

## What to do in July...

The pre-seasonal hard work should now be paying off, with flowers blooming and budding. The veg patch should now be ready for harvesting some of the early produce with strawberries, potatoes & salads to name a few. Take some time to visit your local garden nursery and see what's new for this season such as Hardy Osteospermum!

**Flowers** - Lift, divide & replant congested flag irises after flowering, Deadhead border perennials like delphiniums and lupins to encourage a second flush of blooms, Pick dead flowers off rhododendrons, Deadhead roses and feed to encourage more flowers, Cut back ceanothus, weigela, & escallonia where necessary to control growth. Tie in developing stems of dahlias to supports, Give shrubs and perennial plants a liquid feed, Take cuttings from non-flowering shoots on hydrangeas, Pick sweet peas regularly and remove any seed heads to keep them flowering, Pinch out the shoot tips on fuchsias and bedding plants for bushier growth, Save seed from foxgloves to sow right away in small pots of compost.

**Allotment** - Thin heavy crops of apples, pears and plums, Tie in new raspberry canes to support wires, Cover brassicas with fine netting to prevent cabbage white butterflies laying their eggs on the leaves, Sow cabbages to pick as spring greens, Pick gooseberries when ripe. If they're still very green, small and hard, leave them a bit longer. Some varieties turn red or white as they ripen, Prune bay trees to keep them in shape, Lift early potatoes, Sow an autumn crop of peas before mid-July, Peg down strawberry runners into pots of soil to root new plants. Only ever propagate from healthy, disease-free stock. After fruiting, trim off all strawberry foliage with shears, Vegetables to sow now include beetroot, cabbages, endive, kohlrabi, lettuce, radish, rocket, spinach, swede and turnips.

**Greenhouse and Conservatory** - Pinch out tomato sideshoots developing from the main stem & Tie in to their supports. Thin out bunches of grapes with pointed scissors, Pinch out shoot tips on coleus to encourage plants to branch, Propagate pelargoniums from cuttings during July and August, Feed crops in growing bags and pots every week, Repot any plants that are pot bound or getting top heavy. Open all vents and prop doors open on warm days to improve ventilation, Damp down the greenhouse floor each morning on hot days to increase humidity, Bring large-leaved houseplants into the garden and hose them down to clean off dust. Wipe dry and apply a leaf shine for an attractive glossy finish before bringing back inside.

**General** - Keep lawn edges trimmed by cutting with a half-moon edging tool, Look out for cabbage white butterfly eggs and rub them off with your fingers, Remove blanket weed from ponds & wash out pond filters, Feed hanging baskets and patio pots every week, Prune fast-growing hedges like privet, Keep mowing the lawn regularly, Deadhead border plants, unless you want to collect their seeds, Pick everlasting flowers or herbs for drying, Look out for developing weed infestations and control immediately, Top up bird baths regularly.

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