

## *July's List for the Garden*

The hot and humid weather has been a challenge for this gardener! I have my list out and have been prioritizing so that I limit my time outside. Hopefully, the cooler temps that are being predicted will happen. I have some plants in my staging area that need to be put in the ground, but I have been putting it off to give them a better chance to survive.

The tomatoes have loved the weather, but the squash plants look a bit frazzled by the heat. The cucumbers and peppers are blooming and the Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) is still full of blossoms. The clover is trying to take over my pollinator garden, but I'm leaving it alone until the blooms fade so the bees can enjoy themselves.



Can it really be July? It seems like I am still working on June's list. How about you? I am having to remind myself to "find the Joy" as I edit weeds from my perennial beds. I really do love being outdoors, but NOT when it is so humid!

My favorite Garden Almanac list includes the following tasks for the month of July:

- \* Turn the compost pile – remember to balance the “wet and green, brown and dry”
- \* Keep up with weeds in garden beds
- \* Water your garden during periods of drought – plants most vulnerable to the effects of drought include seedling, young plants and recent transplants
- \* Finish transplanting annuals
- \* Fertilize container plants regularly
- \* Stake tall plants growing in windy sites
- \* Cut spent perennials to the ground to encourage new growth
- \* Deadhead flowers to prolong bloom time
- \* Cut back daffodil leaves after they turn yellow
- \* Continue planting broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower transplants for fall crops
- \* Continue direct-seeding vegetable and herb crops
- \* Beginning mid-month, direct-seed vegetables such as spinach for fall crops
- \* Harvest onions and garlic after the tops start to yellow and die back.
- \* Harvest and dry herbs for winter use
- \* Give your vegetable garden at least 1 inch of water per week during periods of drought.

Remember that leafy crops such as lettuce are especially sensitive to dry soil and will develop bitter-tasting leaves or set seed prematurely as a result.

Have you ever considered planting an edible edging in your flower bed? Lettuce – especially colorful or frilly-foliaged leaf varieties – can be used instead of sweet alyssum, or other low-growing annuals that are often used to edge flower beds. I'm not sure that this is an option for me since the Rabbit family is still frolicking in my front yard as I write this article.

Now is the time to be taking notes on your developing color schemes in your flower beds. Watch how your garden evolves during the growing season and how you can improve it by adding, subtracting, or rearranging elements of color.

Here's hoping that your gardens are growing and that we will all be enjoying the rewards of our labor soon!