilize the lawn it is not too late. A slow release lawn fertilizer such as 19-5-9 releases half the nitrogen quickly and the rest over 3-4 months.

Mow frequently enough that you never remove more than one–third of the grass blade and you can leave the lawn clippings to decompose where they lay. It is recommended that you mow St. Augustine at 3 inches tall, zoysia at 2 inches and Bermuda at 1.5 inches or less. Buffalo grass works best if you treat it as a groundcover and only mow it 5 inches or higher. The tall buffalo helps reduce weed development, which is the major problem in buffalo grass lawns.

SAWS is expecting to have to declare Stage 3 restrictions this summer. Hopefully, continuing rains will make it unnecessary but if not, be conservative about launching any major landscaping projects. It is hard to support new plantings, if you can only sprinkle irrigate every two weeks and even drip irrigation is restricted to three days a week. Rely on hand watering to supplement the gaps in meeting plant water needs.

If you do feel the need to do some planting this summer, check out the SAWS low water-use plant subsidies. The water system is encouraging the planting of low water-use combinations of plants by contributing to their purchase at cooperating nurseries. They also offer subsidies for irrigation system improvements. Check out the website at [www.saws.org/Conservation/Outdoor/](http://www.saws.org/Conservation/Outdoor/).

In addition to the low water use conversions offered by SAWS, consider a mulch cover. Kill or remove the lawn grass and cover the area with mulch. You can then plant into mulch as water is available.

For hot weather annual color, consider coleus, pentas, caladiums and begonias for the shade. In the sun consider zinnias, cosmos, moss roses and purslane. Firebush, esperanza, poinciana and duranta are hot weather blooming perennials that can be planted in the summer heat.