

What to Do in June 2023

June 3

Perennials: Continue to pinch back late flowering perennials, stake plants if needed, and refresh mulch to retain moisture during the hottest days of summer. Young spotted lanternfly nymphs may feed on perennials and other herbaceous plants before they are large enough to pierce the bark of woody plants. Be on the lookout for this invasive pest. See <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-species-exotic-pests/spotted-lanternfly/> for information and ReportSLF.com to report sightings.

Flowers: There's still time to plant summer bulbs, including caladiums, calla lilies, dahlias and gladioli. To promote vigorous daffodils, species tulips, and other flowering bulbs next year, remove developing seeds at the top of the flower stem. You can let the flower stalks fade naturally or remove them if they become unsightly.

Fruits and Vegetables: Long days and warm or hot weather promote flowering of many early season vegetables, which in turn may cause some varieties of cabbage family plants (Brassicas) lettuce, and others to develop strong flavors. Continue to harvest spring crops before they flower, go to seed and become unpleasantly strong, spicy tasting, or bitter. Radish roots will decline as the plants flower, but the developing seed pods may be mild and tender before the seeds begin to mature. If these are to your liking, you can enjoy them raw or cooked. Check for ripening strawberries to enjoy homegrown fruit, or visit U-Pick farms, farmer's markets, or other local outlets.

Trees and Shrubs: Prune spring-flowering trees and shrubs right after their flowers fade, before next year's buds have set. Some shrubs, such as lilac, rhododendron and others, begin to initiate these flower buds for the following year within a few weeks after the current blossoms fade.

Lawns: Mowing "high," at 3½ to 4 inches, contributes to the health of the grass while retaining functionality for ecosystem services and many uses. If you mow according to the "⅓ rule" you won't need to mow as often. Mow when the grass reaches approximately 5 inches, cutting it to 3½ or 4 inches. Grass needs to grow faster to replace what was lost when it is cut short, especially if half of the grass blades or more are removed. Smaller grass clippings also disappear into the lawn more easily than larger trimmings. Clippings that remain on the lawn act as a natural fertilizer and save the time and hassle of disposal.

Houseplants: If you want to bring houseplants outdoors for their summer vacation, but haven't yet done so, you can do it now. While houseplants typically like bright lighting indoors, natural light is much brighter. To prevent scorching, make sure the plants are gradually exposed to outdoor light conditions and remain shaded from strong sunlight.

June 10

Perennials: Take notice of early-blooming perennials that are clumpy or too big for their space. Make a note in your September calendar for those that may benefit from division in early fall. An exception: you may divide low-growing ground cover sedum varieties, and other very drought tolerant perennials that have finished blooming now, provided they receive an inch of water weekly, inclusive of rainfall, for establishment. Wait until early fall to divide most spring flowering perennials.

Flowers: You can still sow seeds of fast-growing annuals such as cosmos, marigold, nasturtium, and zinnia directly in the garden.

Fruits and Vegetables: Finish planting most warm season vegetables, such as beans, cucumber, tomatoes peppers, and winter squash soon. If you are in a cool microclimate, you can wait another week or so to plant

eggplant, melons, okra and other heat-loving tropical vegetables. You can also wait to plant fast maturing summer squash until the end of June (after most squash vine borers lay eggs) to help reduce borer injury.

Trees and Shrubs: You can still lightly shape evergreen shrubs and hedges. Severely pruning plants at this time can cause sunburn on newly exposed leaves that were previously protected by growth above. If your roses have black spot disease, pick off diseased leaves as is practical, clean up fallen leaves, and contact your local Cooperative Extension for advice. Spotted lanternfly nymphs may be found on roses, vines and other thin-barked woody plants. See <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-species-exotic-pests/spotted-lanternfly/> for information and ReportSLF.com to report sightings.

Lawns: Has grass crept into adjacent flower beds? Keep the yard looking neat, and “natural areas” looking intentional by maintaining the boundaries between the lawn and gardens.

Houseplants: Indoor and outdoor container plants that are in a rapid phase of growth may benefit by fertilization every few weeks, as nutrients are leached away during waterings. Follow fertilizer label directions for best results.

June 17

Perennials: Continue to pinch back mums and other fall blooming perennials until the Fourth of July. This will help them to stay bushy and form more flowers.

Flowers: Keep window boxes and planters blooming all summer by being vigilant about deadheading spent blossoms, watering and fertilizing as needed.

Fruits and Vegetables: Last call to plant most warm-season vegetables such as cucumbers, eggplants, peppers, squash and tomatoes for a decent harvest. Continue harvesting early crops that have maintained their quality. If you have space, you can leave flowering lettuce and other plants for pollinators. If there is no extra space, pull these and other spent spring crops to add to the compost pile. Spotted lanternfly nymphs may be found on cucumber, squash and other vegetables. Grape vines are a preferred host of this invasive pest, and can kill the vines when feeding pressure is heavy. See <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-species-exotic-pests/spotted-lanternfly/> for information and ReportSLF.com to report sightings.

Trees and Shrubs: Continue to look for the three D’s—diseased, damaged or dead branches—and remove them. Reblooming tea roses may benefit from fertilizer according to label directions after the first blossoms begin to fade.

Lawns: If you are mowing on a 2 week schedule, when the grass has grown to about 5 inches tall, cut it back to about 3½ inches. This regulates the rate of growth and reduces mowing frequency. Grass blades that are “tall” support deeper roots and thicker growth than shorter grass. This is important because the natural response to heat of cool-season grasses is to go dormant and wait until conditions improve in cooler weather, while some roots naturally degrade in the heat. If you irrigate, consider applying a half inch of water, inclusive of rainfall, twice weekly through summer.

Houseplants: Don’t forget to periodically check on the houseplants vacationing outdoors, trimming, watering or repositioning them as needed. As it gets hotter, you may need to water more frequently.

June 24

Perennials: Mulch doesn't have to be only a spring thing. If the perennials are contending with weeds, after you remove weeds that are currently present, you can apply an inch or so of mulch after a rainfall or irrigation to conserve moisture. The mulch will help to block light that promotes weed germination. If weeds are not a problem, you can leave some bare soil as habitat for ground nesting bees.

Flowers: You can cheer up shady areas with plants for a pop of color. Consider planting ageratum, begonias, disease resistant impatiens, annual lobelia, nicotiana, bedding salvia, sweet alyssum and more. Also consider plants with colorful leaves such as caladium, coleus, polka dot plant (*Hypoestes phyllostachya*) and bloodleaf (*Iresine herbstii*) which has cream colored leaves with red or lime colored accents.

Fruits and Vegetables: Continue weeding, watering, and mulching as needed. Regular weeding here and there can make this task easier than dedicating a whole afternoon to the project. If you remove weeds before they flower, there will be fewer seedlings to deal with in the future. Add vegetable scraps and weeds without seed or other propagules to your compost pile. Mix in "brown" materials like paper and old leaves, periodically moisten and turn the pile to speed decomposition. Continue to pick strawberries and look for early ripening cherries. Check for the fast-moving, black and white spotted lanternfly nymphs on vegetable and fruit plants. See <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-species-exotic-pests/spotted-lanternfly/> for information and [ReportSLF.com](https://nysipm.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-species-exotic-pests/spotted-lanternfly/) to report sightings.

Trees and Shrubs: Be sure to provide adequate water to newly planted trees and shrubs. It generally takes at least 3 seasons for woody plants to become established, so don't forget to water those planted last year and the year before. Provide an inch of water weekly, inclusive of rainfall.

Lawns: Here's a task you *don't* have to do: fertilize the lawn. Grass roots naturally decline a bit in hot weather and fertilizer could burn as we head into the real heat of summer. Best to wait until fall. If you irrigate, you can provide one half inch of water twice weekly, inclusive of rainfall. Return to providing one inch of water weekly if needed when the weather cools in early fall. You can also stretch out mowing intervals if the grass has slowed its growth as the weather has warmed.

Houseplants: If plants need transplanting to larger containers, you can do this messy task now, outdoors in the shade. Choose a pot that's at most two inches larger in radius than the old pot. This helps to stabilize the new transplants. Many plants also won't do well if the potting mix holds too much moisture around their roots.