

Horticulture Tips

May 2011

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources
Oklahoma State University

GARDEN TIPS FOR MAY!

David Hillock

Trees and Shrubs

- Prune and feed azaleas immediately after blooming.
- Insect Alert: ([EPP-7306](#))
 - * Bagworms on juniper and arborvitae. (Late May)
 - * Elm leaf beetles and larvae on elms. (Late May)
 - * Mimosa webworms on mimosa and honeylocust.
 - * Lace bugs on sycamore, pyracantha and azalea.
- Soak new transplants and newly planted trees unless rainfall is abundant.
- Pine needle disease treatments are needed in mid-May. ([EPP-7618](#))

Turfgrass

- Cool-season lawns can be fertilized again. If you did not fertilize cool-season grasses in March and April, do so now.
- Warm-season lawns may be fertilized again in May. ([HLA-6420](#))
- Seeding of warm-season grasses such as bermudagrass, buffalograss, zoysiagrass and centipedegrass is best performed in mid-May through the end of June. The soil temperatures are warm enough for germination and adequate growing season is present to promote winter hardiness.
- Dollar spot disease of lawns can first become visible in mid-May. Make certain fertilizer applications have been adequate before ever applying a fungicide. ([EPP-7658](#))
- Nutsedge plants become visible during this month. Post-emergent treatments are best applied for the first time this month ([HLA-6421](#)). Make certain warm-season grasses have completed green-up.
- The second application of pre-emergent annual grass herbicides can be applied in late-May or early June, depending upon timing of first application ([HLA-6421](#)). Check label for details.
- Vegetative establishment of warm-season grasses can continue. ([HLA-6419](#))

Flowers

- Annual bedding plants can be set out for summer color.
- Plant summer bulbs such as cannas, dahlias, elephant ear, caladiums and gladiolus.
- Shake a leaf over white paper to look for spider mites. If the tiny specks begin to crawl, mites are present.

Water Gardens

- Clean out water garden and prepare for season. Divide and repot water garden plants.
- Begin feeding fish when water temperatures are over 50°F.

Fruits and Vegetables

- Plant watermelon, cantaloupe, cucumber, eggplant, okra, sweet potatoes, etc.
- Fruit spray programs should be faithfully continued during the next several weeks. ([EPP-7319](#)).
- Late May is the best time to control borers in the orchard. Check for label recommendations and controls.



OKPLANTtrees Web Site – a Resource for Community Forestry in Oklahoma

The OKPLANTtrees web site was funded by a grant from the [Urban and Community Forestry Council](#) and was created by Lou Anella and Kristina Lewis in the [Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture](#) at Oklahoma State University. This web site is sort of a one-stop-shop for information about trees and urban forests in the state of Oklahoma. The site has three parts to it - Resources, Champions, and Organizations.

Under *Resources* you will be able to view educational resources related to plant identification, selection, and maintenance; find consultants to help you with your planting or community forestry project; find links to international, national, and regional organizations dedicated to community forestry; and learn what other communities are doing by viewing videos related to community forestry and trees.

Under *Champions* you will find records collected by the Oklahoma Forestry Association and the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food, and Forestry Services since the 1960s of the largest trees of each species growing in the state. This list is presented in the *Great Trees of Oklahoma* now online. Currently there are more than 100 champion and co-champion trees contained in the list. The Oklahoma Champion Tree List has broad appeal. Many homeowners take great pride in having the largest specimen of a particular tree species in their yard. The Oklahoma Champions are also submitted to the American Forestry Association to be recorded nationally. And some, in fact, are recognized as being the largest tree of its species in the entire United States. Think you have a champion tree? Have it measured by your regional State Forester.

Under *Organizations* find information about organizations dedicated to community forestry. Organizations highlighted are the Oklahoma Urban and Community Forestry Council, the Tree Bank, the Morrison Tree Board, and the Oklahoma Forestry Services.

To get started learning more about trees and your own community forest visit the web site today - <http://www.okplanttrees.org/>.

Fresh Strawberries from the Garden

David Hillock

It won't be too long and the first strawberries will form and begin to ripen in the garden. As a strawberry patch comes into production you will want to harvest every other day. Leave the berries on the plant one to two days after they reach full color. Avoid picking strawberries that have a white tip – these have not reached their full potential and the white tip will not have good flavor. Harvest berries by twisting the stem and fruit from the vine, leaving the green hulls attached to the fruits. It is best to harvest early in the morning when the berries are cool. Store them in a cool place or refrigerate for up to 5 days. Wait to wash your strawberries until just before using them to prevent softening and decay.

Simple Lawn Irrigation Tip

Justin Quetone Moss

Homeowners often wonder how long they should irrigate their lawns, but the volume of applied irrigation water cannot be directly measured in units of time. However, one can estimate how much irrigation water is applied to their lawn over time by following a few simple steps.

1. Purchase a few short, plastic rain gauges from a local lawn and garden retail store.
2. Strategically place the rain gauges approximately at turfgrass mowing height throughout the irrigated turfgrass areas in the lawn.
3. Early in the morning, irrigate the lawn for exactly 20 minutes on a relatively non-windy day.
4. After irrigating for 20 minutes, measure the volume of water in each rain gauge and calculate the average volume over 20 minutes, then multiply by 3 to calculate the average volume over one hour.
5. Move the rain gauges to different areas/zones of the lawn and repeat the process as needed.
6. After completing this process, you will have a very good estimate of average irrigation output in inches per hour for your lawn.

Assume you complete this process and determine that your irrigation system delivers 0.5 inches of water per hour. Assuming you water three times per week for 20 minutes, then your weekly irrigation output would be 0.5 inches of water per week. For more information about lawn irrigation scheduling, visit the Oklahoma Mesonet SIP website at <http://sip.mesonet.org/>. Now that you know the output of your irrigation system, you can use the SIP website to determine the daily and weekly irrigation requirements for your lawn. Many companies now have “smart” lawn irrigation controllers that have automatic rain “shut-off” sensors and capabilities to connect to local weather stations to help you determine your lawn irrigation needs. This simple procedure may save you money and can help to conserve water resources during drought periods such as those we have experienced in late 2010 through early 2011. For a more detailed explanation of how to conduct a simple lawn irrigation audit to determine lawn irrigation output and uniformity, a new OSU Fact Sheet is forthcoming summer 2011.

Upcoming Horticulture Events

June 2-3, 2011

Master Gardener Continuing Education Conference

Enid, OK

<http://www.hortla.okstate.edu/mg/conference/index.htm>

June 18, 2011

GardenFest: Celebrating the Grand Opening of The Botanic Garden at Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, OK

<http://www.oklahomagardening.okstate.edu/events/gardenfest/index.htm>

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or stephanie.larimer@okstate.edu.