

Gardening in June

If you are a rose lover, you have probably already heard of Rose Rosette and the deadly impact the virus is having on roses. Rose Rosette is a virus spread by the eriophyid mite which is not visible to the naked eye, so looking for the insect will be futile. Symptoms of the disease include sprouts and foliage that have an abnormal red color. These stems will appear thick and succulent and have an overabundance of pliable thorns. New growth may have many branches that create a witch's broom (similar to glyphosate injury). Buds, flowers and leaves may be deformed. At this time there is no cure for the disease. Most miticides are not effective against eriophyid mites. Infected plants should be removed and bagged (including roots). If you suspect that your roses may have Rose Rosette, you can bring a cutting of the abnormal growth to the Fannin County Extension office for a diagnosis.

Google images of Rose Rosette to help with identification. Clemson University has answers to frequently asked questions on their website.

Plant

Buy crape myrtles now while they are in full bloom so you can get the color you want. Also, decide what size mature plant you want and buy accordingly. Crape myrtles should never be topped. Topping reduces the flowering to once a season as opposed to several blooming cycles throughout the season. To reduce the size, cut tall canes out from the base of the plant.

Nurseries place landscape plants on sale as spring winds down. Hand-water the new plants every other day through the summer. They will need frequent deep watering, so sprinkler irrigation will not be enough to get them established.

Vegetable transplants for fall such as tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants can be started from seed in early June for transplanting in July. Starting fall transplants is fairly easy because they can be grown outside. Keep evenly moist until the seeds come up; then make sure the seedlings get sun for most of the day. Morning sun and afternoon shade is beneficial.

Transplants are usually ready in about six weeks after seeds are planted.

Early in June heat-tolerant annuals such as moss rose, pentas, lantanas, Dahlberg daisies and gomphrenas can still be planted in sunny places. Dragon Wing and wax begonias and flowering tobacco for shade.

Lawns. Plant bermuda from seed or sod. Plant St. Augustine in parts of the lawn that receive some shade.

Watering

Water in the morning. It is normal for plants to look a little sad during the day because they have transferred their water reserves to their roots. You may notice that later in the evening the plants will perk back up because they are drawing their water reserves from their roots back to their leaves.

Water tomatoes consistently to help avoid blossom-end rot.

Water newly laid sod for 15 to 20 minutes every day for a week. For the next 7 to 10 days, water the sod every other day if it does not rain. Apply 1/2 inch of water to the lawn twice a week for several weeks if the weather is dry.

Established lawns: One inch of water per week whether from irrigation or rain. If water begins to run off before you have watered 1 inch, water those sections in two 30-minute segments giving the water a chance to soak in between waterings. Your grass is getting dry when the blades fold or roll, it turns a drab, olive-green color, and you leave footprints in the blades when you walk across it.

Mulching helps keep the soil cooler as well as helping retain moisture in flower beds and vegetable gardens

Prune

Spring annuals. Remove spent flowers, seed heads, and flower stalks on coleus, lambs ear and basil.

Pinch growing tips of chrysanthemums to encourage branching for maximum bloom in the fall.

Blackberries: Tip prune new canes to encourage branching. Remove canes that have borne fruit by cutting them back at the base. They will die at the end of the season, so it's good to get them out of the way of the new growth that will produce next year.

Fertilize

Fertilize shrubs, trees, perennials, flowering annuals and vegetables with a high-nitrogen fertilizer if your soil is sandy or all-nitrogen fertilizer for clay soils. Half of the nitrogen should be in a slow-release form.

For potted plants and hanging baskets, use a high-nitrogen liquid fertilizer at each watering.

Lawns: Use a high-nitrogen fertilizer with at least half in a slow release form. Common bermuda every eight to nine weeks. St. Augustine early in the month

Garden Tips

If you plan to start your own tomato seeds, plant those toward the end of the month so transplants will be ready to plant early to mid-July.

Be on the lookout

Spider mites. Look for tiny pale or white speckles on the upper surface of foliage. Fine webbing may be seen on plants with heavy infestation. Hold a sheet of white paper under a leaf and tap the leaf. Look for tiny paprika-colored spots on the paper. Horticultural oil sprays may help control the mites, as well as spraying with a hard stream of water. The best control may come from applications of general-purpose insecticides. Be sure to follow the directions on the label carefully. Check the plants in a day or so to see if the numbers have decreased. Repeat weekly spraying until mites are controlled.

Weeds. Weeds love fertilizer and water just as much as our flowers. Hand-weeding regularly and mulching helps overall control.

For gardening questions call 903-583-5473 or email questions to fanninmastergardener@gmail.com