



FROM A GARDENING PERSPECTIVE...

MID-SUMMER TASKS

By

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All gardeners want their flower beds to look as good in the summer heat as they do in the spring or fall. The blooms may be different, but it is possible to have flower beds full of thriving plants all year long. To assure summer blooms, the drip irrigation system needs to be checked and working properly. If drip irrigation has not been installed, it needs to be considered. Drip irrigation is easy to install and very inexpensive compared to in-ground systems. Once the drip system has been checked, the mulch in the beds needs to be evaluated. Mulch is the very best thing to preserve moisture for plants. a good deep layer of mulch could mean the difference in survival of summer plants. There are many kinds of mulch. The small pine bark chips certainly dress up flower beds, but there are reasons to use other kinds. Small river rock makes a good mulch for drought tolerant plants and looks great. The dark brown rubber mulch is good for areas that will be walked on. One thing that needs to be remembered is that mulch prevents reseeding. If a gardener wants perennials to reseed, then the mulch around them needs to be pulled back so that seeds can contact the soil. Mulch will help keep weeds from sprouting also.

Rain water harvesting is also a very good idea. Collected water can be used to water potted plants or a large barrel can be connected to a drip system.

It is perhaps too late this summer, but most perennials need to be pruned back by one third around July 4. This keeps the plants from becoming too leggy and promotes another bloom cycle that peaks in the fall. Sometimes blooms are pruned off in order to do this. If crepe myrtles have already bloomed, the plant may bloom again if the tips are carefully pruned. Most roses need to be pruned back by one fourth to one third in August to September. This will promote a good fall bloom cycle.

The last tip is to prune any trees in the red oak family now while they are semi dormant in the hottest part of the summer. They are susceptible to oak wilt, so should not be pruned any other time except February. That would be Red Oaks and Live Oaks.

Remember to check for the upcoming talks at the library and call the Palo Pinto County Extension Office if you have questions. 940-659-1228.

