

This Month in the Garden

June Tasks

Summer will begin in earnest this month. Time for those backyard activities your family really enjoys (and some they may not, like weeding).

- If you have not already done so, prepare your garden for hurricane season. [Learn the steps you can take now](#) to reduce your stress if a hurricane heads our way.
- You can continue to plant heat-tolerant vegetables this month. So, go ahead and put in okra, sweet potatoes, southern peas, artichokes and certain greens. Check out [easy vegetables to grow](#) for more information.
- If you can stand the heat, you can fill in your yard with pieces of sod, as needed. Just make sure it is getting an adequate amount of water to put down roots. One-half inch to an inch per week should do it.
- Most, if not all, of your cool season annuals are probably in serious decline by now. If you haven't already done so, it is time to pull them up and toss them on your compost pile.
- While you are cleaning up, you might also prune any dead or unwanted branches to give your garden a cleaner appearance and keep your plants healthier. Learn [how to properly prune your plants](#).
- Go on a bug hunt with your children or grandchildren. Take photos and then go to <https://www.insectidentification.org/insects-by-state.asp?thisState=Texas> to compare your photo and identify the insect. Knowing which insects are in your yard will help you learn which are beneficial and which are not and should be treated. Remember – 97% of insects have either beneficial or neutral impacts to your garden.
- You can expect water expenses to double during the summer months due to garden water needs. With the added burden of higher electricity costs due to air conditioning, you may be motivated to learn how to reduce your water costs. Check out these Earth-Kind® tips for [Efficient Use of Water in the Garden and Landscape](#).
- Are you planning for your fall garden? Here is something you might consider for weed control: soil solarization. Soil solarization is an environmentally friendly way to reduce weeds by up to 90%. If you plan to start your fall garden in August, then you will need to start your soil solarization by the end of this month. Learn how [here](#).



Okra



- Watch your roses for damage from chilli thrips. This problem tends to arise during the summer months. Read [this to learn more](#) about this problem.
- If you have Louisiana or bearded iris, they will begin a dormancy period in early summer. If they are not growing, you can trim their yellow leaves by about half. This will make them more attractive and reduce their water loss during the dormancy period. Get more information [here](#).
- Azaleas and gardenias are acid-loving plants. If you notice yellowing on the leaves of new growth, add fertilizer for these plants that is high in iron and sulfur. [Learn more](#) about keeping these perennials lush and lovely.
- If you have plants in containers, keep a close eye on them as the temperatures rise. Some may need watering every day. Just be careful the container has a drain hole, so the water does not accumulate and drown your plant. Read more about porta-growing [here](#).
- Do you have a place in your garden where nothing thrives because of high heat and little water? Perhaps this is exactly the right place to put in a succulent garden. Learn [how to make a succulent container garden](#) or a [succulent garden in your landscape](#).
- Don't forget to celebrate Father's Day on June 20th. If the Dad in your life is a gardener, he might enjoy things like hose timers, new gardening tools, a rain barrel, or a coupon for someone else to do the less enjoyable garden chores.
- The first official day of summer is the Summer Solstice on June 20th. Dancing in your garden to celebrate is not a requirement on this day but, if you choose to do this, please do so after dark so you will not get a sunburn. With the advent of summer, it is important to protect yourself as you garden. Learn [more here](#).



June Color in Fort Bend County

In May 2021, the Rock Rose was added as one of the newest Texas Superstars. This Texas native shrub grows best in part sun to light shade. It is drought and heat tolerant and considered a perennial in hardiness zones 9 to 13. In cooler hardiness zones 7 and 8, it should be considered a herbaceous perennial or annual.

Here is more information:

- Grows to height and width of 2-4 feet
- Blooms from early spring through fall
- Needs well-drained soil
- Relatively disease free.



Rock Rose. Photo courtesy of [TexasSuperstars.com](#)

For more information about the Rock Rose, visit <https://texassuperstar.com/plants/rockrose/index.html>

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Many gardens are a riot of color in June. Perhaps you will want some of these to adorn your garden.

- **Salvia:** Salvias, also known as sages, are colorful flowers that grow in most parts of Texas and in our part of Texas they are frequently perennial. Blooms begin in spring and continue through fall. Blossoms are usually red or blue but also come in other colors. Sizes range from a small 6 inches to over 5 feet tall. There are also native varieties. Plant in full sun or part sun. Bonus: There are three varieties that are Texas Superstars®: Henry Duelberg Salvia, Mystic Spires Salvia and Mexican Bush Sage.
- **Tropical Hibiscus:** These evergreen shrubs can be found with blooms in every color of the rainbow. The size depends on the variety, but most are 4 feet tall or more. Because this is a tropical plant, you may choose to plant it in a container or someplace where it can be protected during cold snaps. Plant in full sun or part sun. Bonus: There are several varieties that are Texas Superstars®.
- **Caladium:** Do you need a bit of color in the shade? Caladiums might be the answer you are seeking. These annuals have insignificant flowers but who needs flowers when you have such lovely leaves? The leaves come in a variety of reds, greens, whites, and pinks with different patterns and sizes.
- **Verbena:** This small spreading shrub or groundcover comes with flowers in white, pink, blue, purple or red. It grows in full sun or part sun and will faithfully bloom from spring until frost. Look for the perennial versions when you shop for this plant because many annual varieties are also sold. Bonus: Blue Princess Verbena is a Texas Superstar®.



Salvia



Caladium

The Fort Bend County Master Gardeners' Demonstration Gardens are undergoing major renovations. Some gardens are being removed, some are being moved, and new gardens are being added. If you choose to visit these gardens, please be mindful of this work and maintain appropriate social distancing as recommended by the CDC. For more information, visit <https://fbmg.org/demonstration-gardens/>.