

Summer

June, July, August

Vegetable and Flower Gardens

Weed Control

Weeds grow beautifully in our summers. It is important to get them out before they have set seed, if possible. If the weeds have bloomed, target weed control for just after the flowers have wilted, using your favorite nontoxic method.

Mulch flower and vegetable beds with compost or grass clippings to conserve water and control weeds.

Remember that some weeds are required to be [controlled in King County](#).

Insect Pests, General

It is critical to make sure you know the exact insect that is causing the problem. You may need to go out at night with a flashlight to catch them in the act. Collect at least one specimen to identify.

You can bring it in to the Master Gardeners, along with a sample of the damage. Once you know what it is, then you can research how best to deal with it. Recommended resources include Master Gardeners, the Garden Hotline, Grow Smart, Grow Safe, and Garden Green's *Green Gardening Ways That Work!*

<https://gardengreen.webs.com/common-garden-problems>

Use fabric row covers to keep many kinds of insect pests off sensitive vegetables. For details on how best to use row covers for specific crops, see this:

<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/floatingrow-cover>

Root Weevil on Rhododendron

If you have ragged edges on your rhododendron leaves, summer is a good time to apply beneficial nematodes (e.g. *Biosafe*) to the soil under the bushes. Also make sure there is a good 3 inches of compost mulch over the roots, and water appropriately.

Slug Control

The best time to spread your homemade compost is in July and August. This is because slugs like to lay most of their eggs in fall, in

Preventing Fungal Diseases your compost pile. So put your homemade compost in the garden during the heat of the summer, before there are slug eggs in it.

Like Powdery Mildew, Blackspot, and Late Blight on Tomatoes

Once these diseases have taken hold, they are nearly impossible to remove. Prevention is the best alternative. Watering and good air circulation are key. Water early in the morning, and do not get the leaves wet. Drip irrigation will save water and keep the foliage dry. If this doesn't solve the problem, consider moving the plants to a sunnier, drier location, and/or pruning overhead trees and shrubs.

If you do wish to spray something, consider these products: *Bacillus subtilis* (Serenade) and *Bacillus amyloliquefaciens* strain D747, (Southern Ag Garden Friendly Biological Fungicide) started as soon as damage is seen.

Lawns

Lawn Weeds

Any lawn looks good once it's mowed. Relax. It's summer. If you really want to remove some, however, consider one of the long-handled weed pullers that work well for dandelions and other tap-rooted lawn weeds. You can stand up and do the weeding. Pull them before they go to seed.

Do not use Weed and Feed products containing 2,4-D, as this chemical is extremely toxic to salmon and other life. It is so toxic that by law, one cannot apply it more than twice a year.

Watering to Prevent Lawn Disease

Improper watering is a major cause of damaged lawns. Light, frequent sprinklings encourage shallow rooting of turfgrasses. Shallow rooted turf cannot withstand sudden changes in temperature or soil moisture. Overwatering can cause soggy conditions and may (1) leach plant nutrients, especially nitrogen; (2) encourage weeds such as speedwell, buttercup, and annual bluegrass; and (3) cause oxygen starvation of the grass roots. Use a small soil tube, spading fork, or shovel to determine soil moisture conditions before watering. Irrigate when the top 2 inches become dry and crumbly and water to at least 12 inches deep if the soil is that deep.

The best time to water for most efficiency and to limit disease is early morning, i.e., 4 a.m. For areas that can't be watered in early morning hours, irrigation should begin as late at night as possible, i.e., 11 p.m., to limit the time leaf surfaces would remain wet. Watering once a week should be fine for lawn soil textures of sandy loam or heavier. Light, sandy soils may require watering twice a week in summer. Irrigate according to plant type, soil texture and depth.

Fruit Trees

Holistic Orchard Spray

Continue to spray the basic holistic orchard spray throughout the season (to just before harvest). Add herbal teas of horsetail, comfrey, and nettles in summer. Omit the hydrolyzed fish after June.

Spray for summer moth control according to the timing of the species attacking your fruit. A rotation of spinosad and *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) just as eggs hatch is typical. Pure neem oil may well get this job done in its own right if holistic spray options for disease are being continued in the summer months.

Apple Maggot Control

Surround® WP kaolin clay forms a physical barrier that protects from many pests when sprayed on fruits. The white barrier not only repels pests, it causes irritation, confusion, and is an obstacle for feeding and egg-laying. Begin applying Surround® WP kaolin clay by late June, or as early as petal fall, and reapply every 7 to 14 days, or more frequently if it rains, to maintain a good visible film on the fruit. This works for both apple maggot and codling moth. You will need to spray throughout the season for apple maggot.

Nylon footies also provide a good physical barrier, especially for apple maggot. Put them on the small developing apples and thin the apples at the same time.

From early August to harvest, pick up and destroy fallen apples at weekly intervals. Or let the deer eat them.

Visit your trunks

Install or handweed a peastone circle around the trunk, check for borer, adjust mesh vole guards, rub loose bark off, place a repellent mudpack over active sapsucker holes.

Soil Tests

Take ongoing soil tests every few years to check on nutrient status and thus the need to obtain specific soil amendments for fall application.

Treat anthracnose on young fruit trees

Treat the young trees. It is not a problem for large old trees. Don't spray with copper. Instead, carve out the anthracnose and paint with a mix of copper solution and latex.