

Gardening in Asotin County

July-August-September

Fertilize lawns in early **July** for the last time before **September**. Water the lawn according to temperature and soil moisture, not the calendar. Water deeply when the top one or two inches of soil are dry.



In addition to their regular watering schedule, it helps to deep-water trees and shrubs a couple of times each month during the hot weather by letting a hose run slowly enough for the water to soak into the ground directly beneath the plant.

Do not fertilize trees, shrubs or fruit trees after **mid-August**. Fertilizing will encourage tender new growth that will not harden off in time to avoid winter injury.

Keep weeding! Weeds compete with desired plants for nutrients and precious water. The best methods for weeding gardens are hand pulling and hoeing.

Start cutting and drying herbs for kitchen use. Frequent cuttings from herb plants encourage new growth.

Side dress vegetables and annual flowers with fertilizer. Follow label directions exactly. Remove faded blossoms from annuals to encourage new flower development.

Continue mulching around landscape plants and between garden rows. Grass clippings, shredded leaves, straw and sawdust make good mulching materials. They help maintain soil moisture throughout the year.

Keep deadheading annuals and perennials. Divide and transplant perennials once the temperature begins to drop a little.

Yellowjackets get really active now. Yellowjackets are actually beneficial for your yard and garden, so if they are not bothering you, do not harm them. Use yellowjacket sprays and traps if they nest in areas of human activity such as playgrounds, patios or walkways.

Harvest vegetables as they ripen! Overripe fruit on a plant will prevent the smaller fruit from developing.

If squash plants start dying, look for squash bugs at the bottom of the plant. If they produce blossoms but no fruit it may signal lack of pollination. Hot weather, heavy irrigation, or lack of bee activity may be the cause.

After raspberries have finished bearing fruit, cut the dry canes to the ground (they will not bear fruit again). Leave new green canes that grew this year and tie them loosely to a fence or trellis. They will have berries next year.

Think about entering some of your garden items in a local fair. A quick call to the fair office will give you the rules and regulations.

Planting a fall vegetable garden can give you fresh vegetables up to and even past the first frosts. Many varieties of vegetables can be planted in **mid-to-late summer** for fall harvest. Succession plantings of warm-season crops such as corn and beans can be harvested until the first killing frost. Cool-season crops, such as kale, turnips, mustard, broccoli, and cabbage, withstand frost and grow well during cool fall days. Consult your local WSU Master Gardener office to determine the time to plant a particular vegetable for the latest harvest in your area.

You can start to dig potatoes when the tops begin to yellow. Avoid over watering potatoes for the rest of the season.

September is a good time to fertilize existing lawns to keep them vigorous through the winter.

When the weather cools down, dig and divide large, old perennial herbs and flowers. Transplanting in the fall allows the plants time to achieve good root establishment. This also allows plenty of moisture to enter the root zone before the ground freezes.

Fall is a good time to plant or transplant trees and shrubs, once the weather cools.

Continue weeding of the garden to remove weeds before they go to seed and spread.

Rototill or dig compost, rotted sawdust, manure and other organic matter into the soil. Fairly warm temperatures this month will give these additions a chance to begin breaking down before the ground freezes. By next spring the soil will be rich and ready to go. You can add shredded fall leaves to the top of the soil.

Tomatoes don't need sun to ripen. Bring green tomatoes indoors once they have lost their bright green color. They will ripen to red on an indoor windowsill.

A hard frost can damage winter squash and pumpkins. Harvest them when their rinds resist puncturing with a fingernail and when the vines near the stem end begin to wither.