



It's July, time for skyrocket and Roman candles. But who needs fireworks when the garden is putting on a show? This is the month when hollyhocks sparkle and daylilies dazzle and Bright Lights Swiss chard glows like neon. Lilies burst into bloom like floral fireworks and mandevillas and passionflowers light up my life. And I keep oohing and aahing over the cannas. On the Fourth – and every day – there's something to celebrate in the garden. And if you like light shows, watch for fireflies as dusk descends.

~Irene

JULY 2018: In the Garden with Irene Virag

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Create a rainbow with rows of Gladiolus. You can plant till the middle of the month	2 Tend your tomatoes: Tie up vines, re-move suckers, mulch, keep soil evenly moist.	3 The dog days of summer are here. Stay cool – drink lots of water and lather on the sunblock.	4 Independence Day. Free your garden from the tyranny of chemicals. Go organic.	5 Pick summer squash, zucchini and cucumbers when they're small, tender and tasty.	6 Last call for peppers. Let them turn red for a bigger, sweeter boost of vitamin C.	7 Plant more corn. Put parsley, dill or yarrow nearby to entice good bugs that eat earworms.
8 Tug gently to remove the faded foliage of daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs.	9 Keep the rose garden rosy. Pick off Japanese beetles; blast aphids with the hose.	10 Snip small side buds off dahlias for bigger – albeit fewer – blooms. Provide sturdy support.	11 Pinch back asters and hardy mums one last time so they grow bushy and full.	12 Prune climbing roses and ramblers after they flower. Take out 1/3 of the oldest canes.	13 Cut lavender for drying. Hang bundles upside down in a well-ventilated, dark place.	14 Bonjour. It's Bastille Day. Deadhead marigolds, nepeta, coreopsis and cosmos.
15 Last chance to shear evergreen hedges. But hold off transplanting until late August.	16 Veg out. Pick beans. Harvest eggplants and okra. Sow cabbage, carrots and broccoli.	17 Curl larger leaves over forming cauliflower heads so they're white by harvest time.	18 Pinch back basil, oregano and thyme so they don't flower and turn bitter.	19 Bring in the beets. Fill the empty space with lettuce, arugula and spinach.	20 Toss spent pea vines in the compost. Turn and moisten the pile so it keeps cooking.	21 Dig up, divide and transplant bearded iris. Get rid of any with borer holes or signs of rot.
22 Keep watering root crops like carrots and radishes so they grow sweet enough to eat.	23 Raise the mower blade to its highest setting so you don't scalp the lawn.	24 Divide Oriental poppies and bleeding hearts, if necessary, while they're dormant.	25 Tidy the perennial bed. Pluck off faded flowers of lilies, daylilies and <i>Platycodon</i> .	26 Pick early Brussels sprouts. But be patient – let tomatoes ripen on the vine.	27 Corn is ready for picking when the silks turn brown. Get the water boiling.	28 Water muskmelons now but stop as they ripen – or you'll risk diluting their sweetness.
29 Revive parched hanging baskets by soaking them in buckets of water till the flowers perk up.	30 Fertilize roses for the last time so tender new growth toughens up before frost.	31 Weed, water, mulch. I've said it before, I'll say it again – it's the gardener's mantra.			Check out my TEDx Talk: "Everything I Know About Breast Cancer I Learned from My Garden."	Tell me how your garden grows: irenevirag@verizon.net 1019 Ft. Salonga Rd. Suite 10 -- #302 Northport, NY 11768