



## Garden Fatigue

*It gets a little tough this time of year*

Have the weeds taken over your flower beds? Do you have cucumbers as big as a sweet potato, still waiting to be harvested? Are the containers you watered this morning wilted by the time you get home from work?

If so, you may be suffering from garden fatigue.

It's common this time of year. Fall is getting closer, but it sure doesn't feel like it. Thankfully, we can look forward to our fall gardens and the cooler temperatures that will come with it. Looking for some refreshing garden tasks? Wilted and insect battered vegetables can be pulled and replaced with fresh transplants. Add another layer of mulch to combat those weeds. Consider installing drip emitters into containers, so that you don't have to water as often. But most importantly – don't wear yourself out. The garden will still be there when you're ready.

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# Drought Tolerant Options for Parched Gardens

August is here. July came with the sun and Norman hasn't seen a decent rain since. The water bill is creeping upward and dragging the hose around to water does not sound fun. The gardens are about as worn out as the gardeners. One way to avoid this situation is to use drought tolerant plants within the landscape. Drought tolerant plants are more adapted to these water-stressed conditions and will thrive through the heat of the summer. Consider using some of these plants to make this time of year less stressful.



**Stonecrop**

Stonecrop blooms with clusters of pink flowers in the fall. It has succulent like foliage and prefers a full sun location. Consider the popular cultivar 'Autumn Joy'.



**Japanese Painted Fern**

The best drought tolerant fern, Japanese painted fern add a beautiful silver foliage to the gardens. It is low to the ground and makes a great border in shade gardens.



**Guara**

Sometimes referred to as whirling butterfly, guara has a dance-in-the-wind like appearance. Flowers come in pink or white and a bronze foliage variety is available.



**Coneflower**

A classic in any prairie bed, coneflowers are highly adapted to drought conditions. More cultivars are available on the market, including different colors and dwarf varieties.



**Autumn Sage**

This bright pink perennial will bloom all summer long. It is medium sized with upright foliage. The reddish pink, tubular shaped flowers are a great attractant for pollinators.



**Russian Sage**

Russian sage has grey-green foliage with wispy purple flowers. It performs best in full sun. It can grow quite tall and may be useful as a backdrop in the garden.

# Beat The Heat With Hot Peppers

Peppers are a favorite vegetable among gardeners. They're easy to grow and they come in many colors, shapes, sizes, and heat levels. Ever wondered what's behind that heat level?

The heat in peppers is caused by the chemical compound capsaicin. When we consume capsaicin, tongue receptors undergo a pain response to combat the heat. So rather than be a flavor compound or one of the five tastes (i.e., salty, sweet, sour, bitter, and umami), our bodies actually go through a chemical reaction to perceive the burn that is associated with hot peppers.

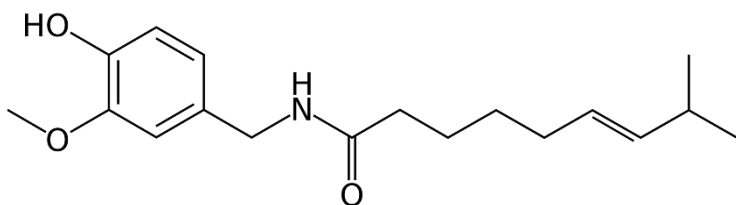


Figure 1. The chemical structure of capsaicin

In its natural environment, birds are the primary way of dispersal for peppers. Birds do not have the receptor for capsaicin, so they can eat hot peppers without a negative response. Mammals do have the receptor, so they've learned to avoid eating them. This is a win-win – pepper seeds can travel long distances and birds have their own food source.

Some peppers are hotter than others. The heat level in peppers is measured by Scoville heat units (SHU). Peppers with a higher level of capsaicin will have a higher SHU and thus, stronger pain response as we eat those peppers.

Responses to pepper heat vary among individuals. Some people are highly tolerant of high pepper heat, while others may have difficulty eating low SHU peppers. Other flavors are present in hot peppers that can add a nice element to dishes. If you are particularly sensitive to hot peppers, consider growing some of the no heat varieties. No heat options are available for jalapenos and habaneros.

## Scoville Heat Unit Scale

### Pepper Types

SHU

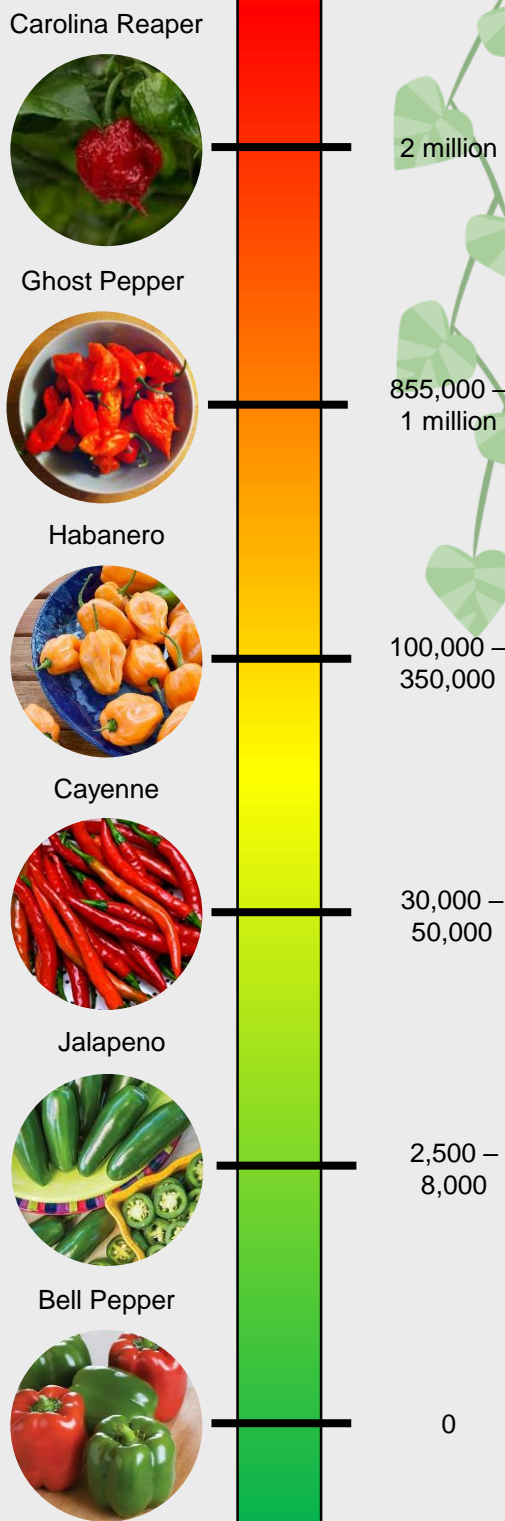




Photo from Medical News Today

## August Plant of the Month: Aloe vera

Cool off with this popular houseplant

Aloe vera is a succulent plant with thick, fleshy leaves and serrated edges. It originates from the Arabian Peninsula and grows as a perennial in tropic climates. In Oklahoma, it makes a great houseplant or addition to a succulent container during the warm weather. This plant prefers dry, well-drained conditions and would do best when planted in a cactus potting soil. Water aloe vera only when the soil is dry. Aloe vera plants require bright light, so it is best to place them in south or west facing windows.

The fleshy leaves store phytochemical compounds that can be used as a topical treatment for sunburns. It provides relief with a soothing and cooling effect. Simply break off one of the leaves and use the gel on the affected areas.



**Serrated** /sə' rādəd/: having or denoting a jagged edge; sawlike

## Garden Tips for August

- August is a good month to start fall vegetables gardens:
  - Bush beans, cucumbers, and summer squash can be replanted for another crop
  - Beets, broccoli, carrots, lettuce, and other cool-season crops can also be planted at this time
- Continue protective insect applications on home fruit trees; a good spray schedule is often abandoned too early
- Towards the end of August, divide and replant spring-blooming perennials like iris, peonies, and daylilies
- Consider leaving annuals seeds to self-sow; cosmos, cleome, and tickseed will reseed themselves for the next year
- Pull weeds as soon as they appear; weeds can grow very quickly in this warm weather
- Water compost during extremely dry periods so that it remains active
- Watch the temperatures and rain fall – consider adding supplemental irrigation to drought sensitive plants during the heat of the summer
- Grassy winter weeds can be prevented with a pre-emergent herbicide application in late August
- Check for grubs in the lawn; mid-to-late August is the best time to control infestations
- Tall fescue should be mowed at 3 inches during the hot summer
- Irrigated warm-season lawns can be fertilized once again in early August
- Discontinue deadheading roses by mid-August to help initiate winter hardiness
- Watch for second generation fall webworm in late August/early September

## Eat Seasonally

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

Corn



Eggplants

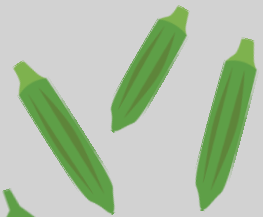


Figs



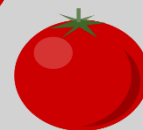
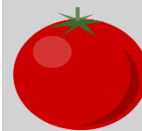
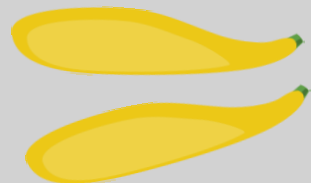
Green Beans

Okra



Peppers

Summer Squash



Tomatoes

Watermelon



# Upcoming Events

## August 7<sup>th</sup>, 6:30pm to 8:00pm – Fall Gardening

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

It might be too early for pumpkin spice lattes, but it's not too early to start planning your fall garden. It's difficult to think about autumn in the heat of the summer, but fall gardens require strategic planning for success. As the weather cools off, late plantings are perfectly positioned for a harvest before the killing frost. Join Cleveland County Horticulture Educator, Courtney DeKalb-Myers, to learn more about this strategy of gardening and how to have a successful fall harvest.

This class is free and no reservations are required.

## August 10<sup>th</sup>, 10:00am to 11:00am – Hypertufa Planter Workshop

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

Cleveland County Master Gardeners are offering a class on how to construct hypertufa planters. Hypertufa planters make a beautiful garden container that will last for years. Hypertufa is an anthropic rock made from various aggregates bonded together using Portland cement. Materials for the workshop will be provided for the first 15 participants. All other participants are welcome to watch the demonstration.

This class is free and no reservations are required.

## September 5<sup>th</sup> – September 8<sup>th</sup> – Cleveland County Free Fair

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

It's that time of year again! The Cleveland County Free Fair will begin on September 5<sup>th</sup> and end on September 8<sup>th</sup>. Fair entry drop-off will be on September 4<sup>th</sup> from 3:00pm to 8:00pm. Come check out all of the amazing exhibits, enjoy sweet treats, ride amusement rides, and listen to some live music. For more information and a full schedule of events, visit [www.clevelandcountyfair.org](http://www.clevelandcountyfair.org).

This event 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.

