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Gardening keeps us going

Aug 11, 2020



Most gardeners knowledge of Kohlrabi is limited to seed catalogs, but this odd-looking member of the cabbage family is tasty and grows easily. The edible portion is the swollen stem which is ready for eating when it grows to the size of a tennis ball after a late August planting. If they take longer than 10 weeks to mature, they have not had sufficient moisture and fertilizer.

Special to the Chronicle

Floral City Garden Club Horticulture Chair Kathy Lingusky keeps us going this summer by writing a colorful and informative Horticulture Hints paper and sending it to all of us in the FFGC Floral City Garden Club. At the top of the page a green, heart-shaped leaf vine wonders through the words "Horticulture Hints" inviting us to read on. August notes began with a quote from Marcus Tullius Cicero, "If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need." During these challenging times, the truth could not have been stated more accurately! These seem to be two things that do keep us going.

Lingusky tells us that August is a good time to take stock of what may have worked (or not) for you this past year. Evaluate what you have and where you have it planted before you head to the nurseries the end of the month or early next month to take advantage of nurseries who have restocked for the cooler weather ahead.

She says, "August is traditionally the time to start cool weather vegetables from seed. ... I believe I will wait just a little." Last year she planted in August and put them out in October, but it was unseasonably hot and they withered. Lingusky continues, "I believe this year I will experiment with kohlrabi, which was a favorite of mine when I was a kid." She provides a preparation idea, "Mom made a cream sauce for the thinly sliced vegetables. Heaven for a kid who already loved brassicas." She said she will start the seeds inside in September and see what happens with the weather before moving them into the ground outside.



Take advantage of summer perennial booms by cutting off dried heads and storing a a labeled paper bag for planting next spring.

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Lingusky has advice for us about what to do with those fading summer perennials such as Black-eyed Susans, "Take advantage of all that potential bloom for next year. Leave the seed heads on for the birds (I like to leave about half of them for the birds) or cut them back just below the flower when they are nice and dry. Some of the seeds may have already made it into the ground below and will pop up on their own next spring. Save the dry seed heads in a paper bag (not an air-tight plastic bag) and be sure to label them so there is no guessing next spring what you are planting."

August is a good time to give those rose bushes another pruning. She says, "Prune back where they have become leggy or where the foliage has become thin. Remove any diseased or declining branches. This will encourage new growth followed by more blooms. The addition of a little Epsom salts, some time-released fertilizer sprinkled around the roses, then top dressed with a little compost and the roses will be happy campers for the rest of the hot season."

"Early morning is the best part of the day to work out in August, we know that and mosquitoes know that! To curtail the "ouch!" factor and put the kibosh on them." said Lingusky, "Is to make up a household spray. I half fill a spray bottle with cheapest-you-can-find blue peppermint mouthwash and add water to fill up the bottle. Spray the area around you and even your clothes if you want. Apparently they do not like peppermint. Who knew? I got this from my favorite: Pinterest!"

In closing she counsels, "If you are seeing signs of yellowing leaves or leaf drop on your shrubs, now is a good time to give them a nutrient boost before the heat fades. Feeding crepe myrtles now will help them keep their leaves well into the fall."

The FFGC Floral City Garden Club Officers are looking forward to resuming meetings monthly on the second Friday at noon in the Community House at the Town Center. This Sept. 11 meeting will undoubtedly be in a ZOOM format. Check into our website for an update at www.floralcitygardenclub.weebly.com, or call or text Program Director/First Vice President Carol Wood at 813-235-3917 or email her at carolwood@outlook.com.

Marcia Beasley submits publicity for the FCGC Floral City Garden Club. Visit www.floralcitygardenclub.weebly.com.