Planning/Maintenance/ Activities

Average Last Frost Dates:
Ronald: 9 June

Pull weeds before they go to seed.
They are easier to pull when they are still young.

Use organic mulches to conserve soil moisture in ornamental beds.
An inch or two of sawdust, barkdust, or composted leaves will minimize loss of water through evaporation.

Make sure raised beds receive enough water for plants to avoid drought stress.

Construct trellises for tomatoes, cucumbers, pole beans, and vining ornamentals.

Avoid deep cultivation around shallow rooted plants by hand pulling weeds when they are small.

Replenish mulch under trees and shrubs to conserve moisture, reduce weeds, and control temperature fluctuations in soil.

Pest Monitoring & Management

Monitor rhododendrons, azaleas, peonies, bergenia, lilac, primroses and other broadleaf ornamentals for notches eaten out of leaf edges caused by root weevils.
The adult weevil crawls up the plant from the ground at night.

Monitor all plants regularly for insect and disease problems.
Early detection can make a difference!

River ***Birch trees dripping a sticky fluid from their leaves means that aphids are present.***
In the spring, the new leaves on river birch often become distorted and take on a corrugated appearance. This is caused by an infestation of the spiny witch-hazel gall aphids, Hamamelistes spinosus. The aphids also produce honeydew, which falls on things underneath the river birch tree. The leaves attacked by the aphid eventually turn brown and drop from the tree. Fortunately, they produce another flush of leaves and the tree suffers no real harm.

Homeowners should be aware of the threat by the bronze birch borer.
The bronze birch borer, Agrilus Anxius Gory, is becoming a serious pest of birch (Betula spp.) in portions of eastern Washington. This native insect can be found wherever birch is grown as an ornamental. Weakened birch trees are extremely susceptible to attack. The most effective way to prevent beetle infestations is to keep trees healthy by following a regular schedule for fertilization and watering.

Lawn

Mowing your lawn:

- Mow at the proper height; between 2 – 3 inches.
- Keep mower blades sharp. Dull blades tear the grass tips, which leave a lawn looking ragged and yellow.
- Do not reduce or lower the mover's cutting height more than ½ inch (one notch or setting or rotary mower) per mowing or you will scalp the lawn, causing brown patches.
- Don't increase the moving height at any time during the season. If lawn is mowed too high, matted thatch will build up at the soil surface preventing water, air, and plant nutrients from reaching the soil, and can harbor insect populations.

Maintain adequate fertilization for normal growth.
Nitrogen is important to stimulate populations of beneficial bacterial organisms in the soil, but do not over-fertilize. A balanced program is essential.

Water thoroughly and infrequently.
Turf grass needs approximately 1 to 1 ½ inches of water per week. Water deeply once or twice a week. Frequent, light watering encourages roots to stay shallow, making them more susceptible to drought. The amount of water per application should wet at least the top 4 to 12 inches of soil including the root zone area if the soil is that deep. To determine how much water you are using, use the 'tuna can' test found on the Turfgrass Calendar for Central Washington.

Don't remove clippings from the lawn.
Clippings can be beneficial by returning nutrients to the soil. (If your lawn has excessive weeds, seeds are also returned with mulched clippings. Remove excessive clippings, mulched or not, so they do not smother the lawn or encourage disease.)

Woody Landscape Plants & Fruit Trees

Prune spring-flowering shrubs after blooms fade.
Forsythia, lilac, Rhododendron, Oak Leaf hydrangeas, Mock orange, Purple-leaf sand cherry, Spiraea species, Weigela.

Fertilize roses.
1-2 handfuls (use gloves, or a 1-cup measure) per manufacturer label, of granular fertilizer applied in April, June and August will suffice. Do not apply any fertilizer containing nitrogen after mid-September. Always water before and after applying granular fertilizer. If dry fertilizer gets on the leaves, rinse it off immediately.

Water newly planted trees and shrubs.
Water deeply when top 1-2 inches of soil is dry. Water the soil and not the foliage to reduce leaf spot diseases.

Remove faded flowers and seed pods on lilac and other spring-flowering shrubs.

Remove spent blooms of peony, iris, delphiniums, and other flowers.

Propagate deciduous shrubs, such as forsythia, lilac, mock orange, hydrangea, and weigelia by soft-wood cuttings.
June is the ideal month to take cuttings from deciduous shrubs. Propagating from cuttings is a relatively simple way to make new plants at virtually no cost. It's also a great way to replicate sentimental favorites. Plant pieces are clipped from the parent plant and rooted to form new plants; these are called rooted cuttings.

Avoid pruning oaks and elms during the growing season, typically early April through October.
Oak wilt and Dutch elm disease are spread by sap - feeding insects carrying the disease from tree to tree.

Flowers, Vegetables and Small Fruit

Supplement natural rainfall to supply a total of 1 to 1 ½ inches of water per week to flowers, berries and trees.
Water deeply once per week rather than frequent light sprinkling.

Vegetable gardens should be watered daily, preferably in the morning.

Fertilize annuals.
Although you can use a wide variety of balanced fertilizers, "slow release" or "controlled release" products are available that can be applied just once in the spring to a garden bed.

Plant summer flowering bulbs and annuals outdoors.

Petunias, marigolds, zinnias, asters, nasturtiums, salvia, coleus and impatiens.

Pinch shoot tips of impatiens, petunias, and coleus to promote bushier growth.

Pinch garden mums and asters one a month for bushier growth.
Stop pinching after July 15 so plants can set flower buds.

Remove tops of spring-flowering bulbs only after they have yellowed and withered.

Remove faded blossoms from flowering annuals, perennials, and roses to encourage more blooms.
Pinching back stems on annuals and perennials will keep plants compact and healthy.

As your Bearded iris flowers fade, cut back the flower stalks to the base of the plant. Divide bearded iris every 3 to 5 years in July and August.

Transplant basil, tomatoes, eggplant, squash, pumpkins, melons, and peppers into the garden.
Sow seeds of beans, corn, parsnips, and cucumbers.

Consider crop rotation and needed amendments as you plant another crop.
When planning your vegetable garden, remember the importance of crop rotation. Planting crops in a different location as opposed to planting the same crop in the same spot each year can reduce problems with insects, nematodes, and diseases.

Protect ripening strawberries from birds by covering with netting.
Make sure netting is secure around all berries.

Continue harvesting ripe fruits and vegetables.

Thin fruit and prop trees as needed.

As crops mature, let go to seed or pull out and plant another short season crop.
In mid-June, discontinue harvest of rhubarb ***and asparagus spears (when no thicker than a***

pencil) and allow foliage to develop and store food reserves for next year's harvest.
Carefully remove weeds and mulch to prevent further weeds. Fertilize and water when dry to promote healthy growth.

Observe fruit trees for pests.
Continue applications of home orchard fruit sprays to maintain problem-free fruit. Read and follow label directions.

Do not become alarmed at June drop of tree fruit.
It is a natural thinning process for most trees to prevent excessive loads. Thin remaining excess fruit, if any exists, or prop up heavy branches to avoid breaking. Most fruit should be spaced 6 to 8 inches apart on a branch.

Start seeds of cabbage, Brussels sprouts, broccoli and cauliflower for fall garden transplants in a cold frame or hot bed.

Harvest spring plantings of broccoli, cabbage, spinach, radish, turnips, swiss chard, collards, lettuce, and peas.

Remove cool-season plants, such as radish, spinach and lettuce, as they bolt, or form seed stalks, during hot summer weather.

Blanch (exclude from light) cauliflower when heads are just 2 inches in diameter.
As cauliflower plants begin to mature and the head or curd starts to form, gather together and tie the leaves over the curd with soft twine or tape to ensure the curd will be white and tender at harvest.

For staked tomatoes, remove suckers (branches that form where the leaf joins the stem) while they are 1 to 1 1/2 inches long to allow easier training.

Continue planting carrots, beans, and sweet corn for successive harvests.

Pick June bearing strawberries and raspberries from the garden.

Gardening in Kittitas County

Gardening in Kittitas County presents many challenges and opportunities. While there are ample days of sunshine and nights that meet and exceed plants' chilling requirements, there are extremes of heat in the summer and cold in the winter. Wind is a constant in all parts of the county and snow depth is a factor, especially in the higher elevations. Add to this the fact that Eastern Washington has an arid climate and most plants require additional regular watering, especially while becoming established. Last, but certainly not least, are the pests that prefer ones' garden and orchard to their natural diet and would ravage these if homeowners did not use special precautions against them.

Kittitas County, not unlike many counties in Washington, has differences within the county with respect to rainfall, elevation, and temperature. Therefore, the length of growing season is different depending on location. While the ground may be workable in Ellensburg (lower county) at the beginning of April, it may still be covered in a foot of snow in Roslyn (upper county). While the lower county may require minimum winter protection for most crops, upper county requires maximum protection for most perennials that do not naturally grow there.

At higher elevations such as Ronald (2,349 feet), the average growing season is 90 days with last frosts in early June (approximately June 9th) and first frosts in early September (approximately September 2nd); In Cle Elum (1,930 feet), the average growing season is 90 to 120 days with last frosts in late May (approximately May 24th) and first frosts in the middle of September (approximately September 11th). Cle Elum receives about 22" of rain on average. At lower elevations such as Ellensburg (1,542 feet), conditions are much drier and frost-free days are longer. The average growing season in Ellensburg is about 120 days with last frosts in early May (approximately May 11th) and first frosts around the end of September (approximately September 25th).

Ronald, Rosyln, and Cle Elum are rated USDA Zone 4 (-30ºF minimum temperature) while Ellensburg is rated at USDA Zone 5 (-20°F. minimum).

The authors of this e-book are using techniques deemed necessary for their particular region within Kittitas County. The reader's to do list will be specific to their area and their particular climate. Be sure to check resources provided to determine specific climate area.

This calendar is a compilation of many sources of information. Many thanks for the outstanding guidance provided by: Washington State University Extension, Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service, The Morton Arboretum, Oregon State University Extension and many others as evidenced by the extensive use of hyperlinks.

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