

Tips for Successful Late Summer Gardens

by Shawn Tubridy

We have reached the point in summer when many gardeners are questioning some of their life choices, "What was I thinking when I decided to start a garden? Why is my garden so dry? How did I end up with so many weeds? Why didn't I grow more?" While gardening can be therapeutic and stress-relieving, it can also be a lot of work! Luckily, there are some things you can do to cut down on the workload.

Watering your garden shouldn't be a daily task. When you water, make sure that you are watering the roots and not just watering the foliage. Deep watering approximately every 3 days helps the plants in your garden to grow strong roots. Check the soil to assure that you are soaking the soil 6-8" deep. Water evaporates quickly from bare soil so make sure that your soil is covered.

Mulching is essential to cutting down on your garden workload. In addition to keeping soil moist and cutting down on your need to water, mulching also helps to keep the weeds at bay. There are many ways to mulch. Using the chop and drop method with non-seeded

weeds, spreading grass clippings, and placing cardboard boxes and old newspapers around your plants can all help to retain moisture. Each creates a barrier between the soil and the sun. However, If aesthetics are important to you, you can always put straw, wood chips, leaf mulch or natural wood mulch over the weeds. While many people choose landscape cloth as a barrier, it does not break down and feed the soil like the other mulches and weeds often grow on top of it.

To help your garden survive drought-like conditions, 6" of mulch is recommended. You can also grow green mulches like white clover, thyme, and alyssum. Green mulches can help to feed the soil and keep it from drying out while many of them also adding nutrients to the soil and deterring pests.

Finally, It is not too late to plant more seeds in your garden. Succession planting can happen in August. Many vegetables don't like the heat but will thrive as the weather gets cooler. Now is a good time to plant lettuce, spinach, and other salad greens. This is especially helpful now with the safety risks of store-bought salad greens. Plants in the Brassica family such as cabbage, cauliflower, kale, broccoli, and brussels sprouts prefer the cooler weather. Root crops such as carrots, beets, radishes and turnips are also a good choice to plant now. Some of the advantages of fall gardening include fewer pest problems, less watering and more pleasant working conditions.

Remember, gardening season is far from over. It's not too late to plant more seeds and make sure you're gardening smarter not harder.



Tips for Mulching

Unsure what materials work best as mulch? The following techniques can work to help retain moisture in your soil and cut back on weeds:

- **Practice the chop and drop method. Leave discarded weeds where they fall. As long as they have not gone to seed, they can work as mulch.**
- **Use grass clippings as cover (again, no seeds).**
- **Reuse cardboard boxes or newspaper to cover the soil around your plants**
- **Spread straw, wood chips, leaf mulch, or natural wood mulch to cover the soil.**



If you have any gardening questions, feel free to contact CCE Schuyler Garden & Horticulture Coordinator, Shawn Tubridy at slt22@cornell.edu or join her on Thursday, August, 13th at 5:30pm for her "In the Weeds Workshop" in the CCE Schuyler Teaching Garden.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

August 4-H Forensics: DNA - Hector, NY

August 11, 2026 - Elizabeth B. Pert Library - 4:00pm-5:00pm

Join us August 11th at the Elizabeth B. Pert Library for 4-H Forensics. This event is perfect for young wannabe sleuths looking to solve a "crime" with their forensic science skills. This month youth will learn forensics skills like DNA analysis, Fingerprinting and more! This event is FREE for ages 8-16 years old. Pre-registration is preferred, but walk-ins are welcome. **Register for this FREE event at www.cceschuyler.org/events or contact Kim Seaman at 607-535-7161 x3218**

Master Gardener Summer Workshop Series:

● MG Workshop Series: "In the Weeds with Shawn"

August 15, 2026 - CCE Schuyler Teaching Garden - Montour Falls, NY - 5:30pm-6:30pm

Discover the CCE Schuyler Teaching Garden with Garden and Horticulture Coordinator, Shawn Tubridy and learn which weeds should be removed, which can be eat and ways to keep weeds at bay. **Register for this event at www.cceschuyler.org/events**

● MG Workshop Series: "Summer Jam with Rose Anne"

August 22, 2026 - Human Services Complex Rm 120 - Montour Falls, NY - 5:30pm-6:30pm

Join Master Gardener Rose Anne Wincek to learn how to make safe and delicious jam with summer fruit. **Cost is just \$15. Register for this event at www.cceschuyler.org/events**

● MG Workshop Series: "Drought Resistant Plants with Tom"

August 25, 2026 - Human Services Complex Rm 120 - Montour Falls, NY - 5:30pm-6:30pm

Learn more about Cactus and Succulent Plant Adaptations for Survival with Master Gardener Tom Sydelko. **Register for this event at www.cceschuyler.org/events**

Mermaids and Pirates! - Montour Falls, NY

August 26, 2026 - Family Play and Resource Center - 4:00pm-5:30pm

Join us August 26th from 4-5:30pm at the Family Play and Resource Center for Pirate and Mermaid themed crafts and activities for ages birth to 8 years old. Activities Include: exploring with mermaid and pirate play-dough; running pirate ship and mermaid races; making your own mermaid crown and pirate hat; and enjoying some seaweed dip. **Reserve your FREE maritime materials by August 21st. Contact Parenting Educator, Paula Goodrich: pg347@cornell.edu or 607-535-7161 x3229.**

Summer Tours of the Family Play and Resource Center!

August 1 - August 31, 2026 - Family Play and Resource Center - Call for Appointment

Are you looking for new ways to beat the summer heat? Come take a private tour of our climate controlled play area - perfect for hot summer days! Schedule a private one on one tour of the center with Parenting Educator, Paula Goodrich on YOUR time. Tours include: introduction to the Family Play & Resource Center; age-appropriate activities for your child; opportunities to ask parenting questions. This FREE Stay-cation is for ages birth to 8 years old! **Call or Email Paula to book your tour today - email: pg347@cornell.edu phone: 607-535-7161 x3229.**



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Find out about upcoming events in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Horticulture in the Southern Tier through the SCNY Ag News.



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EVENT HIGHLIGHT:



New Master Gardener Volunteer Training - Now Accepting Applications

Are you Interested in improving your gardening skills? CCE Schuyler is looking for gardeners interested in becoming Master Gardener Volunteers. Take your skills to the next level and learn teach others how to become better gardeners. **The deadline for registration is September 11th.** This hybrid Online/in person training has a \$100 fee, but limited scholarships are available.

For more information, contact Shawn Tubridy at slt22@cornell.edu or by phone 607-535-7161 x3226.