# Late Summer Landscape Maintenance

It's hot; it's humid; it's rainy. Your plants are likely feeling the effects of our intense summer climate. Try to find some time in the next few weeks for these landscape maintenance tasks that will help to keep your landscape looking fresh for the rest of the season!

Assess the needs of your annuals and perennials. Are they still just as strong as when you planted them several months ago? They are probably not – which is to be expected. True annuals such as petunias, marigolds & zinnias might not bounce back. In which case, I recommend ripping them out, prepping the soil, adding some fresh mulch, and leaving the bed open until you're ready to plant some fall color.

Other annuals that might be fading, such as begonias, impatiens, lantana, coleus & purslane, don't necessarily need to be pulled out and replaced. These types of annuals are stronger and can rebloom with a little help. Give the plants a hefty trim, put down some fresh fertilizer, make sure they're getting plenty of water, and watch them regrow. Then they should last for several more weeks or months.

As for your true perennials, like hostas, cone flowers and daylilies, do some very light pruning or deadheading. Identify and then cut out the flowers and leaves that are looking weak - those that have black & brown spots. For these true perennials, be careful not to prune back too much. The leaves that they are growing right now will help them reserve energy for when it's time to go dormant for the winter.

If your annuals beds are looking fresh, check out your vegetable garden. Do the same thing – identify what looks weak, or what is "done for the season," and either replace, or revive.

Do you have a compost pile going in the backyard? Give that a turn.

Do you need to trim off a few limbs from that big ole crape myrtle or vitex tree? How about your hydrangeas? They probably need some deadheading.

How do your potted plants look at the front door, or on the back patio?

Since it's so hot, you're not likely to want to tackle any mass plantings right now. Take this time to take a closer look at some of the smaller details in your garden – I'm sure you'll uncover plenty of things that need attention. Remember, there is beauty in the details!

*Written by John MacMillan*