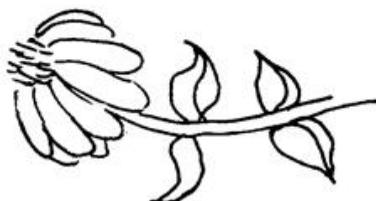


July

Weather

Hotter! No, make that **really** hotter! July is when the thermostat hits 100 degrees and suddenly you long for cooler weather. The low temperatures in July are in the mid-60's at night and daytime highs are around 92 degrees on average. Keep that in mind next fall and plant a couple of trees. You will not have to run your evaporative cooler as often. Average rainfall is a little less than 1 ½ inches, usually in the form of brief cloudbursts.

July is when the summer rains begin. It often seems that the rain begins with the New Mexico Arts and Crafts Fair at the end of June and ends with the State Fair in early September! In fact, the heavy rains do not typically occur until the end of July. By then, the earth is parched and you are tempted to stand with your tongue out to catch the longed-for moisture.



What's Blooming

Look for daylilies (*Hemerocallis*), bee balm (*Monarda*), tall garden Phlox (*P. paniculata*), Asters, Shasta daisy (*Chrysanthemum maximum*), calendula, tall Veronicas, many sunflowers (the smaller varieties), blackeyed Susans (*Rudbeckia hirta*), crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*), butterfly bush (*Buddleia*), and Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*).

Xeric Blooms

Need to cool off: look in your garden at the blue blooming plants. If you don't find any, take a cold drink, sit in the air conditioning, browse the catalogs, and plan for your fall and spring plantings. Most of last month's plants are working overtime to brighten your garden this month including yarrows (*Achillea*), purple coneflower (*Echinacea*), Russian sage (*Perovskia*), pincushion flower (*Scabiosa*), creeping thymes (*Thymus serpyllum*), desert zinnia (*Zinnia acerosa*), yellow bird of paradise (*Caesalpinia gilliesii*), Vitex, desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*), and various honeysuckles (*Lonicera*). Hyssops (*Agastache*), purple and white coneflowers bloom now through September. Newly blooming to provide color for your house and garden include many sunflowers (the smaller varieties), crape myrtle, hummingbird plant, and fernbush.

Garden Activities

It's getting too warm to do much in the heat of the day. Take a few minutes each morning and evening to weed, deadhead, and look for potential problems. Cut some flowers before 7 a.m. and bring your garden inside. Brighten someone's day with a vase of flowers. Cutting flowers for your house and others is better than deadheading to keep them blooming.

To Do List

- When it cools down in the evening, deadhead spent flowers to keep the plants blooming. If you allow seed heads to form, the plants will use their energy to produce seed rather than flowers. Remove early season annuals as they finish blooming.
- Begin dividing Iris as they become dormant and continue until early September. Spring blooming bulbs may be dug and divided whenever fully dormant. If you are leaving these bulbs in the ground, remove dead foliage to keep beds looking neat.
- In the vegetable garden, garlic and onions are ready when their tops bend over. Let them dry in a shady spot for a couple of weeks, then remove tops and store in paper bags in a cool pantry, or leave tops on and braid them for garlic and onion ristras.
- Feed your roses in mid-July to encourage another round of blooms before the first frost.
- Stake fast-growing plants as needed before they begin to flop over. Support fruit laden trees as necessary if you didn't thin the fruit earlier.
- Continue to remove weeds and unwanted grasses daily/weekly. They go to seed faster in hot weather.
- For a glorious blaze of color in the fall, continue to pinch back Chrysanthemums and other late blooming perennials through mid-July to make them bushier and to keep them from flowering before fall. On a cloudy day or early in the morning, feed with granulated slow release fertilizer by scratching it in lightly. Mulch lightly with compost. Water thoroughly.
- To reduce watering and to help cool the soil around your plants, continue to mulch. Add mulch where plants are drying out too fast. An easy way to help acidify our alkaline soil is to mix pine needles into your compost pile and beds, or use them as mulch. They make a superior weed barrier.
- Spring lettuce and salad rows should be dug in before the plants bolt. Bolted lettuce provides an interesting texture (especially if you used it for a border planting), but may present unwanted blessings if you let it go to seed. Dig the plants into the soil to self compost and then hole compost over them through July. (Or pull the plants and throw in the compost pile.) In late August the soil will be ready for fall salad and vegetable planting.
- Remember those containers you planted in May? They may need watering TWICE a day from July through mid-August or maybe you can use an olla in your larger containers. Apply a liquid or slow release fertilizer, watch for stress, and lightly prune or replace the straggly ones. Consider replanting next month with fall flowers -- decide now and start seedlings or visit the nursery.
- Watch for signs of salt build up in containers. When it occurs, remove white crust from the top of the soil and flush salts out of the soil with a heavy watering.
- Move containers to a slightly shadier spot for July and early August if plants seem stressed.
- July and August is a great time to make gardening stones. Pick large showy flowers, e.g. sunflowers and zinnias, and leaves and imprint them in the top of your stone. It will brighten your days next winter.

Garden Tip!!! This is a good time to empty the compost bin and restart it. You'll get a good start on a new batch of compost that will winter over. Compost that is too hot to use on plants at this time can be dug into an unplanted area, or it can be set aside to finish composting. Keep stored compost covered so rain won't leach out nutrients.

Watering

Keep adjusting your watering schedule for hot weather. Generally, water established trees and shrubs every 10 to 14 days deeply. Water established beds weekly. This will not be adequate for new plantings or soil that has little organic matter. Continue to water newly planted shrubs twice a week until well established or until cooler weather arrives. Some established plants, e.g. Mexican elder and Spanish broom only need to be watered once a month. Be sure to water trees and shrubs away from the base of the plant; their feeder roots may extend more than 2-3 times the radius of the canopy in all directions from the trunk. DO NOT forget to check irrigation systems for leaks, clogs, etc.

Watering Tips!!! Deep water trees and roses every two weeks by placing a soaker hose or a slow dripping hose overnight near the edge of the drip line (where the edge of the tree canopy hangs over the soil). Water trees and shrubs every 10 to 14 days to a depth of two to three feet. Water testers are available or use a sharp rod, a small piece of rebar, or a knitting needle to check for the correct water penetration depth. DO NOT use nitrogen fertilizer on trees and shrubs any more this year since you don't want to encourage new leaf growth. The application of compost however, will help plants grow roots over the winter.

When planting, a good way to ensure deep watering is to sink several 2-liter plastic bottles with large holes in the bottom into the ground about 6 inches away from the plant root system. When watering, fill the bottles with water and replace the cap. The water will seep into the root zone. Refill the bottles several times until the seepage slows. Repeat the following day.

Another way is to construct soil basins and furrows (swales and berms) to direct water to plant roots. Water only when necessary. As plants mature, lengthen both watering times and the time between waterings. Watch plants for stress. Know your plants. Some plants "wilt" in the afternoon sun to conserve water and perk up in the cooler evenings.

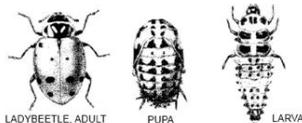
Collect cold fresh water when running warm/hot water in the kitchen sink, bath/shower, and bathroom sink. Depending upon the location of your hot water heater, you can collect 2-4 gallons of water each time to water potted plants and select garden areas.

Pruning

If you haven't completed pruning your spring-flowering shrubs, be sure to do it by July 15th. Inspect your trees for dead branches. Remove any dead wood when you find it. DO NOT prune any live wood from trees. Other pruning should wait until the tree is dormant.

Planting

Later in the month you can begin planting irises (intermix a few white ones for contrast) and daylilies. Start preparing the soil now if you want to plant peonies in September. After the 15th, you might try planting another row of green beans for harvest in early September. Every garden has different sun and shade patterns. Experiment to find out what works best for your garden. Have an adventure in your own backyard. Plant a couple of seeds in different areas and keep watered. You will have many surprises.



Troubleshooting

Flying Ants & Termites — Ants swarm after the first rains of the monsoon beginning in early July. To tell the difference between ants and termites, remember ants have “thin waists.” Other distinguishing characteristics: termite wings are the same length while an ant’s front wings are longer than the back wings; termites have straight antennae while an ant antennae are bent like an elbow. Finding termites around a porch light or on your patio does not mean that they are infesting your house. However, if you find sawdust, a sawdust rill, and/or find termites inside your home, contact a professional pest control company. Better yet, contact several to confirm the findings. Carpenter ants can do as much or more damage than termites. Yard ants vary in species and the need to control. Remember though, ants can be either sugar or protein consumers and the bait must match their favorite choice. Combine honey, peanut butter, and boric acid as a bait for both types.

Geranium bud worm — Holes in petunia flowers or geranium buds are from the geranium bud worm. Bt will work as well as other insecticides that are toxic to humans.

Lawn diseases — Lawn problems begin in July. Sprinklers may not adequately water certain areas. Diseases may be exacerbated by too much/not enough nitrogen and too much/not enough water. Soil compaction and insects are still other causes. Finding the problem and curing it is frustrating.

Pear slug, cherry slug, cherry sawfly — Pear and cherry trees may have sawfly larvae chewing on the leaves. Remember, a tree can take a bit of this before it is really suffering, so don’t be in a hurry to spray! While most any insecticide will work, Bt does not. This is sawfly larvae, not a caterpillar. To tell the difference between the two, flip the larvae onto its back and count the fleshy abdominal prolegs (found behind the three pairs of true legs next to the head). Sawflies have six or more pairs of prolegs; caterpillars have from two to five pairs of prolegs.

Spittlebug and slime mold — Two curious problems that might arise are the spittlebug and slime mold. Spittle bug is an insect that develops a frothy mass about itself. Most often found on junipers, the frothy mass and the insect inside are easily washed away with water. Another problem is a yellowish mass that shows up on lawns in the early mornings. Often jokingly called “poodle puke,” the problem is a short-lived fungus that disappears within hours. To speed its disappearance, wash it away.

Squash bugs and Mexican bean beetles - Planting your squash later in the season, once the majority of the squash bugs have already hatched and perished or using floating row covers for the second generation of bugs can be effective. They seem to prefer yellow squash, so variety selection may help, and also planting in containers has proven effective. Many beneficial insects prey on both the bugs and larvae. Keeping your plants and soil healthy, providing a pesticide-free habitat for beneficial insects and doing a thorough garden cleanup in the fall will give good results. Ditto for Mexican bean beetles.

Tomato hornworm — The tomato hornworm is a caterpillar and Bt will work if applied when the insect is still quite small (if you can find it). The larger the hornworm is before detection, the less effective Bt will be. Monitor the plants for stripped stems and large black fecal deposits – sure signs of tomato hornworms.

Hand pick and throw to the birds. If you maintain a large bird population in your yard you may not even see hornworms. As a last resort, consider a synthetic insecticide such as carbaryl. Planting dill near your tomatoes attracts the hornworm, making it easier to find and remove.

Houseplants

Do not repot plants in July -- wait until late August when the sun is less intense. Water thoroughly; if possible, water at least once a month by setting the plant in a basin of water for one-two hours. Do not let the plants dry out for more than a day or two. Continue your feeding and grooming schedule and watch for signs of stress.

Around Town

- The Albuquerque Aril and Iris Society has a club sale in July at the Albuquerque Garden Center. They have quality named varieties of iris for sale. Arrive early for best selection. Call 296-6020 for the actual date of the sale.

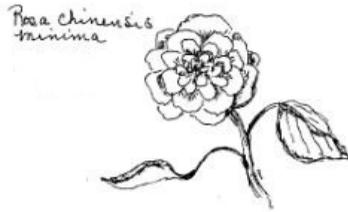
August

Weather

August weather is humid, with an average rainfall of 1.5 inches. Temperatures average in the low 60's at night to the high 80's during the day. It tends to be sunny in the morning with clouds forming midday and, sometimes, a downpour in the afternoon. Be wary of electrical storms in the garden.

August is the wettest month in New Mexico. The monsoon season is now at its peak, and with it, higher humidity. School starts, and as the temperatures begin to drop, it feels like fall. Not so! There are two more months of warm weather.

Hot weather continues to affect all but the most heat-loving plants. Measurable solar radiation (intensity of the sun's rays) in Albuquerque is greater than most plants like. Give them some protection from full sun all day and you will have fewer pests and problems.



What's Blooming

There are three types of blooming shrubs you see everywhere this month, crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*), Rose of Sharon (*Hibiscus syriacus*), and butterfly bush (*Buddleia*). Crape myrtle comes in tall (over 20'), medium, and dwarf forms. The tall variety can be limbed up to look like a tree with flowers massed at the top so the ground below can be used for other plants when this late blooming beauty is not in flower.

The blooms come in the same red, pink, purple, and white shades as flowering stock. Every yard should have at least one! They bloom for weeks. The most mildew resistant varieties have Indian names and were tested at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C.

Roses continue to bloom. The big sunflowers are beginning their spectacular show. Many annuals are in full bloom by the end of the month, including zinnias and marigolds. Also blooming are *Clematis* and trumpet vine (*Campsis radicans*).

Xeric Blooms

Look for dwarf plumbago (*Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*), "red devil" verbena (*Verbena Peruviana*), gayfeather (*Liatrus punctatas*) and Texas sage (best choice for Albuquerque *Leucophyllum langmaniae* "Lynn's Legacy"). *Gaillardia* (blanket flower), *Gaura* (whirling butterflies), and *Rudbeckias* are still going strong.

Flowering shrubs include "Blue Mist" spirea (*Caryopteris x clandonensis*), and cherry sage (*Salvia greggii*), and dwarf butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii nanhoensis* – note it's 5-6' tall).

Pink *Amaryllis*, asters, chamisa, chocolate flower, *coreopsis*, daisies, *delphinium*, germander, hyssop, *lavender*, purple iceplant, red rocket, *scabiosa*, *sedum*, snowberry, sundrops, thrift, valerian, and yarrow continue to add color to the garden.

Garden Activities

The fall is best for planting, especially perennials. There are lots of plants on sale; check out what is available locally. If you are on their mailing list, some mail-order nurseries will notify you of late season sales.

It only takes a few minutes to weed each day and by the end of the month the evenings are getting cooler. It's a great time to sit outside in the early evening, observe your garden, and plan September's rearranging and planting activities.

To Do

- Keep fruit and vegetable debris cleaned up to reduce bug populations.
- Prune peppers and indeterminate tomatoes lightly. Cutting back lightly can encourage a fall crop.
- Protect with shade cloth to prevent sunburn on newly cut and exposed stems.
- Continue removing spent flowers; many plants have a burst of new bloom in September if they haven't set seed. Cut hollyhock stalks to the ground when they finish blooming.
- Divide Iris and other spring bloomers as they become dormant.
- Stake fast-growing plants as needed before they begin to flop over.
- Remove weeds and unwanted grasses on a daily or weekly basis. They go to seed faster in hot weather.
- Mulch to reduce watering and to help cool the soil around your plants.
- Turn compost weekly and then water the pile. In this heat, green waste breaks down quickly.
- Cut everlasting flowers e.g. statice, straw flowers, and baby's breath just before they fully open to dry for fall and winter floral arrangements. Remove the leaves and hang upside down in a cool dark place for longer lasting arrangements. They can also be placed in a vase out of indirect light to dry.
- Sharpen or replace lawn mower blades. Be sure to buy a blade made specifically for your mower.

Garden Tip!!! When do you pick cantaloupe? When they have a light fragrance at the stem and can be picked with a very slight tug; the outside of the fruit will be yellowing and the veining will be pronounced.

Watering

Water trees and shrubs every 10 to 14 days to a depth of 3 feet. Do not fertilize except with compost. If you feel you must fertilize, don't add any with a high nitrogen number which encourages new growth. Water flower beds and vegetable gardens 2 to 3 times a week. Low cost moisture sensors are available and this is one of the best ways to determine when to water. Because the surface of the soil does not indicate how dry the soil at the plant root zone is, a moisture sensor can help you conserve water or prevent overwatering.

Pruning

Prune honeysuckle again after it blooms if needed. Do not pinch Chrysanthemums back. Evergreen and hedge-type shrubs are starting to look shaggy. Their heavy top growth is usually quite noticeable by mid-August. Using electric or hand-operated hedge trimmers, shape fine-medium-leaved shrubs in an A shape, that is slightly wider at the base than the top. This allows sun to reach all of the leaves equally. Trim when new growth is about 6" long or about 3 times per year.

When using string trimmers around trees, be careful to not damage the bark around the tree as this is usually fatal to a tree. Protect the small tree trunks with a flexible black plastic pipe that has been split up one side. It expands as the tree grows. Remove when the tree has grown sufficiently for the shade of its canopy to reduce weed growth. Or create a garden bed with the tree enclosed within and you won't have to use a grass trimmer near tree bark.

Planting

The best reason to plant in the fall is that it gives plants a chance to establish themselves while the temperatures are in a more hospitable range. Perennials planted in April have only a few weeks to acclimate before the onslaught of summer heat. In contrast, those planted in fall have several months of mild temperatures in which to establish roots. As a result, they do better and you will still get flowers the following season.

There are a few exceptions, mostly plants that are frost tender here or that usually die back completely in winter. Crape myrtle and cherry sage, for instance, should be planted in spring. Also, some plants in four-inch pots or smaller might heave out of the ground during winter's freeze-thaw cycles, particularly in heavier soils. Native plants, and most sturdy perennials, shrubs, or trees will do better when planted in the fall which gives them time to establish roots before the onslaught of summer heat.

Finally, in fall, (as opposed to the following spring), your garden layout is still fresh in your mind. You will have a better idea of what "worked," what did not, and areas of the garden that need attention.

- Start or add to your herb garden. Plant lavender, rosemary, chives, lemon balm, top multiplier onion, mints, and other perennial herbs.
- Begin planting cool season vegetables, and vegetables that will winter over. Plant lettuce, spinach, radishes, carrots, onions, broccoli, snow peas, turnips for harvest before Christmas.

- As the days begin to shorten and the rains come, the soil starts to cool down. Now is a perfect time for outdoor seeding of hardy annuals, wildflower seeds, and some perennials and biennials. Scratch the soil and sprinkle liberally with larkspur, love-in-a-mist, poppies, bachelor buttons, hollyhock, Rocky Mountain Penstemon, and Rudbeckia. Rake over lightly and sprinkle to settle them in. The rains will help them break dormancy. Small plants will appear, will winter over, and will be ready to take off next spring. If plants are in a totally dry area, provide extra water as needed.
- Plant trees and shrubs that are fully hardy in Albuquerque. Remember how hot it was in July? Research the type of trees you'd like to plant for future shade or check out the best trees for Albuquerque in the Basics section of this book.
- Plant cool season lawns (generally bluegrass) between August 15 and September 15.



Troubleshooting

Ash borers — Check the June Troubleshooting section.

Corn Borers — Check leaves several times a week. If translucent skeletonized patches appear, spray with *bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt).

Fall webworms — Fall webworms, erroneously called bagworms, are visible now. The webbing reaching from branch tip to branch tip is filled with caterpillars and their droppings. If only a few webs are visible, don't treat since the tree is losing its leaves now and can produce enough sugars to store in the roots for next year's growth. Branches can be pruned out, but this may change the canopy shape. Trees can be treated with insecticide to poison the caterpillars as they feed. Killing the pests in their web is difficult without a high-pressure sprayer. Do not attempt to burn out the webs. You may burn the tree and possibly yourself. Most webs are beyond homeowners' sprayers. Treat these insects as early as you notice the web tent forming.

Garden spiders — Watch for garden spiders - especially the orb weavers. These spiders come in a wonderful variety of colors, and some of them create magnificent webs. They are friends in the garden; don't disturb them if possible. In outlying areas tarantulas are active in August; it's their mating season.

Iris Borer - Iris borer moths lay their eggs on the foliage of irises in late summer and early fall. The eggs overwinter on old foliage, and emerge in the spring as tiny caterpillars that tunnel into the newly emerging foliage. Sure signs of borer damage are tunneling through foliage that looks waterlogged or if the tips of the foliage turn yellow and start to look dead. Monitor your plants closely throughout April and May. Prune off the affected foliage below where the damage occurs. The caterpillar, still quite small, will be trapped inside the section you've removed. If there is rot at the base of the stalk, dig up the rhizomes. If you see tunneling, soak the rhizome in water to drown any borers and cut away the damaged areas. Let the cut dry for several hours and replant. Clean up all foliage in the fall to prevent eggs from overwintering.

Lawn grubs — Now is the time to treat for lawn grubs. The eggs laid in June and July have hatched. The new grubs are tiny — most susceptible to insecticides. Always check the lawn first by sampling various locations under the sod. To sample, peel back a square foot of sod and examine the soil beneath; if more than a dozen grubs are found in the sample, treat the entire lawn. Replace the sod and water well. You may want to try inoculating the soil with parasitic nematodes, or you can treat with the insecticide imidacloprid.

Powdery Mildew reappears. Fungicides don't cure the problem, but do limit further spread. Remember, leaves and flowers can already be infected without noticeable symptoms prior to fungicide application. An organic solution consists of sulfur dusting whenever the first signs of mildew appear; however, sulfur products must never be used when temperatures may reach 90 degrees, to avoid damaging the plants. You can also spray with a mixture of 1 part whole, full fat milk to 9 parts water.

Needle drop — Pines begin their natural needle drop. Older interior needles are shed. If you are losing needles from the ends of the branches (new growth areas), you have a serious problem. Check carefully though; needle scale insects cause more than the usual needle fall. Look for insect signs on remaining needles.

Snails, slugs and leaf diseases — August's moisture brings out the snails, slugs, and leaf diseases. Vigilance is necessary with snails and slugs. Baits are deadly to pets and dangerous for small children. Either pet proof and child proof the baits, or use other control actions: trapping, hand collecting, or removing organic mulch at the base of some plants.

Houseplants

Check for salt build up. Remove any white crust on the soil or pot and drench the plant with water if you're not going to repot it. Do any necessary repotting between August 15 and September 15. Discard soil that has salt build up and clean the pots. Houseplants do not go dormant, but there will be little to no growth until March when the days begin to lengthen again.

Around Town

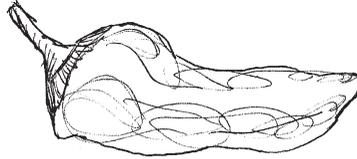
- A field day is held every year in mid-August at the Agricultural Science Center Research Station in Los Lunas and at the Fruit Research Station in northern New Mexico at Alcalde. Both facilities are part of the agricultural research arm of New Mexico State University and are open to the public. At Los Lunas there are tours of the research demonstration plots and a plant clinic with faculty to answer questions. At Alcalde there are tours of the fruit orchards, small fruit production areas, the herb plots, grass research, and lavender plots. Plus you get to sample the fruit. Contact the Bernalillo County Extension Office at 243-1386 for the exact dates.
- The annual lavender festival will be held at Rancho Manzano in Chimayo, NM . This event features tours, demonstrations and refreshments. Lavender and plants and products may be purchased. Watch the newspaper for pertinent info or give the B&B a call.
- Santa Fe Greenhouses holds an annual butterfly and hummingbird day in August. This event features lectures on hummingbird and butterflies and a look at the plants they feed on. Call 505.473.2700 for more information.

- The annual Tomato Fiesta sponsored by Master Gardeners celebrates the tomato, our favorite vegetable, with tomato variety tastings, tomato recipe tastings and cooking demonstrations, a tomato cafe for lunch, kids corner, tomato and produce vendor fair, and gardening seminars. It's a tomato extravaganza held the 3rd Sunday from 11am-3pm.
- Get your Master Gardener application for January classes from the Extension Office at 1510 Menaul or download it from the Master Gardener web site www.abq.mastergardeners.org.

September

Weather

September weather is slightly cooler, but it's two months too soon to put away your summer clothes (exception: white shoes). Nighttime lows are in the 50's, and the daytime highs average in the low 80's, with plenty of sunshine. The monsoon pattern is ending. September gets less than an inch of rain on average. The smell of roasting chiles is in the air and it must be time for the State Fair flower shows.



What's Blooming

Lots of things! September is the garden finale. Shrubs and trees begin to provide color and texture. It is a BIG blooming month - think May! Asters, *Ageratum*, *caladium*, cock's comb (*Celosia*), *Cosmos*, *Chrysanthemum*, *Dahlias*, *Gladiolus*, globe amaranth, goldenrod (*Solidago*), marigolds (*Tagetes*), petunias, *Salvias*, spider lily (*Lycoris*), and *Zinnias*. Roses, of course!

All of the annuals you seeded in June will bloom this month, and if they were dead-headed after their first bloom, early perennials will re-bloom e.g. *delphinium* and Maltese Cross.

Xeric Blooms

Giant hyssop (*Agastache cana*), 'Autumn Joy' (*Sedum telephium*) and other *Sedums* are strong in the garden. New England Aster (*Aster novaeangliae*), New Mexican sunflower (*Helianthus maximiliana*), and rabbitbrush or chamisa (*Ericameria nauseosus*) are seen in gardens and on the roadside. Many earlier bloomers continue or rebloom including *gaillardia* (blanket flower) and purple iceplant.

Garden Activities

To Do List

- If you want to force bulbs for winter flowering indoors, you need to plan ahead. Some bulbs such as tulips need 12 to 14 weeks of cold stratification (chilling time, e.g., in a refrigerator) before they will bloom.

- Use only phosphate fertilizers on perennials, no nitrogen at this point; feed spring blooming shrubs and water well to give them a boost for next spring. Organic phosphate choices might be bone meal and bat guano or you can find premixed organic solutions at the local nurseries.
- Do not fertilize annuals or roses. Let faded blooms remain on the bushes to form hips. This helps the rose bush transition into winter dormancy.
- Stake your mums and de-bud for larger blooms.
- Cut back annuals as they finish blooming.

This is a popular time to landscape or modify your landscaping.

- Continue planting perennials and remove unwanted trees and bushes.
- If you redesign your landscaping, remember to apply “SST:
 “S” – keep it simple (monochromatic, less is better, regionally appropriate plants)
 “S” – scale (balance, focal point, appropriate for space)
 “T” – texture (interest, contrast, variety, height, density)

Watering

As the temperature cools, start cutting back on watering. Plants need to begin going dormant soon. Too much water at this time can force tender growth – just what you don’t want.

Planting

- Begin planting spring-blooming bulbs and lilies that you are dividing.
- Plant peonies, pansies, and ornamental cole crops (kale, cabbage, etc.)
- Continue planting perennials and seeds of hardy annuals including Chrysanthemums and pansies.
- Good candidates for a cold frame or a protected area are arugula, chard, lettuce, spinach, radishes, carrots, onions, garlic, broccoli, fava beans, leeks, snow peas, and turnips. Planting them now will give you an early winter harvest and a head start for spring. Transplant cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, and chives.
- Identify seedlings and offshoots like penstemon, poppies, lemon balm, statice, and strawberries that have appeared in your garden. Move them or give them away by the 15th so they will have time to become established before winter.

Lawns.

- NOW is the time to fertilize cool season grasses with a high nitrogen product. The weather has cooled and the grasses are revitalized. Fertilizer will improve the appearance of grass and promote healthy root growth. Organic alternatives to chemical fertilizers are compost, compost tea and fish emulsion.

- Reseed cool season grasses where necessary to fill in bare patches.
- Begin to cut back on lawn watering (except newly seeded areas) to encourage hardening off for the winter.



YELLOW JACKET

Troubleshooting

Borers — Refer to the June Troubleshooting section for what to do for borers.

Powdery Mildew — September begins to dry out. As temperatures drop, mildew may occur. Mildew is a fungus. You can reduce moisture around the plant, put the plant where it will get more air circulation, and water in the morning so the moisture dries on the leaves. If all that fails, find another plant.

Wasps, yellow jackets, and hornets are especially aggressive about defending their nests. Avoid their areas if possible, otherwise cautiously treat the problems. Night-time applications of carbaryl to the nest entrance is the best bet for treatment.

Winter weeds — Winter annual weeds are germinating. Check for tiny mustard or brome grass plants suddenly appearing. These weeds often harbor viral disease that insects can transmit to your garden plants. A thorough fall clean up will eliminate problems next spring. If you haven't already done so, apply a preemergent herbicide to keep those weed seeds from sprouting in rockery, perennial beds, and lawns. There is also an organic natural material that acts as a pre-emergent herbicide – corn gluten meal. Ask for it at the Albuquerque Garden Center shop.

Houseplants

- Bring in all houseplants by mid-month. Be sure to check for insects, spraying the plants before bringing them indoors.
- Take cuttings to start new plants of geraniums, coleus, and other annuals that you want to keep as houseplants or plant outside next summer.
- Start covering Christmas cactus nightly to ensure they get the necessary 12 hours of darkness every night that will bring them to bloom in December.
- Sprout or germinate an avocado seed to give as a Christmas gift. This is a great houseplant for kids.

GARDEN TIP!!!! Shop now for fall bulbs that you plan to force in November. Begin looking for those special containers that are so hard to find at the last minute — take advantage of sales including garage sales. Find some bright animal shaped containers for kids. Cut glass, brass, or porcelain make beautiful containers on a holiday table. Don't forget the rock or glass stones and marbles that you are going to use to stabilize the bulbs.

Around Town

- The big agricultural event of the fall is the New Mexico State Fair, one of the top state fairs in the country. Fruit, vegetable, and flower exhibitions and competitions are scheduled throughout the Fair. Most local garden clubs and plant societies provide special exhibits and sponsor shows. The flower show schedule is available online at the state fair web site; the entry tags are available at the Albuquerque Garden Center 296-6020.
- Albuquerque Daylily Society holds its fall sale early in the month. Call 296.6020 for more information.

October

Weather

Fall is a time of year when we realize how lucky we are to live in New Mexico. The last days of Indian summer are couched between cool mornings and evenings. The air is crisp, but the first frost lies ahead, and things are still blooming.

The weather is becoming “fallish” — rather abruptly at times. October’s highs fluctuate from the upper 70’s to the mid-60’s on average, and the nighttime temperatures average from the high 40’s down to the 30’s. The average date of the first freeze is October 29th although the record is October 8th. This event is typically heralded in the newspaper and on television news. In the East Mountains, the average date of the first freeze is around the first week of October.



What’s Blooming

The roses are enjoying a respite from summer’s heat, and they bloom with renewed vigor. Your garden is a-bloom with *aster*, *chrysanthemum*, goldenrod (*Solidago sp.*), statice, and the last of the roses, *zinnias*, *dahlias* and Maximilian daisy. Saffron bearing fall crocus (*C. sativus*) are a new addition. Hummingbird Trumpet (*Zauschneria californica*) will continue to bloom until the first frost.

Xeric Blooms

The hardier varieties give us a last hurrah, a beautiful burst of color, to say goodbye to summer and welcome winter. These include *Agastaches*, *Asters*, *Nepeta*, chocolate flower, *Rudbeckia*, *Gaillardia*, *Salvias*, and yarrow. Chinese pistache begins its showy fall color change. Hummingbird trumpet (*Zauschneria californica*) blooms ‘til frost.