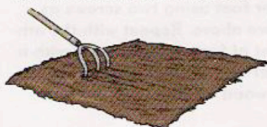


What to do in your garden in August

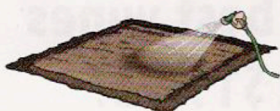
TIP FROM THE TEST GARDEN

Bake summer weed seeds

To control weeds in empty flower and vegetable beds that you will be replanting in fall, try "solarizing" the soil. By spreading a clear plastic sheet over the soil, you can trap the sun's heat there and cook weed seeds and seedlings. The process works best where daytime temperatures stay above 80° for four to eight weeks.



1 Till the soil, removing weeds, debris, and large clods.



2 Make a bed at least 2½ feet wide, carve a small ditch around the perimeter, and rake the bed level. Soak soil to a depth of 1 foot.



3 Cover soil with 1- to 4-mil clear plastic (use UV-resistant plastic if available). Stretch plastic tightly so it's in contact with soil, and bury the edges in the perimeter ditch. Leave plastic in place for four to eight weeks (but no longer, since that may harm beneficial soil organisms). Remove plastic and begin planting.

PLANNING

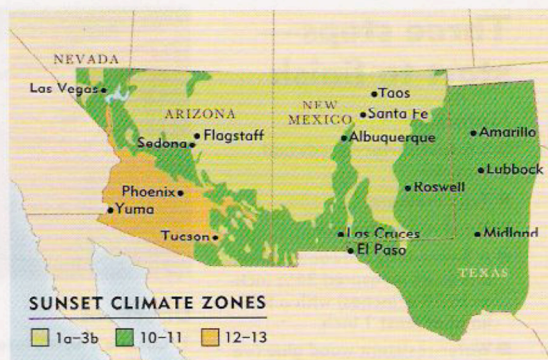
☐ **Nocturnal pollinators.** See which flowers are visited at night by hawk moths, bats, and other desert pollinators during the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum's Summer Saturday Evenings program (5–10 Sat through Aug 26; \$5, \$3 ages 6–12, ages 5 and under free; 2021 N. Kinney Rd., Tucson; www.desertmuseum.org or 520/883-2702).

PLANTING

☐ **High-desert duo.** Sunset climate zones 1a–3b, 10, and 11: If you enjoy the classic late-summer roadside show of yellow chamisa and purple asters (*Aster bigelovii*), why not replicate it in your garden? This combination produces reliable native color each fall and is perfect for the wilder edges of a xeric garden. For a different take on this combination, replace purple aster with white flowering heath aster (*Aster falcatus commutatus*). A good source for seeds is Plants of the Southwest (www.plantsofthesouthwest.com or 800/788-7333).

☐ **Ornamental grass.** Zones 11 and 12: Large, stately grasses adapted to the low desert are hard to come by. But vetiver (*Vetiveria zizanioides*), a recent introduction from the East Indies, provides a valuable new option. The 5- to 8-foot-tall grass produces attractive green blades that form streaks of bronze and red in fall. Eventually, the plant turns a pleasing shade of brown and develops curled tips. Position plants toward the back of a border or plant them in a row as a living barrier. Provide full sun and moderate water; cut back in early spring. If you can't find vetiver at your local nursery, it can be ordered from Mountain States Wholesale Nursery in Glendale, Arizona.

☐ **Vegetables.** Zones 1a–3b: Sow seeds of arugula, bush beans, carrots, lettuce,



peas, radishes, spinach, and turnips. Set out transplants of broccoli, cabbage, and cauliflower. Zones 10 and 11: Sow beans, corn, cucumbers, potatoes, and spinach. Zones 12 and 13: Sow bush beans, carrots, corn, green onions, summer squash, and turnips.

MAINTENANCE

☐ **Cut back tomatoes.** Zones 10–13: Rejuvenate your tired tomatoes by shearing them back to 1 foot; fertilize and water deeply afterward. This will spur new growth and blooms for a crop that begins ripening in September.

☐ **Fertilize citrus.** Toward the end of August, give your citrus trees their final feeding of 2006 with a fertilizer formulated specifically for citrus; follow package directions. Water thoroughly before and after feeding.

☐ **Protect hands.** Thorn Armor gloves are three times more puncture-resistant than leather. Made from space-age Superfabric, they will protect your hands while pruning, transplanting, and weeding around prickly plants. Thorn Armor gloves are available at some nurseries or online at Mo Plants (\$16; www.moplants.com or 877/892-2688).

☐ **Water deeply.** Shallow irrigation can cause salts to build up in the root zone of landscape plants. Flush them out by watering two to three times deeper than you normally would (3 to 6 feet for shrubs, 4 to 9 feet for trees). To deep-water a tree, run a hose at a slow trickle for six to eight hours under the canopy (move it to a different location every hour or so). —SCOTT CALHOUN

DAMIAN SCOGIN (3)