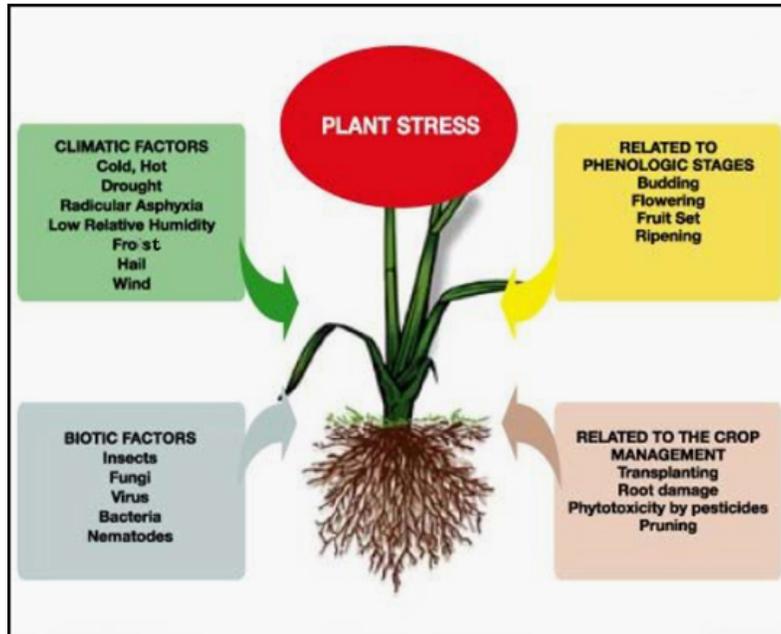


CHRIS' CORNER



**Not
All
Plants
Like
It
Hot!**

This summer's inescapable heat has created challenges for gardeners and their plants. My newly planted hydrangea 'Endless Summer' is showing signs of stress and is starting to wilt because of the extreme heat and humidity of August. You really have to pay close attention to your plants this time of year because the hot weather can have a deleterious long-term effect on their overall health.

We always provide tips to keep people and pets safe during hot weather but what about our plants? Many plants need extra attention to cope with the heat once temperatures skyrocket. When a plant starts to wilt, that's its visible response to heat. Wilting is the plant's ability to reduce moisture lost through transpiration. This is considered a survival mechanism for that plant. Plants will also close their stomates to prevent moisture loss.

This will of course have an effect on the plant's ability to carry out the photosynthetic process. This is the process whereby the plant converts light energy into chemical energy. If a plant is under heat stress, it will not produce as much sugar as it needs for food which can lead to starvation of the plant.

Extremely hot weather can cause tomatoes and bell peppers to abort their blooms. The same can be said for bush beans. Day temperatures over 90 degrees and night temperatures above 70 degrees greatly reduce pollen production. Once night temperatures fall below 70 degrees, the plant should begin to set fruit.

Be sure to irrigate your garden properly. Give your plants about one to one-half inch of water per week. You want to water deeply but infrequently. This is adequate for lawns, woody plants, flowers and vegetables. Be sure to irrigate early in the morning so those leaves can dry off before nightfall. This will help to reduce disease problems. Don't forget to apply two to three inches of mulch in your garden; this will help to keep those roots cool. Please do not do any volcano mulching around the base of your trees!

Well, it's time to check on my 'Endless Summer' hydrangea. I would sure hate to lose it in this summer heat.

Until next time, happy gardening and stay cool!



Christopher Conner

