



Betty's Bloomers Nursery

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Summer Time!

The kids are out of school. We're thinking of vacations at the beach or lake, or just staying inside and soaking up some of that nice cool air conditioning. I know how easy it is to forget about those poor, starving, thirsty plants that were lovingly planted only a few short months ago. Especially when that first water bill arrives that is double the amount of last months bill. Hang in there! Your garden will appreciate it. It will reward you with season long color & it will show out in the fall when cooler weather arrives.

Grower tips

By now your tropical plants are thriving in this heat and sunshine. So what do you do when your Bougainvilleas and Hibiscus won't stop growing? How do you keep them from overgrowing their pots or trellises without removing all of the blooms on the end of each branch? Soft pinching is the answer. Removing only the very tip of each branch by simply pinching the new leaf buds stops the plant from growing straight up but still allows the flower buds on that branch to open and mature. Pruning the very tip of each stem causes the plant to branch out and become a more compact and fuller bush.

What's in Season?

There are many new varieties of

Crepe Myrtle Trees on the market today. They range in sizes from small bush type, to medium sized tree to large tree. Some of the newer hybrid trees have larger blooms and will bloom for a longer season. After the first flowers fade, dead-head them to prevent them from producing seed and you will get a new flush of blooms soon. A healthy well placed tree can bloom for 3 or 4 months. Watch for powdery mildew on your crepe myrtles. As long as the tree is getting plenty of sunshine (at least 6 hours) it should out grow it, but you may need to spray with a general purpose fungicide or a baking soda & soapy water spray.

We are all guilty of buying that "new" plant from the big garden centers or catalogs that no one else grows here. And usually, by the first heat wave we begin to understand why no one else grows it here. There are some plants that just don't appreciate our climate & will let you know really fast they are not happy. Do your homework before you spend your money. Check the climate zone for growing each variety or ask a reputable grower nursery.

To Do List:

Mulching adds so much to your flower beds and garden. Any organic mulch such as leaves, pine straw, or shredded bark helps retain moisture & shades the soil from the hot summer sun. Mulch also prevents any soil-borne diseases from

splashing up onto leaves and infecting plants. As mulch decomposes it adds nutrients to the soil. So, simply by taking the time to mulch, you save time by not having to water, fungicide, or fertilize as much.

Watch for stink bugs on your tomato plants. My Grandmother used to pick them off one by one and throw them into a bucket of kerosene, but if you just can't stand the smell use an insecticide labeled for garden use such as Sevin or Rotenone. Also keep your vegetables free of any fungal diseases by removing any spotted leaves before they spread to the rest of the plant.

Something Extra

Adding liquid soap such as Ivory dishwashing liquid to Fertilizer, insecticides and fungicides will make them easier to apply. The soap actually makes the "water wetter" by breaking the surface tension of the water. Try this experiment for yourself. Drip a small amount of water onto a clean solid surface such as your counter top. It will keep its form as a bubble until you lightly touch it with a toothpick dipped in liquid soap. It will instantly spread out over the surface getting it wetter. Amazing isn't it?

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HAPPY GARDENING!