

THE NEW HORT THYMES

Serving Cleveland County, Oklahoma with the most up to date gardening, lawn, landscaping, and horticulture information.



It's Beginning To Look A Lot Like Summer

Everywhere you go...

Take a look at the tomatoes ripening once again, with mosquitoes and fireflies aglow.

It's beginning to look a lot like summer, the ground is finally dry. But the prettiest sight to see, are all the flowers that didn't drown and die.

A pair of climbing roses and expandable hoses is the wish of gardening souls. Beds that are filled with plants that thrill and surpass all of our garden goals. And the nurseries can hardly wait for mums to start again.

It's beginning to look a lot like summer, soon the heat will burn. And the thing that will make us smile, is weeding for awhile, right between our ferns. It's beginning to look a like summer...

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Patriotic Containers for the 4th of July

Thriller, filler, spiller – the tried-and-true formula for perfect containers. Container arrangements need a tall plant to catch the eye, plants to fill out around it, and then a plant to spill over the side, softening the hard edge of the container. Containers are usually done up in early May, as colorful annuals become available in garden centers. Another great time to create containers is now – as these plants are marked down for end of season sales. To spruce up the backyard for Independence Day festivities, consider selecting red, white, and blue plants for these containers.

Thriller Plants



Angelonia

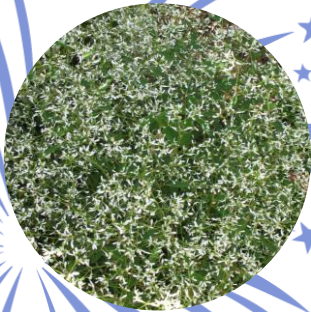


Plumbago



Salvia

Filler Plants



Diamond Frost
Euphorbia



Pentas



Hypoestes

Spiller Plants



Trailing
Periwinkles



Fan Flower



Blue Daze

Conquering Squash Bugs

Squash bugs - the most fearsome of all vegetable garden pests. Despised by gardeners everywhere, these insects prefer cucurbit species including yellow squash, zucchini, pumpkins, watermelon, cantaloupe, and cucumbers. Winter squash is rarely infested with squash bugs. What's a gardener to do about such pervasive insects? As with most garden pests, there's a good rule of thumb:



Know your enemy.

Here's what gardeners need to know about squash bugs:

1. Identification

Adult squash bugs are brownish gray and about ½ inch long (a). They are oval shaped, compact, and have a triangular shaped thorax behind the head. The eggs are bronze colored and laid on the underside of the leaf (b). Nymphs are gregarious, usually found in masses. Younger nymphs are pale green (c). As they grow, they become gray with black legs (d). It's important to recognize all stages of the squash bug so they can be removed. Early detection prevents a large infestation later in the season.



2. Habit and Lifecycle

Young squash bugs spend a lot of their time on the underside of the leaf. Adults congregate near the plant stem at the soil level. They also like to hide underneath mulch and soil clods. One control strategy is to place boards near plants and check them in the morning. Destroy any squash bugs that have harbored there overnight.

Squash bugs overwinter as adults and emerge to find host plants in June. Planting cucurbits in July for a fall harvest will make squash bug populations more manageable.

3. Damage

Squash bugs have piercing-sucking mouthparts. Their damage appears as small yellow dots, creating a tattered appearance. Feeding primarily occurs on the leaves and stems, but can occur on fruit in severe situations.

4. Control

Removal is the best option. Destroy adults and remove leaves that have eggs. Consider floating row covers to prevent egg-laying. Pesticides are not recommended – they will affect insects needed for pollination.

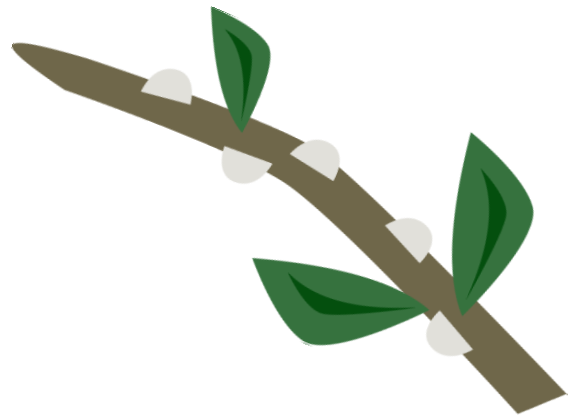


July Plant of the Month: Rose of Sharon

Enjoy summer-long blooms with a low maintenance shrub

Rose of Sharon, *Hibiscus syriacus*, is a hardy, long-blooming plant that is making a comeback in the gardening world. Sometimes called an althea, it is a small, deciduous shrub growing to about ten feet. It can tolerate many soil types and can thrive in a large range of soil pH. Rose of Sharon is relatively drought tolerant and does not like extended periods of moisture. There are many varieties, with single and double bloomed flowers coming in shades of pink, lavender, red, and white.

Rose of Sharon is a good replacement for crapemyrtles plagued with crapemyrtle bark scale (CMBS). Crapemyrtles are arguably the most popular long blooming, small shrub, but CMBS has made them a high maintenance eyesore. Rose of Sharons provide a similar colors palette in a similar size.



Scale /spīk/: a small, sap-sucking insect with a shell-like covering

Garden Tips for July

- Water plants deeply and early in the morning; most plants need approximately 1 to 2 ½ inches of water per week
- Give flowering plants a mid-season feeding or side dress of compost to keep them through the fall
- Continue to deadhead ornamentals for more blooms later in the season
- Watch for spider mites as the weather gets hot and dry
- Monitor containers closely, especially hanging baskets; these dry out quickly and can require two watering sessions during the heat of the summer
- Add more mulch to areas where it has washed away or decomposed
- Stake tall plants so they do not fall or break
- Divide and replant crowded irises until August
- Stay ahead of weeds – pull them before flowering to prevent more work later
- Harvest fruits and vegetables early in the morning and refrigerate as soon as possible
- Make fall vegetable garden plantings in late July
- Properly identify pests so that you don't get rid of the beneficial insects
- Meet the water requirements of turfgrasses to keep a green lawn through the summer
- Fertilizing of warm-season grasses can continue if water is present for growth
- Sharpen or replace mower blades as needed; shredded leaf blades invite disease and allow more stress on the grass
- Look for brown patch disease on cool-season grasses
- Provide birdbaths, shelter, and food to turn your landscape into a backyard wildlife habitat

Eat Seasonally

In-season produce is fresher, cheaper, more nutritious, and better for the environment. These are some of the seasonal crops for July:

Blackberries



Corn

Cucumbers



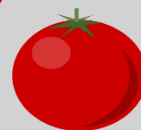
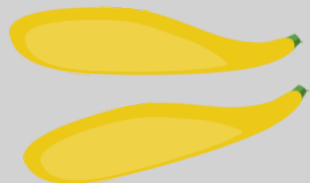
Green Beans

Okra



Peppers

Summer Squash



Tomatoes

Watermelon



Upcoming Events

July 13th, 10:00am to 11:30am – Getting the DIRT on SOIL

Cleveland County OSU Extension Office, Classroom “C”, 601 E. Robinson St., Norman, OK 73071

Join Master Gardener Cathy Bowden to learn what to do with soils that seem too poor to grow grass, flowers, or vegetables. In class, students will turn clay into prime planting soil! You’ll learn the secrets to soil improvement that are easy to do and will increase your chances of growing things you never believed. Learn about plant nutrients and how to spot nutrient deficiencies. The class will also demystify the numbers on fertilizer bags. You’ll be ready to put in that garden or turn your lawn green after completing “Getting the DIRT on SOIL!”

This class is free and no reservations are required.

July 25th, 6:30pm to 8:00pm – Recycle your Rain with Rain Barrels!

Pioneer Library System – Norman Public Library East, 3051 Alameda St, Norman, OK 73071

This program will cover the benefits of rain barrels, water conservation in the home, and rain barrel construction. The OSU Extension will offer a hands-on demonstration and showcase a sample rain barrel to see if this is right for your home. The City of Norman will be present to offer resources, watershed demonstrations, and information about how you can sign up with City of Norman’s rain barrel program.

Registration is encouraged but not required, for reminders and notices.

August 7th, 6:30pm to 8:00pm – Fall Gardening

Cleveland County OSU Extension Office, Classroom “C”, 601 E. Robinson St., Norman, OK 73071

Fall gardens can be started as early as late July. It’s difficult to think about fall in the heat of the summer. As the weather cools off, late plantings are perfectly positioned for harvest before the first frost. Join Cleveland County Horticulture Educator, Courtney DeKalb-Myers, to learn more about this strategy of vegetable gardening.

This class is free and no reservations are required.

About the editor...

Courtney DeKalb-Myers has been the Cleveland County horticulture educator since August 2018. Her position handles homeowner inquiries, master gardener advisement, and other horticulture education programming throughout the state. She is originally from Norman, Oklahoma and developed a passion for gardening at a young age. She went onto study horticulture at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater with an emphasis in entrepreneurship. After graduating from OSU, she moved to Raleigh, North Carolina to attend NC State for graduate school. Her research was heavily focused on vegetable production, specifically processing tomatoes for a local salsa product. The emphasis on local products motivated her to move back to Oklahoma and she is so excited to now serve the town that raised her.

