



## Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article      May 01, 2017

### Garden To-Do List for May by Lydia Holley

May is a glorious month in the garden. Blooms should be abundant, and your flower beds should be full of lush, green growth. Many plants will appreciate being deadheaded, and you will appreciate the blooms that repeat when you attend to your plant's needs. Deadheading can be an easy chore to achieve, snipping off declining blooms as you walk around your garden, taking in its beauty daily.



To keep your garden blooming beautifully, keep an eye on the rain gauge. If the spring rains stop, be certain to step in to irrigate your flower and vegetable beds as needed. If you have been plant shopping, do not delay in putting your new acquisitions into the ground. Keep them well watered until they are established.

Daffodil foliage should be dying down by now. Do not cut daffodil foliage for at least six weeks after blooming. This will give your daffodil bulbs the energy to bloom again next year. I have an area of lawn full of daffodil bulbs. This area does not get mown until all the daffodil foliage has faded. It is worth seeing this area wild and unkempt for a short period of time in order to have numerous daffodils reliably return each spring.

Azaleas need to be fertilized after blooming, so they can be fertilized now. You can also prune them now. While you are looking closely at your azaleas, check for the azalea lace bug. You may not actually see the bugs, but instead you may notice leaves that have a speckled appearance, or a concentration of black spots on the undersides. If you see either of these symptoms, you can spray with an insecticidal soap. It is best to spray monthly to control an outbreak.

Plant annuals for summer color. If you have irises that need to be divided, do it now. This gives their roots time to get established before next spring. Monarda, asters, chrysanthemums and other autumn flowering plants can be cut back to encourage branching and to keep them from getting too tall and leggy.

This winter had wild, fluctuating temperatures, which did a lot of unexpected damage to some plants. If you have shade trees with limbs that have not leafed out, you can feel assured they are not going to recover, and may remove those limbs now.

In the vegetable garden, keep an eye on the vegetables you have already planted, and then harvest and enjoy any that ripen.

If you are wanting to increase the size of your garden, now is also a great time to start any future beds by using the lasagna method. Cover any well-mown area with cardboard, topped with manure, then covered with

several inches of shredded leaves, pine needles or straw. Each layer should be well watered. Be sure that there is no area, no matter how small, left uncovered with all three layers. The entire stack should be approximately 3 to 6 inches high. Keep the bed watered throughout the summer. It will shrink in height as the organic matter breaks down. After six months or so, the grass and weeds underneath should be smothered, and you can then begin to plant. The soil at that time will be dark and fertile.

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