**July Gardening Calendar**

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In the flower garden the vinca, moss rose, cosmos, zinnias and purslane should all be doing well. This has been a good year for gladiola production. Let the leaves decline from green to brown naturally before you dig up the bulbs for storage for planting next February.

July is not the greatest month for rose blooms. Keep the roses irrigated. Fertilization and pesticide sprays can be cut back until September when the autumn growth flush begins.

The best recommendation for tomatoes is to pull the spring planted plants so they don’t become a nursery for fungus and spider mite production. Some tomatoes will survive the hottest part of summer but overall production is usually better if a new crop is planted next month for autumn production.

If you have southern peas, use some of them like you would cut green beans. Harvest and cook them before the peas in the pod reach full size.

The moisture in May and June has been great, but it means that the summer weeds have really taken off. The most obvious weed in many landscapes is Bermuda grass. It spreads by seed, by underground runners and across the top of the soil. Pieces of Bermuda grass that have been dropped will even root where they fall.

You can try to pull Bermuda grass by hand but that is a very difficult job and is only a temporary fix if you don’t get all of the roots.

Bermuda grass is susceptible to contact herbicides. Glyphosate is the most obvious herbicide to use. Spray it on healthy growing Bermuda grass and within a week the grass quits growing and changes color. The chemical that dried on the green part of the plant had been translocated to the roots. The color change indicates that the whole plant is dying, underground runners and all!

The problem with using glyphosate is that it kills almost any plant whose foliage it settles on. Accidental spray contact with vegetables, roses, shrubs, newly planted trees will result in dead plants. There is a set of contact herbicides however that kills grass, including Bermuda grass but does not hurt broadleaf plants. Grass specific contact herbicides such as Grass Be Gone, Over the Top, Vantage, Ornamec, Poast and Fusilade are selective for grass. They can be applied to unwanted Bermuda grass growing in the midst of roses, groundcovers, annual flowers and shrubs without hurting the desirable plants. Check the label before use in vegetables and fruits; it is usually not allowed during the harvest period.

The hottest part of the summer is a good time to prune live oak trees. The oak wilt spores are not active in the heat. Even if the spread of the disease is not as much of a threat at this time of a year, paint the pruning wounds for extra insurance.

Midsummer is not the favored time to plant trees and shrubs but it can be done with container plants. Water is the key. Apply the water at the base so the root ball is wetted. There is very little root growth outside of the root ball in hot dry weather.

Black-chinned hummingbirds will be common in any landscape with flowers or a sugar water feeder. Rinse and refill the feeder once every week. Once a month use a bottle brush for a more thorough cleaning. Bird baths are also appreciated by resident birds. In midsummer water may be more of a limitation for bird population than seeds or other food.