

June Garden Tips
By Sandi Stringer Somervell County Master Gardener

O.K. folks, summer is just around the corner and it's time to prepare your plants for the sizzling hot and dry weather that lasts into August and often September.

Plant Selection

Fortunately there are native and adapted plants that thrive in our heat and the following are some examples:

Annuals: Caladium, Coleus, Marigold, Periwinkle, Moss Rose, Purslane, Scaevola, Zinnia

Perennials: Firebush, Gold star esperanza, Hardy hibiscus, Lantana, Petunia, Phlox. Plumbago, Salvias, Sages, and Verbena

Keep on deadheading and fertilizing your flowerbeds to maintain good health. Use organic or timed-release products. Keep the weed population under control because they rob water from the soil.

Mulch Mulch Mulch! It is one of the gardener's mainstays because it is the highest-impact, lowest-tech water conserving practice. A good 3 inches of mulch will help reduce moisture evaporation as well as reduce weed population. Hardwood mulches will actually add nutrients back into your soil

Water Water only when plants need it, they will show signs of wilting or moisture stress. Group your plants based on their water needs, i.e. don't put water loving plants next to cactus. Think in terms of 3 plant zones. The regular watering zone requires water once a week or more in the absence of rainfall. The occasional watering zone requires once a month watering in absence of rain, and the Natural Rainfall zone requires only natural rainfall. Consider using drip irrigation on plants because there will be less evaporation and try to water between sundown and sunrise, when the wind and temperatures are lower

Now! Sit back, enjoy a glass of tea or lemonade and make occasional checks on your flowerbeds. With the right plants and care, your beds should do well throughout the summer

Source: Doug Welsh's Texas Garden Almanac