

June 2019 Garden News

With June has come hotter, dryer weather. Even though we might get short storms and pop-up showers, rainfall this month might not be enough to supply the needs of plants in the landscape. Lawns as well as vegetable gardens and most landscape plants need one inch of water a week. Be sure to water plants to supplement rainfall as necessary. Use mulch to conserve moisture, but be sure not to mulch trees up to the trunk. Make sure mulch is a few inches away from the tree trunk to increase air circulation and eliminate hiding places for small rodents, which can gnaw tree bark.

One insect pest that appears on many plants in the landscape and vegetable garden during hot, dry weather is the two-spotted spider mite. Leaves of plants infested with two-spotted spider mites will have a stippled appearance and may eventually turn completely yellow and die. When you look on the underside of the leaf, you will see mites, eggs, and discarded skin. In severe infestations, you will see webbing on the plants.

If you suspect that your plants have been infested by two-spotted spider mites, you can shake the leaves over a white piece of paper. If mites are present, you will see them moving over the surface of the plate. Two-spotted spider mites will be moving slowly. Predatory mites, which are beneficial insects, will move quickly.

A few spider mites on your plants will not cause problems. However, spider mites produce several generations per year and populations can build up quickly. Scout for mites weekly to make sure that populations do not get out of control. Don't overapply nitrogen fertilizer as mites will be attracted to lush growth. Remove weeds, such as wild blackberry, that may host the spider mites. Be careful when using pesticides to control mites as the pesticides will also kill beneficial insects that help control spider mites, such as predatory mites and lacewing larvae. Removing the beneficial insects may lead to an outbreak of spider mites.

Do not use imidacloprid or neonicotinoids to control spider mites as use of these chemicals can lead to mite outbreaks. Insecticidal soap or horticultural oil may be sprayed on plants to control spider mites. Be sure to spray the undersides of the leaves. You may need to do a follow-up spray a week to 10 days later. Once the weather is cooler and rain is more plentiful, spider mites should be less plentiful.

Vegetable Gardens

Snap beans, field peas, and melons can still be planted this month. Tomato plants, eggplant, cucumbers, and sweet potato slips may still be planted, too. Make sure that new transplants are kept well-watered until establishment.

Lawns

Warm-season grasses, such as bermudagrass, centipedegrass, St. Augustinegrass, and zoysiagrass, may still be planted up until July 1. Keep the top 1.5 inches of the soil moist when establishing new lawns.

Established lawns of bermudagrass and zoysiagrass should be fertilized this month. Don't fertilize other warm-season grasses or cool-season grasses such as fescue.