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Desert Garden Calendar Monthly **DO** List

AUGUST

Grass

You can still plant Bermuda grass. Fertilize Bermuda grass lawns with nitrogen according to the directions on the package.

Trees/Shrubs

Apply nitrogen and zinc to pecan trees. Pecans also need more water than most other shade trees. Increase water to trees and shrubs as it gets hot. Apply mulch to the ground around the base of heat sensitive plants to keep the roots cooler and prevent evaporation. Keep the mulch several inches away from the trunk. Apply chelated iron to bottle brush, pyracantha, silk oak, and other plants with iron deficiency symptoms. Cut off spent blooms to stimulate rebloom. Native and imported heat tolerant plants can be planted. They will need to be watered on a regular basis until fall. Transplant palms. Protect newly transplanted trees from heavy winds and dust storms by staking. Early September fertilization will benefit most plants. August is a good time to plant bougainvillea, yellow bells, oleanders, acacias, cassias, eucalyptus, mesquites, and palo verdes.

Flowers

Water roses deeply. Hose off rose plants in the early morning to increase humidity and control spider mites. If roses show yellowing from iron deficiency add an iron supplement. You can still plant summer flowers, however you will have to pull them up and plant the winter flowers during late October, so there's not much time left.

Vegetables

Prepare flower beds for fall plantings. August is a good time to plant melons.

Monthly **DON'T** list for August

1. Don't prune citrus or other sun sensitive plants during the summer.
2. Don't over water. Yes, it's very hot in the desert in August, so it might seem like watering more is the answer. Not necessarily true. Water slowly (prevents runoff), deeply (use a soil probe or a long handled screwdriver to check that the water is penetrating 2-3 ft. deep for trees and shrubs and 1-1 1/2 ft. deep for turf & flowers), and infrequently (let the soil dry between watering).
3. Watering at night can lead to fungal disease.
4. Don't add fertilizer to dry soil. If you apply dry fertilizer on dry soil and water it in, the fertilizer is carried toward the roots as a concentrated solution and will burn them.
Always water first, then apply fertilizers to moist soils, and then continue with the rest of the water.