

# Monthly Newsletter

## *Summer 2010*

Summer has arrived. After making it through the hottest June on record and trudging into a humid yet rainless July, you are probably starting to get an idea for the tough and the not so tough plants in your yard. Even those with irrigation systems are finding out just how much water it takes to keep everything looking good. It's a time consuming, endless battle, but there are things you can do to help.

Start by observing your yard. Watch what gets beat down on by the sun, what plants start wilting by the middle of the day, what seems to be unaffected by the 90 plus days. When you figure out what needs your attention the most, you can choose your battles and save yourself time and water. Be proactive in your watering. If you know that your hydrangea or viburnum always starts looking thirsty by noon, water it by nine. Don't think that a little bit of water often is better than a good soaking every couple of days. Shallow watering encourages shallow root growth and more vulnerable plants. It's much better to water slowly, and deeply, simulating a good spring rain.

### This Month's Featured Plant



Limelight Hydrangeas

Average size: 4-6' x 4-6'

This hydrangea can take full sun or part shade. It blooms on new wood and so can be cut back to a preferred size or shape each year. Could easily be kept small or shaped to be tree-form. It has a long bloom time during the summer and makes for great cut flowers. Chartreuse blooms turn white and dry to a pink later in the season. Cold hardy and drought tolerant, an all around great shrub.

Also, remember the importance of mulch. Two – three inches of mulch helps the ground retain moisture longer. Whether it's shredded wood mulch, pine needles, dead leaves, straw or even shredded paper products like old newspapers, mulch will go a long way to extend a good watering.

If you have lost plants due to the drought consider replacing them with more drought resistant varieties. Shrub roses, nandina, yucca, hollies and abelia fare well in dry areas. The paniculata hydrangeas tend to be tougher than the large leaf macrophylla when it comes to the heat. As for perennials, lavender cotton, false indigo, daylilies, coneflower, coreopsis, salvia and sedum can take being hot and dry. Lenton rose, Solomon's seal, and coral bells can be dry as long as they get plenty of afternoon shade.

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## Monthly To Do List

~ Before going on vacation, move container plants to an area of moderate shade and make sure each has a saucer filled with water. Slow release watering jugs can be made out of partially buried milk or soda bottles with a few holes poked in them. Tree gators may be a good investment for new trees or large shrubs.

~ New plantings and anything in containers will probably need water every day.

~ Keep an eye out for garden pests that thrive in hot, dry conditions. Spider mites, aphids, Japanese beetles and white flies will probably be your biggest offenders. Try to catch the pests before they multiply and you have a full blown infestation on your hands. Remember that pests are attracted to stressed out plants and areas of poor air circulation. Most pests such as spider mites and aphids can be successfully kept at bay by frequent sprays with cool water on all surfaces of the leaves. A few drops of dish soap in a spray bottle of water helps fight these nuisances as well. Japanese beetle traps are generally effective on these pests that can do number on roses and fruiting shrubs and trees.

~ Cut back and lightly fertilize stressed out perennials. They should flush back out quickly and you will probably get a second bloom. Columbine, hardy geranium, astilbe, yarrow and coreopsis all respond well to being cut back this time of year.