

Gardening tips for June (Watering Special)

June is finally here with summer rains that never stop, thirty days to spoil the garden (apologies to Flanders and Swan). After a decidedly damp April and early May it seems highly likely that June will be similarly soggy. But now is the time to enjoy your garden, whatever the weather (thank you Alan!).

The kitchen garden

A neatly planted veg plot coming into fruition is a sight to behold. All those hours spend toiling and tilling, drilling and planting, this is the time of year when your partner loses you in the garden, a gardening version of *the captain's mistress!* Watering is one of those essentials to get the crops going and keeping them going until harvest. Different crops have different requirements and the best judge on how much and when to water is the diligent gardener. A good drenching once or twice a week can be better than every day and morning watering is now preferable to the evening (see below). And it's not just watering, feed with soluble or pelleted feed to encourage your crops to produce their bounty later in the year.

Tomatoes

A sign of summer when the tomato plants are growing strongly but they really do need close attention on the watering front. The last thing you need with your tomato plants whether planted indoors or out is for them to get a bit of wilt. Uneven water supply to tomatoes will have a knock-on effect with the quality of the tomatoes. So, a bit of judgement is needed, always try to give the plant the same amount of water every day. Slugs are not fond of tomato plants so water in the morning or evening and if very hot, perhaps both. Use a good quality tomato feed once the plants start to flower, always following the manufacturer's instructions, and to keep costs down, use a concentrate that needs diluting, you get so much more for your money.

The flower garden

The latest news on when to water your prize specimens may surprise you. Not to water in the heat of the day is mostly understood therefore perhaps it should be done in the evenings. This is the easiest time for most of us especially after a hard day's work, and what could be better than walking around the garden, hosepipe in one hand, gin and tonic in the other. But wait, early morning is now the new evening! To give the soil a good drenching in the morning before the heat of the day sets in means the soil or mulch surface can dry out, depriving slugs and snails of their most luxurious habitat, something they can look forward to if you choose to water in the evening, they can then feast all

night with impunity. Keep a close eye on anything newly planted as they may need extra watering to stop them wilting.

Water garden

Not a normal addition to a ‘watering special’ but water is certainly involved. As the pond water heats up it has less capacity for dissolving oxygen. This is where pond pumps and oxygenating pond plants come in to their own. To have both will help to keep the pond healthy, water quality is also very important especially if the pond has wildlife including goldfish. A change of water is a good thing to do from time to time. Depending on the size of pond, remove a few buckets of water and refill with fresh water preferably from stored rainwater. Tap water can be use but be careful, some aquatics such as Koi are sensitive to chlorine or rather the ammonia that is produced after Koi have been feeding in chlorinated water, so tap water can be used if doing a few buckets refresh, any more or if you keep Koi, a proprietary water conditional chemical should be used to remove the chlorine.

Lawns

I’m sure I said this last year and probably the year before &c, whatever you choose to water in the garden, please leave the lawn to cope on its own, they always do. No matter how brown the once lush sward, even if it’s keeping up with your suntan, spare the water, the lawn will return to its verdant grassiness in the autumn.

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Keep gardening.

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