

WHAT TO DO IN THE GARDEN IN JULY

THE ORNAMENTAL GARDEN

- Be on the lookout for outstanding winter-flowering shrubs. Note their names for planting later in the year or in autumn. These might include many Australian plants but, as well, camellias, early-flowering magnolias, dogwoods, corylus, garrya, witch hazel, stachyurus, wintersweet and many others.
- Many trees and shrubs provide winter interest with fine displays of foliage or bark colour.
- Rhododendrons (including azaleas) and magnolias will appreciate extra moisture in the time leading up to blooming so check the surrounding soil and ensure it is kept moist.
- Divide perennial phlox, perennial asters, Shasta daisies, heuchera and other clumping perennials, retaining the stronger outer growths of each clump. Water well after planting in fresh soil.
- Removing flower buds from spring annuals will improve later display.
- Attend a pruning demonstration by the Horticultural Society of Canberra Inc. Local garden centres often run courses.
- Prune wisteria and deciduous climbers.
- Take cuttings of chrysanthemums at the end of this month.
- Many shrubs can be pruned this month, removing dead and diseased wood, old canes and any rubbing growth, while it is easier to see. The pruning of spring flowering shrubs should be delayed until after flowering; otherwise you will be reducing your flower display.
- Check catalogues and order summer-flowering bulbs, including liliiums. Liliiums should be planted as soon as possible after being lifted to prevent drying out.

THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

- Prune kiwifruit, remove any surrounding weeds and mulch thickly.
- Divide globe artichoke, asparagus and rhubarb.
- Sow seeds of broad bean.
- Plant strawberries (certified stock), berries and currants.
- Early-flowering peaches and nectarines will soon be at bud-swell stage when it's important to spray with Bordeaux, copper or lime sulphur to help avoid leaf curl, a fungal disease which causes the new spring leaves to distort and thicken, and fall prematurely. Follow up in two weeks with another spray, and encourage your tree/s to grow past leaf curl by indulging them with compost, fertiliser and a little moisture.

- Potted lemon trees should be moved to a warmer position or covered at night. Pots can be insulated from the cold by placing inside a larger pot, and stuffing newspaper or straw between the two layers. In time, your tree will be a welcome source of winter colour.
- Lemon trees in the garden require frost protection while young. Frost protection cloth is available, or Stressguard® is a product which will afford a few degrees of protection. Older trees may still burn off with frosts, but those leaves should be left unpruned to protect the inner canopy. In spring the tree can be pruned and fertiliser applied.
- Look for and control the nymphs of the bronze orange bug with a spray of Eco or Pest Oil.

GENERAL MAINTENANCE

- Where possible, apply thick mulch to keep weeds from germinating and remove weeds as they appear. It's easy to scrape away tiny seedling weeds, but if you let them flower and produce seed, you will have those weeds for years to come.
- Now is a good time to clean and sharpen secateurs, loppers and saws.
- Wooden handles on all hand tools should be sanded and treated with linseed oil or another preservative.
- Mower blades should be checked and replaced if necessary. It's also a good time to arrange or do any necessary maintenance on edgers and trimmers. Check or change oil in four-stroke machines.
- Now is a good time to clean the glasshouse, shade house, garage or garden shed, and clean up and remove any rubbish.
- Complete any construction work already started.
- Cultivate and improve any areas free of plants.
- Remove couch runners growing into gardens.
- Water only when necessary, in the warmest part of the day. It's a good time to install, alter or repair watering systems■.