

The End of Summer Garden To-Do List

Every month of the season provides an opportunity to tend the garden. And August, being one of the hottest months, is no exception. While some gardeners long for fall around this time, others are relishing in the bounty both a vegetable and flower garden provides. Keeping up with maintenance during the hottest month will assure both the health of your garden in spring and a shorter maintenance list for fall.

Weeding and Dead-Heading

No doubt. Weeds are most prolific in August. As summer sets in weed seeds become well established, and their plants flourish in conditions less suited for vegetables and flowers. Staying on top of your weeding—this month especially—will deter new weeds from seeding themselves, allowing fewer of them to propagate next year. Keep on track, and in a few years, the dreaded task of weeding will become smaller.

Stay on top of the deadheading too, to keep perennial gardens and annual pots looking their best. Pickoff old, spent flowers to allow for healthy new growth and buds to form. Keeping up on this task forces ever-bearing plants to keep producing flowers. And if you have a perennial that is just plain unruly, pinching its flower heads prevent it from seeding and out-competing the other plants in your garden.

Fall Planting

As days get cooler, kale, lettuce, arugula, mustard greens, and [spinach](#) will proliferate and complete their harvest before the cold hits. Sow seeds directly into the ground, cover them and keep them soaked to encourage sprouting. We live in a hardy zone that stays warmer longer so, beets, radishes, broccoli, and cabbage can be sown from seed, as well. But even if you cannot get more vegetables in the ground, strongly consider planting a cover crop to keep the soil loose, prevent weed build-up, and restore depleted nutrients to the ground.

HAPPY GARDENING!