

In the Garden with Shobha Vanchiswar



Creeping Jenny; see slide show inside or in [Photo Gallery](#)
July 3, 2009

Our To-Do List for July

Collect seeds now, plant yourself some surprises for next year.

1. Weed as often as possible.
2. Cut back spent flowers to neaten appearances, as well as to encourage a second flush of flowers.
3. Mow regularly, but keep grass height at a minimum of four inches. Leave clippings to mulch and feed the lawn. It may not look pristine, but it is the right thing to do.
4. Start collecting seeds from plants such as forget-me-nots, foxgloves, columbines, hellebores, etc. Or, let the seed heads dry in place and be dispersed naturally. The self-seeded plants will emerge next year in various locations and provide happy surprises. This method is particularly nice when you want more of the same plants within the beds for a more informal look. Simply remove those plants that are in undesirable spots, pot them up and give to friends.
5. Water as required. July can get very hot, so pay attention, especially in the vegetable garden.
6. Keep birdbaths filled.

7. Watch out for pests and act promptly if any infestation is detected.
8. Protect fruit trees and shrubs from birds and squirrels by covering well with appropriate netting. Wish me luck - my espalier of apple and pear trees is going to get this netting because last year the squirrels did serious damage to our fruits. They blatantly knocked down most of the young fruit for the fun of it. I have not taken kindly to their sport and ever since I've been mentally exacting all sorts of highly satisfying revenge.
9. Pinch back asters, chrysanthemum and such so that they get fuller and yield more flowers.
10. Fill bare areas within perennial borders with annuals. Meanwhile, think about more permanent solutions and get those plants for planting in the fall. Write down your choices as in all probability you will have forgotten by September. Go one step further and note down where you will be planting these selections. The garden looks quite different in the fall and those "obvious" spots are no longer apparent. I speak from experience.
11. Arrange for someone to check and water the garden while you are on vacation.

Shobha Vanchiswar has been gardening all her life, the last 21 years in Chappaqua. She received the Golden Trowel Award for garden design in 2007 from Garden Design magazine. Her jewel-of-a-garden here in New Castle was on view in this year's Garden Conservancy Open Day program. She has a garden design business, Seeds of Design. Write her at seedsofdesign@verizon.net.