



Late summer vegetable garden. Photo: Bill Swantner, BCMG

August in the Vegetable Garden

By Bill Swantner, Bexar County Master Gardener

Normally, July is blistering hot, and the heat usually continues through September, but this year has been a weather anomaly. The January temperatures were very mild; February had extremely cold temperatures with snow; March and April had less than an inch of rain; and there was some discussion about Stage 2 water restrictions from the San Antonio Water System (SAWS).

While we enjoyed mild temperatures in the beginning weeks of July, we also experienced an abundance of rain. So look out. With an abundance of rain, an abundance of weeds always follows! Weeds need to be caught early and physically removed.

August is the time to start your fall garden, no matter what the weather is like. Some of you may have noticed that the stores started carrying "Rodeo" tomatoes in mid-July.

If the soil in your vegetable garden hasn't been amended with compost, August is the time to add it. Mix compost into the top 2 to 4 inches of soil. Plant Texas A&M University AgriLife Extension recommended transplants or other well-adapted varieties. For the first three weeks, add a water-soluble fertilizer regularly. Around the third week, add a 19-5-9 granular side dressing. Mulch your garden with a double-shredded native mulch to protect the soil around your transplants. The recommendation is 2 inches of mulch, placed 2 inches from the crown of the plant. Do not put mulch over any beds you have direct seeded. While August is a great time to put transplants into your amended garden soil, these transplants might need some shade protection against the hot afternoon sun until they become more established.

Finally, water. Drip irrigation is the best way to water plants because when we water a garden with a hand-held hose or in-ground sprinkler system, we're also watering weed seeds. Drip irrigation puts the water directly at the root system of the plant we want to grow.

Here is a link to the recommended Fall Vegetable varieties with recommended planting dates: <http://bexar-tx.tamu.edu/files/2012/06/Fall-recommended-plants-revised.pdf>

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