

Weather continues to cause plant problems

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I have been bemoaning the weather and its effect on plants for the last few weeks. Last year at this time I was doing the same thing but in the opposite direction - it was extremely dry.

I would take dry over wet any time. It's so hard to control diseases and other issues that come with this wet weather. Any my husband is really tired of mowing.

The weather is taking its toll on green industry businesses as well. Landscape maintenance crews would normally be busy at this time mulching, pruning, fertilizing and overall maintenance. This year, however, they are mowing, sometimes twice a week, and weeding.

It is what it is and we just have to work with it. When plants start to look bad, assess the situation and act accordingly.

If perennials have been ravished by disease, it's ok to cut them back to the ground or the crown and let them re-grow. Don't fertilize as we are getting closer to the end of the season and they don't need additional nutrients now.

If annuals are looking pretty rough, especially if they are really bad (unsalvageable!) then pull them and plant new or look at some of the upcoming fall crops such as pansies or flowering cabbage and kale.

If annuals look decent with a few bad leaves, give them a slight haircut to encourage new growth and rejuvenation. This may be especially true for hanging baskets that are slightly overgrown and gangly.

If trees and shrubs look bad, there is not much to do except for waiting until next year.

If your vegetable look bad, wait it out.

I am hoping that the weather changes and I'll get some good growth in the next few weeks. My peppers are absolutely horrific. I have heard this from a lot of gardeners.

They started out with a leafspot disease in the early spring that set them back a few weeks. They have never really come out of it because we haven't had the best growing conditions for them.

Last year it was perfect and I had the best peppers ever; this year, not so much.

And of course you have heard me bemoan the tomato problems. I am starting to see a few tomatoes ripen but they are small and they are cracking due to the recent onslaught of rain.

Some of the common summer insect pests are showing up as well including sunflower head-clipping weevil (sunflowers and coneflowers), Japanese beetles (on a wide variety of plants), brown marmorated stink bug (on a variety of vegetables and fruits), and cucumber beetle.

Keep up with inspecting your plants to prevent major problems. Address the issue early before it's too late.

Unless you have been applying fungicides on roses on a regular basis or you have a resistant variety, roses have look deplorable all season.



Many roses look pretty rough due to disease and insect pressures.



Hollyhocks once loaded with disease and insect problems cut back to the base.



Leafspot diseases such as this one on Hellebores are common this summer.

This year has been one of the most challenging that I can remember for growing plants (except for lawns). As they say, "there is always next year." Mother Nature will never spoil my love for gardening!