

EARLY SUMMER

After a long, cool spring, we're now seeing a hot, timely summer and while *we* may relax in the sunshine during our vacations, high heat and drought can be a major source of stress for our gardens.

Watering well, particularly any young sprouts that have yet to develop deep roots, is the first step (see this issue for best practices), but you'll also want to be on the lookout for a process called bolting. Cool weather crops—often broccoli and lettuce—feel the heat of summer and really begin to panic. Convinced the heat will cut their leafy lives short, they throw all their energy into producing seeds for a new generation. The leaves and stems of these plants quickly become woody, bitter and altogether less fit for your summer salad. To get the most from them before they bolt, harvest the moment you notice the broccoli buds swell and the lettuce reach for the sky.

To prevent your plants from having to focus on anything more than growing your beautiful veggies, watch out for pests (cabbage worms, leaf miner, flea beetles, slugs, etc.) since healing from pest damage will draw some of the plant's energy away from production. See below for dealing with cabbage worms and check the Growing Guide for tips on other pests.

As plants grow past their best, remove them from the bed and replant the empty square to get the most from your garden. It's not too late for squash or bean plantings, and crops like beets, chard, carrots and cabbage are all still well suited. Greens can be planted through the heat of summer if cleverly tucked under larger plants like squashes to offer them a bit of coolness and shade. Harvest while small.

Finally, now is a great time to think ahead to a fall planting of broccoli, lettuce, peas, spinach, kale, or cilantro. Plant in late July to early August for harvest in September.

Contributed by Janet O'Brien

GROWING GUIDE | PAGES

Pests | 67-72

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Square Foot Gardening | Mel Bartholomew

A Garden for All Seasons | John Kelly

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[Johnny's Seeds: Vegetable Succession Planting Chart](#)