

By Susan Brackney, *Hobby Farm Home* contributing editor and passionate gardener



SUMMER

- After their flowers have faded, divide irises and other spring bloomers.
- So you'll have them in time for fall planting, order spring bulbs and cool-weather veggie seeds.
- Conduct daily insect pest patrols. Handpick the bad bugs and drop them into soapy water, and leave beneficials alone. Also, squish egg caches you find on leaf undersides and along plant stems.
- Be sure the garden gets at least 1 inch of water weekly, and use plenty of mulch to conserve water.
- Regularly cut faded or spent perennial flowers to encourage more blooming.
- Keep up with the harvest as tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers and other crops come on.
- Prop up any overloaded branches in the orchard, and, after raspberries and blackberries wind down for the season, cut back and remove canes that bore fruit.
- Flag individual plants exhibiting the traits you value most so you can collect seed from them in the fall.
- Pick any herbs or flowers to preserve; bundle securely and hang them upside down in a dark, dry, well-ventilated area. When harvesting, cut no more than one third of individual plants at a time.
- Directly sow turnips, peas, beets, collards, kale and other cool-weather crops for a crisp, fall harvest.