

Gardening Almanac for the Plateau

June

Weather Average Temperature and Rainfall:

The average maximum temperature for June is 81 degrees F., and the average minimum is 59 degrees F. The average rainfall is 4.58".

Activities **New plants still need watering....this can be critical.** You might even consider adding some rain barrels to your yard, providing a free source of water containing no chlorine, lime or calcium. Rain barrels can be bought at garden centers or hardware stores, and information about installing them will be with them, or can be found on the Internet or at your local agricultural office. The local Orbed Watershed Community Association has good information on rain barrels. Their phone number is 931-484-9033.

- If any of the foliage of your annuals or newly planted perennials is looking pale or yellow, and you have watered adequately, they may need fertilizer that is labeled for flowers, and having low-nitrogen.
- Watch your blooms for Japanese beetles. If you have a dish of soapy water handy, just pluck them into it and they will drown. Or, they can even be attacked with a fly swatter.
- Many perennials will keep flowering if cut back after their first bloom period, such as garden phlox, heliopsis, veronica, Echinacea.
- Tall perennials, before they bloom, may need to be staked to keep them from bending over in high wind or hard rain.
- Sunflower seeds can still be planted every week or two through July, so you have flowers until frost.
- Fall-flowering plants such as asters, mums, goldenrod, sedum and Joe-pye weed can be cut back to make them shorter and stockier when they bloom. Cut their current growth three-quarters of the way back this month to have them looking great when in bloom this fall.
- Many annuals and perennials need to be deadheaded to keep them looking good and blooming all season. Such plants include geraniums, certain petunias, marigolds, salvia and roses.
- Bearded iris should be divided soon after flowering, giving them plenty of time to get established and increasing the chance of flowers next year.
- Azaleas, rhododendrons, mountain laurel and other acid-loving species need to be fertilized one more time before August 15th, using an acid-based soluble fertilizer containing iron. Also, continue to spray monthly against sap-feeding lace bugs. Target the underside of leaves with Orthene, insecticidal soap, or summer oil.
- Are the local deer a real problem for you? One solution requires using rebar posts and fishing line. Position the posts around your garden, far enough away from your plants that deer can't lean over to chew your plants. Tie the fishing line around one post (about 6" off the ground), then wrap it around the other posts at this height. Continue with a new line every 6 to 8 inches until you reach a height of 3 to 4 feet. The fishing line will touch the deer's legs and chest, causing them to stop forward motion, and because it is not a solid structure, they don't see it as something to jump. It's certainly worth a try.
- **This is the last month for planting green beans.**
- Blossom-end rot of tomato is a "physiological" disease caused by uneven watering of the tomato patch and a deficiency of calcium in the soil. It can be prevented by regular deep watering of the garden with drip irrigation or soaker hoses in addition to mulching for water conservation. A Knoxville greenhouse grower recommends fertilizing with calcium nitrate rather than agricultural grade 10-10-10 fertilizer. Some varieties that are resistant to this malady are 'Celebrity', 'Goliath' and 'Mountain Pride'.
- Harvest cucumbers when they are ready. If you stop picking them, the vine will soon stop production. In fact, if you are going on vacation, ask a friend to pick your produce and enjoy what they pick. Watering while you're gone is probably not necessary since we usually get a shower every week in June. Prune anything that needs it so your garden won't look 'wild' when you return home.
- Remove root suckers from the base of all fruit trees, particularly apple and pear, and remove all thick water sprouts shooting up straight on the branches. Also remove any diseased, dying or insect-riddled wood. Continue a regular disease and insect preventative spray schedule until 10 days before harvest.
- Early vegetables, such as radishes, green beans, and onions can be picked in June. Take good care of tomato plants, peppers, melons, squashes etc. for later picking.
- You may find veggies or flowers growing in your compost pile.....this is the Volunteer state, remember, and volunteers can be mighty tasty.
- Feeding birds is critical during the winter, but also fun during the summer. Remember to clean the hummingbird feeder often, and if you enjoy watching the birds outside your window, provide them with thistle seed, sunflower seeds, and safflower seeds and for the bluebirds, mealworms.

Wildlife Birds are abundant in June, and you may see:

Red-bellied woodpeckers, Red-headed woodpeckers, Hairy woodpeckers, Downy woodpeckers, Pileated woodpeckers, Muscovy ducks, Mallard ducks, Wood ducks, Oldsquaw, Canada geese, American goldfinches, English sparrows, Carolina wrens, Tufted titmice, White-breasted nuthatches, Mourning doves, Carolina chickadees, Wild turkeys, Eastern bluebirds, Blue jays, European starlings, American crows, Purple finches, Northern mockingbirds, Northern cardinals, American robins, Great horned owls, Common screech owls, Rufous-sided towhees, Great blue herons, Little blue herons, Scarlet tanagers, Ruby-throated hummingbirds, Wood thrushes, Kingfishers, Whip-poor-wills, Red-winged blackbirds, Song sparrows, House finches, Dark-eyed juncos, Flickers, Great crested flycatchers, Northern "Baltimore" orioles, White-throated sparrows, American tree sparrows, Indigo buntings, Evening grosbeaks, Rose-breasted grosbeaks, House wrens, Brown-headed cowbirds, Lesser goldfinches, and Northern bobwhites.

You may also see deer, fox, squirrels, rabbits, chipmunks, and groundhogs. Great-spangled fritillaries are the orange and black butterflies you may see in your garden.

Plants June flowers include:

Butterfly weed, Butterfly bush, Larkspur, Dianthus, Impatiens, Hosta, Snap dragon, Yarrow, Johnny-jump-up, Pansy, Blanket flower (Gaillardia), Coreopsis, Sweet alyssum, Petunia, Astilbe, Begonia, Shasta daisy, Clematis, Sweet William, Sweet Woodruff, Hydrangea, Red hot poker, Gay feathers, Spiderwort, Day lilies, Sunflowers, False sunflower, Gay flower, Coral bell, Dahlias, Lavender, Black-eyed Susan, Speed well, Queen Ann's lace, Smooth false foxglove, Morning glory, Pokeweed, Chicory, Climbing roses and Prickly pear cactus.

This information has been created by the Cumberland County Master Gardeners Association, Crossville TN