

When More May not Be Better

Water: Overwatering will damage roots by preventing the plant from taking up needed nutrients from the soil and by blocking the flow of oxygen from the air into the soil and the roots. Use a water meter with the probe placed at the level of the roots to determine when to water outdoor and indoor plants. Fact Sheets #'s 595 and 599 at Rutgers Cooperative Extension <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/>

Fertilizer: Plants will not thrive when over-fertilized. Perform a soil test available from Ocean County Master Gardeners to determine how to prepare soil for planting—"Do not guess, soil test." Follow the manufacturer's directions for use. Fact Sheets #'s 633, 020, 119, 022, 316, 930

Mulch: Mountains of mulch against trees or shrubs result in waterlogged soil. Soil pore space that is needed for air is reduced. Diffusion of oxygen to roots is blocked and plants suffocate. Over mulching increases fungal and bacterial growth further harming plants. Fact Sheets #'s 099, 058

Pesticides: Over use of pesticides destroys beneficial insects, increases pest resistance to pesticides and may expose people and pets to harmful chemicals. Monitor the presence of pests and spot spray as needed. Following the manufacturer's recommendations is critical.

A good alternative is physical control of pests by washing or picking off insects and preventing infestations with insecticidal soaps, botanical insecticides, and horticultural oils.

Sun: Too much sun will cause shade-loving plants to burn. Consider light exposure when determining where to place a plant, as duration of sun is critical for growing healthy, beautiful plants.

Seeds: Overcrowding will not allow plants to thrive. Generally, an entire packet of seed is not needed for each row in a vegetable garden. Ideally, plants should not touch each other but rather allow air to circulate around each one. Seeds can be stored in a cool, dry, dark place for 3 to 4 years.

Checklist for June

Flower and Vegetable Garden

- ✓ Remove spent flowers from annuals to encourage more blooms.
- ✓ Feed and mulch vegetable plants as they start to flower.
- ✓ Trim back spring-blooming clematis and wisteria vines after they bloom. Please see Fact Sheet from University of Maryland HG 107 – "**A Quick Guide to Pruning Clematis**" https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/images/programs/hgic/Publications/HG107_Pruning%20Clematis.pdf
- ✓ Use a rain barrel to harvest water to irrigate.

Trees and Shrubs

- ✓ Check roses for black spot and powdery mildew. Treat accordingly.
- ✓ Remove flowers of roses after they fade. Please see Fact Sheet from University of Missouri – "**Roses: Care After Planting**" <http://extension.missouri.edu/p/G6601>
- ✓ Pick Japanese beetles by hand and drown them in soapy water.

Lawn

- ✓ Withhold lawn fertilizer until fall. Leave clippings on the lawn to add nitrogen to the soil.
- ✓ Spot treat weeds.
- ✓ Water ½" at a time, at least 1" weekly, including rainfall.