

Farmer Fred - AUGUST GARDEN CHORES FOR CENTRAL VALLEY, FOOTHILLS & BAY AREA

- # Train new raspberry and blackberry canes on a trellis or fence. Cut to the ground the old canes which bore this year's crop.
- # Brown spots in your lawn? Check your sprinkler coverage of that area. It may be getting substantially less water than other parts of the lawn.
- # Extend the flower season by planting more summer and fall bloomers such as petunias, zinnias and marigolds.
- # Don't let red tomatoes become overripe on the vine. Pick them when they're fully firm, not squishy
- # To increase flower production on geraniums and fuchsias, pinch them back.
- # Keep your roses cool during August. Water deeply and add mulch around the root zone.
- # For larger chrysanthemum blooms this fall, disbud them now. Stake and tie the plants to prevent drooping and breaking.
- # Marigolds and zinnias can bloom well into the fall. It's not too late to plant more of these seeds.
- # To increase the blooms of marigolds, celosia, cosmos, zinnias petunias and impatiens: apply a fertilizer with more phosphorus and potassium than nitrogen, perhaps a formulation such as 5-10-10.
- # Fruit and nut trees that would enjoy a bit of fertilizer this month include almonds, apricots, citrus, peaches and nectarines, cherries and walnuts.
- # Now is the time for planting seeds of winter vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, kale and lettuce. Be sure to keep these new seed beds moist.
- # Bermuda grass lawns are growing actively and would benefit from an application of fertilizer. Be sure to water the lawn thoroughly after feeding to prevent grass burn.
- # To increase the number of blooms of marigolds, celosia, cosmos, zinnias, petunias and impatiens: remove the dead flower heads so the plant can put its energy into new growth instead of seed production.

Whenever you spot a fruiting blackberry cane now, mark it with a dab of white paint to remind you to prune it out after you've picked the berries. For new canes on trailing varieties, peg them to the ground to ease your pruning chores.

Late August is a good time to plant seeds of winter blooming flowers such as sweet peas, snapdragons, Iceland poppies, pansies, violas and primroses. Be sure to keep these new seed beds moist to stave off the drying effects of our warm afternoon breezes.

If your azaleas and rhododendrons have set their flower buds for next spring's bloom, switch your fertilizer to an 0-10-10 to boost the flower size next year.

Fallen fruit and vegetables may be harboring next year's pest problems. Clean up and discard these unwanted homes.

Now's the time to divide crowded clumps of Shasta daisies.

Get a head start on your winter flower garden by planting early flowering sweet peas, such as "Winter Elegance" or Early Multiflora.