

## JUNE

### Summer Lawn Care

The cool, rainy weather in April and May was ideal for the cool season turfgrasses. In the heat of summer, growing conditions become less favorable and turfgrass growth slows. However, proper care during stressful periods can help to maintain a healthy, good quality lawn.

**Mowing.** Mow Kentucky bluegrass laws at a height of 3 to 3-½ inches during the summer months. When mowing the lawn never remove more than one-third of the total leaf area at any one time. A lawn mowed at a height of 3 inches should be cut when it reaches a height of 4-½ inches. Removing more than one-third weakens it and reduces the capacity to withstand additional environmental stresses. Weaned turf is also more likely to be invaded by weeds.

If possible, mow in the cool of the morning or evening. Mowing during high temperatures of midday places additional stress on the turf. Also, make sure the mower blade is sharp. Dull blades tear and bruise the leaf tips.

**Watering.** Kentucky bluegrass turfs require approximately 1 to 1-½ inches of water per week. When irrigating, the general rule of thumb is to match the irrigation amount with the depth of the root system. Because the roots of lawn grasses become shorter in the summer, lighter and more frequent applications are best, as opposed to a thorough soaking (which moistens the soil to a depth of 8 to 10 inches.) Once a week in the spring and fall.

The best time to water a lawn is early morning. Winds are generally light and temperatures cool so little water is lost through evaporation. Watering at midday is less efficient because large amounts of water are lost through evaporation and strong winds may cause uneven water distribution. Strong midday winds may also carry the water onto driveways and streets. Watering the lawn in the evening or at night may increase disease problems.

**Fertilization.** An application of slow release fertilizer in early June is adequate for most cool season (and warm season) turfs. Slow release materials such as sulfur coated urea, urea formaldehyde and WIN are good formulations; avoid products that contain ammonium nitrate, urea and ammonium sulfate. The slow release fertilizers provide for even greening and help prevent ground and surface water contamination, whereas the quick release materials promote pollution and cause the turf to grow rapidly, which usually makes mowing unmanageable.

A summer fades to fall, the cool season grasses will again have more favorable growing conditions. Good lawn care this summer will minimize stress and keep the turfgrass in good condition.

## HARVESTING THE COLE CROPS

Vegetables must be harvested at the proper stage of maturity in order to obtain the highest quality produce. The harvest and storage recommendations for broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage are listed below.

### Broccoli

Broccoli should be harvested when the head is fully developed, but before the small yellow flower buds start to open. At harvest, the terminal head should be tight, blue-green, and approximately 6 to 7 inches in diameter.



Several smaller side heads (about 1 to 3 inches across) will develop in the axils of the leaves after the central head is removed. Broccoli may be placed in a perforated plastic bag and stored in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.

### Cauliflower

Cauliflower heads exposed to sunlight become cream colored and coarse in texture. To obtain high quality cauliflower, the heads must be blanched by loosely tying the outer leaves over the heads when approximately 2 to 3 inches in diameter. The leaves can be tied over the heads with twine or cloth strips. The exclusion of light or blanching will keep the heads white and tender.



Cauliflower should be harvested when the heads are smooth, firm, and compact. Full sized heads may be 6 to 8 inches across. Over mature heads will begin to open up and become "ricey." Cauliflower may be placed in perforated plastic bags and stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.



### Cabbage

The harvest of cabbage may begin when the heads are firm and the size of a softball. Mature cabbage should be harvested when the head is solid and tight, before they crack or split. Splitting is caused by excessive water uptake; the resulting pressure splits the head. Splitting of mature heads may be prevented by pulling the plant upward and gently twisting.

Cabbage may be placed in a perforated plastic bag and stored in the refrigerator. A cool, moist (32°F, 90 to 95% relative humidity) root cellar will suffice for prolonged storage up to 3 to 4 months.

## HORT SHORTS



\* If you have a deck with a sturdy rail around it and would like a spectacular show this summer, attach a gutter along the outside of the top rail for a planter. Fill it half full of container- soil mix. Install an inexpensive, drip-irrigation systems that can be hooked directly to your garden hose to simplify watering and finish filling the gutter with soil mix. Plant your gutter planter with small, flowering plants appropriate to the available light. Impatiens are excellent in shady areas. Fibrous begonias are good in full sun or light shade. Petunias, ageratum and dwarf marigolds all perform well in full sun. Fertilize the gutter garden every two weeks using a water-soluble fertilizer according to package directions.

\* An unusual, hanging fern garden can be made with two wire baskets, some unmilled sphagnum moss, potting soil and small ferns. Line the baskets with the moss and fill the cavity with moist soil. Hold a piece of cardboard on top of the baskets and flip them over onto a workbench, then tuck small ferns securely over the surface of each basket. Again using the cardboard to keep the soil in place, invert one basket and place the other on top of it, forming a ball. Carefully slide the cardboard out, wire the baskets together, add a strong, wire hanger and hang the fern ball in a shady, protected place outdoors for the summer. Keep the fern ball moist.

\* Three levels of flowers add vertical dimension to patio planters. By grouping three flower heights (trailing, low edging and tall background) into one container, the maximum number of plants can be combined without crowding. For example, use trailing blue lobelias or ivy-leaved geraniums near the edge to form a cascade. Petunias or dusty miller can fill in the second story. In the background, use plants that will grow to 2 feet or more by the end of the summer and add height without heaviness such as spikes, (large type geraniums) or Purple Ruffles basil.

\* Make a plot layout of your flower borders. This is an essential, but easily neglected chore. With an accurate plot plan, you will know where to locate the spring flowering bulbs you plant next fall. Also, it will make your spring and summer gardening easier. You will be able to correctly identify the plants in your border and plan for continuous blooming by setting young annuals between bulbs and early flowering perennials after their blooms have faded.

