

Gardening Tasks for June

The weeds are winning at my house! The vegetable garden is in good shape, but as far as the rest of the beds go it is a disaster! The raised bed vegetable garden is awesome! Even after an inch of rain I can go out and weed and plant! All my pots on the deck have been planted. The only herbs that survived on the deck were the Chives, Sage, Rosemary, and Catnip. The deck looks great and the herb bed by the front porch has new plantings of sage, oregano, dill, basil, and thyme. Now the serious work begins!



Are you taking a daily walk through your gardens? This past week I discovered 6 Black Swallowtail Butterfly caterpillars on my Bronze Fennel. At one point there were 3 on one plant and I swear I could hear them chewing! They grew by leaps and bounds these past few days, so it won't be long until they head off to start the next phase of their lives.

The Common Milkweed is coming along nicely and is getting ready to bloom. The Swamp Milkweed has recovered from the hard freeze and I have begun the search for Monarch eggs.

The deer have eaten off my Asiatic lily buds and have browsed on some daylily foliage. Yesterday I caught a young groundhog digging in a planter by my front door! I opened the door to "shoo" him away and he took off. Afterwards I realized he could have chosen to run in the house instead! I think this might be the same brave groundhog that drinks out of my whiskey barrel on the back deck.

The front porch seems to attract wildlife. Last year I caught a skunk digging in a pot and a large Doe grazed on my ornamental sweet potato vine until it was completely gone! The racoons finish up the sunflower seeds every night and have been caught digging up plants in the large pots. It's a three ring circus!

June is the month to finish up the planting and begin the general maintenance work that will keep larger projects to a minimum. The grass is green, flowerbeds are filling, and perennials, tree, and shrubs are blooming. Rain is usually plentiful in June, but in a dry year, newly planted annuals and perennials may need supplemental watering until they become established. A deep watering is more beneficial than a light one; moisture that penetrates the soil thoroughly helps the growth of roots buried deep in the ground. Watering lightly encourages the growth of roots at the top of the soil, where they experience acute stress during a drought. Watering early in the day allows the sun to dry the leaves of your plants, to help ward off the growth of fungal disease like black spot or powdery mildew on foliage. Avoid watering at midday when the sun is most intense, since a good portion of the water will evaporate before it can help the plant.

My June list of gardening tasks includes: 1) Weed planting beds as necessary and sprinkle a "Pre-emergent" (if desired), 2) Throw healthy garden clippings onto the compost pile, 3) Deadhead repeat-blooming roses to encourage more flowers, 4) Spray roses early and regularly to prevent fungal diseases, 5) Dig or pull out excess perennials and share with a friend, 6) Pinch back chrysanthemums when 4 to 6 inches high, 7) Continue direct-seeding vegetable crops, and 8) Keep an eye on your tomato plants and spray a protectant fungicide when necessary. For effective fungicides and spray schedules consult the Ohio Vegetable Production Guide (OSU Extension Bulletin 672). Remember to read and follow label directions carefully.

Author and Gardener, Margaret Roach, shares a great tip in her newsletter, *A Way to Garden*. Make a pass, with hand or hoe, through each garden bed each week, since weeds are not just unsightly but steal moisture, nutrients, and light from desired plants. I know that my raised bed vegetable garden stays mostly weed free because of taking that pass through with my soil knife every few days. Remember that checking in on each of your garden beds will keep you ahead of the weed, disease, and insect battles.

June is an exciting time in the garden. It's simply hard to believe it is here already! Where did May go?