

August 2014 to Do List

By Teresa Spence, University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener of Calaveras County

If you have young ornamental or fruit trees less than 18 months old, they should be deep watered every two weeks around the drip line. Established large ornamental shrubs also need an occasional deep watering even if they are regularly watered.

Maintain mulch at least 3" deep around all ornamental trees and shrubs; start spreading it 3" to 4 " away from the trunk and extend coverage out to the drip line. This will help keep the soil cooler and retain more moisture during the heat of the summer.

Harvest summer fruits and vegetables in the early morning to get the most flavor. Look for vegetables that are ready to harvest and pick as many as possible to encourage more production. Pinch off flower buds from basil before they bloom, to encourage new growth and keep the plant from getting woody.

If you are planning a winter garden this year, it is time to prepare the soil. Cultivate the soil at least 12" deep and dig in a 2 to 3 inch layer of compost. Now is the time to look through the seed catalogues for those special cool season crops such as kale, radishes and carrots.