

# Gardening tips for August



**Sally Scalera**

GARDENING

With the hot temperatures hanging around through August, it's still a good idea to divide your projects up and work outside in the early morning and/or the evening hours. If you are planning on growing a vegetable garden this fall, now is the time to start preparing for it! Here are some ideas of things to do this month.

» Remove all spent vegetable plants to prepare for the prime vegetable gardening season that is just around the corner. Add a four-inch layer of compost, mushroom compost, or aged manure over the entire garden area to enrich the soil.

» This month the following vegetables can be planted; beans; carrots; eggplant; endive/escarole; okra; bunching onions (green and shallots); peppers; squash; Southern peas; and tomatoes.

» The following vegetable seeds can be sown now for a September planting; arugula; beans; broccoli; Brussels sprouts; cabbage; cauliflower; Chinese cabbage; collards; cucumbers; eggplant; endive/escarole; kale; mustard; peppers; spinach; squash; Swiss chard; tomatoes and turnips.

» To help the lawn tolerate the weather extremes of flood and drought, spray it weekly with liquid seaweed. Seaweed supplies trace elements and growth hormones which research has shown helps plants to handle environmental stresses. For the lawn, apply the liquid seaweed using a hose-end sprayer. For edible and ornamental plants, a hand pump-up sprayer works well to apply a fine mist to both sides of the foliage.

» A common practice that can be harmful to both St. Augustine and Bahia is to mow it too short! The recommended height to mow both St. Augustine and Bahia at three to four inches high. That doesn't mean to mow the grass when it is three to four inches tall, but to have grass blades that are three to four inches tall after mowing! Taller blades are much better for the turf so, 4 inches is a



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SALLY SCALERA  
Impatiens



Crossandra



Peppers

great height to aim for. Shorter grass blades equal a shorter root system which dry out faster than a deeper root system. Not only would mowing the grass four-inches high result in a deeper root system, but there would also be more foliage to carry on photosynthesis.

» Prune back overgrown Pentas now. To produce new plants from the material pruned off, root the clippings in water. Make sure to prune each cutting just below where the leaves are, this is the node, and remove the lower two to three sets of leaves. This will insure that only the stem is placed in the water. It may take a few weeks but new roots will grow. When a good root system has formed, plant the cuttings in a four-inch pot. Care for them for another month to get them established before planting them in the garden.

» For ideas of flowers to plant in a sunny spot consider coleus, impatiens, marigolds, celosia, melampodium, gazania, gallardia, cosmos, purslane, sunflower and salvia, just to name a few.

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Brevard County Farmers Market at the Wickham Park Equestrian Center every Thursday from 3-6 p.m.

» Some herbs that can be planted this month include; chives, dill, fennel, mints, oregano, cardamom, ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), Mexican tarragon, and rosemary.

» Bulbs, for sunny areas, that can be planted now include; African iris (*Morea* spp.), Aztec lily (*Sprekelia formosissima*), Snowflake (*Leucojum* spp.), Spider lily (*Hymenocallis* sp.) and *Watsonia*.

» Bulbs for partially shady areas include; amaryllis, white butterfly ginger (*Hedychium coronarium*), Calla (*Zantedeschia* spp.), Narcissus, Shell ginger (*Alpinia zerumbet*), and rain lily (*Zephyranthes* spp.)

» For ideas of colorful plants for a shady spot, consider impatiens, crossandra, coleus, angelwing begonias, and caladiums.