

# Diggin' In The Dirt: Ah, the Lazy Days of Summer!

By Kim Camarda



Summer is really playtime for the gardener. Feed, water, harvest and you're good to go. The digging and soil work is done. Most planting and pruning is done. Spring and fall were overwhelmingly busy and winter was spent worrying, waiting and planning. Summer is for being in the garden-- to watch it go. A good summer practice is to walk your garden taking in your accomplishments (force yourself not to weed). "Remember when" in your gardens. We plant rose bushes to commemorate the births of grandchildren. I have special memories of the day my husband and I planted the tree on our 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we're on number 8 now and the tree has really grown. Remember, we garden for enjoyment. Enjoy it. There really is nothing better than a cool summer morning sampling the berries from a place that was mud just a few months ago. Soak in the reward while you have the time.

Summer-blooming bulbs are

often garden surprises for me this time of year. I'm a tree and shrub gal. I carefully pick trees and shrubs and have a list of ones I'm looking for. Not bulbs, I buy bulbs mainly on whim. "Oh, I've always wanted to grow these," I have been heard to say. "And I know just where to put them." I take them home and enthusiastically plant them and then they fade from memory until the next summer. When, on my hands and knees, I undoubtedly utter the phrase, "I don't remember planting anything here." I have learned to resist the urge to pull unidentified plants as weeds. Nowadays, I wait it out and try to find the stained, soaked little sketch of where the bulbs are planted.

There are some wonderful options for summer bulbs here in Vernonia. My all-time favorite is the Allium, sometimes referred to as drumstick or lollipop flowers. They can grow to 5 feet tall and the flower heads easily reach to 5 inches across. Most colors you see are in the purple range, but they also come in reds to pinks to whites, and yellow, and there is one color referred to as black. There are 500 or so species, many from our surrounding

mountains and they are related to the onions we eat. Many are pleasantly fragrant and will flower from late spring through summer. Another great summer bulb is the Crocosmia. Hailing from South Africa, it is heat-tolerant, mostly insect- and disease-resistant and dramatic. Its leaves are tall and grassy-looking with the flower stems popping out in loud colors. It can grow up to 4 feet and is related to the freesia which it does resemble in habit.

The humming birds love them, and like the other bulbs mentioned here, the deer here seem to leave them alone.

Feed-water-weed-mulch. Feed the fuchsias, the chrysanthemums, the roses, the boxes and the baskets. Feed the lawn with nitrogen later in the month. Mulch the camellia, the rhoddy and azalea, the trees and the shrub bases (if you haven't yet).

Prune-pinch-shear. Prune azaleas and rhoddys, if you wait too long, you risk nipping off next year's buds. Pinch off your annuals and fuchsias and remove any unsightly bits. This will refresh the plant and promote another burst of growth. Shear down your Shasta-type daisies, and your ground

covers. (If you are going to feed these, wait till after they've been cut down.)

It's a good time of year to propagate your woody-stemmed favorites. Azaleas, hydrangea, wisteria, jasmine, fuchsias all will take to stem cuttings now. You want a semi-soft piece of the plant. I usually leave at least 6 inches on the piece I intend to use. You want to cut it off right under a leaf set and dip that end in rooting powder

You can go the old-fashioned route and make your own rooting solution with a willow branch soaked in water. Some plants do better with this approach and some do not. Another old-time way to propagate is to take a low to the ground branch or tendril and set a medium rock on it at a leaf node. Don't let it dry out and in no time you'll see little roots reaching out for the ground. This is when you can cut the branch off the parent bush and plant it in its own little pot and give it a head start. Yeah, free plants!

If you want some additional later-season color, you can seed columbines, penstamon and bleeding hearts now for late summer transplants.

## Barnyard News: Hoof Care and Abscesses



By Stephanie Carr

So, how about this weather?! Usually, I am the one dreading summer and would much rather have cool overcast days. But not this year! I'm ready for the fields to dry out, get disked, and start riding in them. Why the change of heart, you ask? Well, this weather has caused more hoof problems in our barn than anyone should have in a lifetime.

Last January, I bought a two-year-old filly from eastern Oregon with great potential as a cow/barrel horse and nice hard feet. Little did I realize that all this rain and mud was going to cause those wonderful hard feet to become tender, soft feet with stone bruises and abscesses. An abscess is the way a hoof rids itself of damaged tissue caused by trauma to the inside of the hoof. Blood and pus build up inside the hoof and sooner or later it must come out (much like a pimple). Without the proper attention by a vet or farrier, the abscess will travel through the hoof until it finds a way out. An abscess can burst through the coronet band, frog, sole, or the hoof wall. An abscess can be caused by just about anything. Seriously, a thorn in the foot, a stone bruise, and improper hoof maintenance are all possible causes of abscesses.

If you decide to try and heal the abscess on your own, you are going to want to try the following. If your horse will tolerate it you should soak his foot in a solution of Epsom salt and water, or apple cider vinegar and water. Both of these will help draw out the infection. If your horse will not stand with his foot in a bucket for 30 minutes, you can try an Epsom salt poultice. Pack the horse's hoof with the poultice and wrap it with vet wrap. Now, I am not a vet, this is just a common method used to try and heal hoof abscesses. If this does not work in a few days, please call your vet and have him or her come out to drain it, as they

are extremely painful for your horse.

If you decide to have your vet out to drain the abscess the hardest part begins-- healing. Your horse will need to be kept in a dry clean stall or pen until the abscess is FULLY healed. As with the home healing method above, soaking the hoof for 30 minutes will help immensely. You will need to stock up on vet wrap, gauze, and strong iodine such as Betadine. Changing the bandage every day until the infection is gone is very important.

My most recent abscess experience was with my two-year-old filly. Hemi, as we are now calling her, has had stone bruises in both her front feet which have turned to abscesses. We are fairly certain that they were caused by stone bruises. A common way to prevent stone bruises is to put shoes on your horse. So here is the dilemma: To shoe or not to shoe? My belief on shoeing is if the horse walks on gravel, pavement, rocky surfaces, or is used often, you should probably have shoes on your horse. But Hemi isn't any of those. I've put her on hoof-strengthening supplements, clean her feet daily, and

have her trimmed regularly. So what do I do? In this kind of circumstances, your best ally is your friends and your farrier. Ask them for their opinion and see what they say. After talking to my farrier, I've decided that I want to put shoes on her two front feet for a bit of added protection. We will see, maybe it

will help.

Well, that's it for now. If you have any questions, feel free to ask us at Double C Tack and if we can't answer it, we can definitely point you in the direction of someone who can! Best of luck and happy trails!

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