

## Timely Tips for July Gardeners from Calloway's Nursery

Gardening activities usually slow down in the Summertime as the temperature continues to climb into the 90's and beyond. Because it is often a very dry and hot month, maintenance is the focus. The best time to do any kind of gardening or maintenance is early in the morning or late in the day when temperatures are cooler. Now is the time to sit back and relax while enjoying the beautiful garden areas you've created.

Proper watering is essential to keep plants healthy during the Summer. It is best to water as deeply and infrequently as possible, as opposed to frequent light sprinklings. This will encourage a deeper root system that can take advantage of water stored in the soil.

One of the best strategies for getting shrubs and young trees through Summertime is to apply a thick layer of mulch over the root systems of plants. Mulches break down over time, so if it has been awhile since you've mulched, check all the plants in your yard. A three to four inch layer will prevent most evaporation from the soil and lower the soil temperature in the root zone, reducing stress on the root system.

Drip irrigation combined with mulch is an excellent way to maintain your garden and lawn. Drip irrigation, also known as trickle irrigation or micro irrigation is a method that saves water and fertilizer by allowing water to drip slowly to the roots of plants, either into the soil surface or directly into the root zone, through a network of valves, pipes, tubing, and emitters. It is done through narrow tubes that deliver water directly to the base of the plant. This allows for fertilizer and nutrient loss to be minimized due to localized application and reduced leaching. Soil erosion and weed growth is also lessened with this type of irrigation. Drip irrigation also allows the foliage to remain dry which reducing the risk of disease. If drip irrigation is not an option, consider using soaker hoses to provide a good source of water to your garden or bedding plants.

Water plants in containers and hanging baskets more frequently in the Summer to keep them from drying out. This can leach out plant nutrients from the soil, so use a water-soluble fertilizer regularly to keep your plants growing and healthy.