

August

Live in the moment, with an eye on the future

August is a tricky month. It is oh so easy to put one's feet up, or to decamp to somewhere glamorous and poolside, but your garden will thank you for a little additional attentiveness in this dreamiest of months.

Firstly, keep watering. Not little and often, that only encourages shallow, thirsty roots. Every few days, give everything a really good soak. Pots in hot weather? Every day. And give your roses a feed.

Secondly, keep cutting. As soon flowers as bloom and start to set seed, snip them off. If you want flowers for the house, you will get the best vase life if you cut them as they are just starting to open. The only exception is if you are saving seed. I have already started to collect opium poppy seed by the end of July, and sweet pea seed by the second week of August.

Once you have taken care of this summer's bounty, it's time to consider the next.

Seeds to sow

HARDY ANNUALS

Towards the end of the month is the perfect time to start sowing hardy annuals for early flowers next year.

- / Agrostemma (corncockle)
- / Ammi majus
- / Bladder campion
- / Borage
- / Bronze Fennel
- / Chicory
- / Cornflowers
- / Cerinthe
- / Dill
- / Dog daisy
- / Grasses (all of them!)
- / Larkspur
- / Marigolds
- / Nigellas
- / Opium poppy
- / Orlyaya Grandiflora
- / Phacelia
- / Scabiosa
- / Viola tricolor
- / Wild carrot

STARTING PERENNIALS

My flower field, Malus Farm, is being guided more and more by regenerative principles and that means the surface of the soil should be covered, and the body of the soil should be as undisturbed as possible. & that means as much permanent planting - perennials - as possible.

This year, I'll be sowing:

- / Achillea
- / Rare campanula varieties
- / Verbascum
- / Cephalaria gigantea
- / Hollyhocks
- / Dianthus (Try *D. carthusianorum*)
- / Echinaceas (I favour *E. pallida*)
- / The big textural plants such as Echinops and Eryngium
- / Baptisia
- / Bupleurum
- / All the heucharas
- / Rudbeckia triloba - hardy enough for overwintering

For unusual and interesting perennial seed, have a look at jelitto.com

If you aren't ready for this level of commitment, then scattering phacelia seed as a green manure on any patches of empty ground will do wonders for the health of your soil. Aim for it to germinate and grow in the autumn, protect the soil over winter, and hoe in in the spring.

*Flowers to harvest**All the flowers*

- / Lots and lots of dahlias
- / The second flush of roses
- / Sweet peas (they will be fading)
- / Achillea
- / Cornflowers
- / Hydrangeas
- / Sunflowers
- / Rudbeckia
- / Echinacea
- / Cosmos
- / Strawflowers
- / Delphiniums
- / Asters
- / Eryngium
- / Echinops
- / Sanguisorba
- / Verbena (I grow *V. officinalis* 'Bampton' rather than *V. bonariensis*)
- / Amelanchier leaves & berries
- / Crab apples
- / Rose hips
- / Thalictrum
- / Scabious
- / Grass seed heads
- / Perennial phlox

Other jobs for this month

Now is the time for starting seed collecting. Once you are self sufficient for seed, you have everything you will ever need. Except tulips. Now is the time to order your winter bulbs.