

CHRIS' CORNER



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Summer Heat Safety in the Garden

Grab your water bottle and stock up on fudgesicles. It is hot, it is humid... it is summertime! A sweltering heat wave has gripped the Mid-South. The Memphis area is currently under a heat advisory with heat indexes above 105 degrees. The double-digit temperatures combined with the high humidity are not only uncomfortable but can be dangerous. You can't step outside for a few minutes without breaking into a full sweat. The summer heat takes its toll on gardens and gardeners alike. Here are a few tips that will help you to avoid heat stress while gardening:

1. Stay hydrated and drink plenty of water. Don't wait until you are thirsty to start drinking. Drink 2-4 eight-ounces of fluid per hour. Avoid drinking alcoholic beverages when you are working in the garden. Alcohol actually causes dehydration, causing the body to lose additional fluid.
2. Avoid eating heavy meals and hot foods before you start working in the garden.
3. It is imperative to wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing while working in the garden. Be sure to wear a wide-brimmed hat.
4. Apply a sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher about 20-30 minutes before going outdoors. Reapply often, as the effect of the sunscreen weakens as you perspire. Always read and follow the directions on the label on sunscreen products.

5. Do not be in a rush when you are out in the heat. Pace yourself when you are in the garden, especially if you are not accustomed to working outdoors for extended periods. Take plenty of breaks!
6. Plan your activities during the early morning or early evening, when cooler temperatures prevail. If you become overheated, immediately seek refuge in a cooler location, such as a shaded area or in an air-conditioned home.
7. Be sure to have your cell phone with you in case of emergency. Ask someone to check on you periodically when you are out in the garden.

It would also be helpful to know the symptoms and treatments for heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Remember to follow these precautions and do all you can to be safe in the garden this summer.

Until next time, stay cool!



Christopher Carson

