



## Greetings!

Ol' Sol is making our days hot and muggy, and our nights are spent seeking a nice, cool breeze. That's right, folks—summer is here, and it is sizzling! You've been hard at work in your garden, and now's the time to start enjoying the fruits, flowers, and vegetables of your labor. But don't put your feet up just yet. Discover how to keep your garden weed free and your turf in tip-top shape. Then sit back and check out these terrific tips for a rip-roarin' summer!

*Jerry Baker*

## In the News...

### Less Lawn, More Flowers

Maintaining a lush lawn can be time-consuming and costly. Seeding, mowing, watering, and fertilizing to keep your turf in tip-top shape can also be harmful to the environment. So to minimize water usage and eliminate fertilizing, many folks these days are turning over their green grass and replacing it with drought-tolerant flowers, shrubs, groundcovers, and ornamental grasses. Not only is this trend eco-friendly, it gives your landscape a unique, personal touch.

*“Flowers always make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food, and medicine for the soul.”* —Luther Burbank

### *This Season's Hot Topic:*

#### **Win the War on Weeds**

Lots of rain in your neck of the woods means that you've got nasty weeds sprouting all over the place. There's more than one way to wipe 'em out. Here's a roundup of this weed warrior's favorite tricks for battling bad plants:

- Boil a kettle of water and pour it over the weeds.
- Load up your handheld sprayer bottle with rubbing alcohol and take aim.
- Pour apple cider or white vinegar into a handheld sprayer bottle, and fire away.
- Spread mulch between plants. It'll smother most weeds, and the few that do pop up can be easily pulled from the loose soil.

#### **Wild Weed Wipeout Tonic**

When weeds won't take no for an answer, knock 'em flat with this potent potion.

**1 tbsp. of baby shampoo**

**1 tbsp. of gin**

**1 tbsp. of white vinegar**

**1 qt. of very warm water**

Mix these ingredients in a bucket, and pour the solution into a handheld sprayer bottle. Drench the weeds to the point of runoff, taking care not to spray any plants that you want to keep.



### **Get Movin' and Get Mowin'**

Now that it's summer, your lawn should really be taking off. For the best looking turf in town, try varying your mowing pattern from week to week. It's easy to fall into the habit of mowing in the same straight direction over and over again, but that can cause your turf to develop unsightly ridges and flattened out grass. So at least once a month, make it a point to mow in diagonal lines instead.

Then keep your grass looking good by washing it down once a month with my Terrific Turf Tonic after you mow: Pour 1 cup of ammonia, 1 cup of baby shampoo, and 1 cup of weak tea into your 20 gallon hose-end sprayer, and fill the balance of the sprayer jar with warm water. Apply it to your lawn to the point of runoff and you'll be good to go!



Epsom salt takes its name from its birthplace—Epsom, England, where the needle-shaped crystals were first made from the waters of the town's mineral springs.

(cont.)

Check out  
our gallery of  
DIY videos at

[jerrybaker.com/how-to-videos](http://jerrybaker.com/how-to-videos)  
to get the most out of your hose-end sprayers,  
aerating lawn sandals, and more!

## Be Firm with Fruit and Veggie Germs

There's nothing better on a hot summer day than picking up a basketful of fresh, locally grown produce at the farmers market or roadside stand. Just be sure you give it a good going over at home before biting or slicing into it. Here's how:

- Before you wash that zuke or cuke, slice off—and dispose of—the ends. That's where most bacteria and dirt get trapped.
- Soak salad greens in a large bowl filled with cold water, 4 tablespoons of salt, and the juice of a whole fresh lemon. Let them sit for about 5 minutes, then rinse 'em under cold water.
- Wash waxy fruits or veggies, then sprinkle on a little baking soda, and use a damp paper towel to rub the coating off. Rinse each piece thoroughly when you're done.
- Keep a bottle of this germ-killer handy to clean smooth-skinned fruits and veggies: Mix 1 cup of white vinegar with 3 cups of water in a handheld sprayer bottle, and spritz your fruits or veggies with the solution, count to 10, and then rinse them under running water.



## ANOTHER GREAT IDEA!

### SEASONAL SOLUTION

**Soaker hoses snaked through your flower beds don't simply make watering a snap—they also keep your water bill in check! That's because they deliver water directly to the plants' roots and minimize evaporation. Cover them with mulch and leave them in place year round, and your watering woes will be a thing of the past.**

## Fire Up the Barbie—Then Clean that Dirty Grill!

Nothing says summer like a good old-fashioned cookout, but chicken that tastes like fish? That's not a happy recipe, in any book. Here's a handful of hints that'll whip that grill into shape before the next barbecue:

- Use a wire brush to remove all the bits of cooked-on food from both sides of the cooled rack. Then dip the brush into a container of  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of grease-cutting dishwashing liquid mixed with 1 cup of hot water, and scrub again. Hit all sides of the rack wires with the mixture, and rinse thoroughly.
- Put a cooled, greasy grill rack into a black plastic garbage bag. Lay the bag down, pour in enough ammonia to cover the rack, and close the bag tightly with a twist tie. Leave the bag lying flat in the sun for two or three hours, then flip it over, and leave it for another two or three hours. When you open the bag, that grill rack will be clean as a whistle. Just rinse it off, dry it, and you'll be all set for kebobs.
- After you've chowed down on your baked potato, crumple the foil wrapping into a ball, and use it to do a quick rubdown of the grill rack. This trick works best on a warm rack, but make sure the grill is cool enough to touch.

*That's not  
all, folks!*

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- ▶ Jerry's Blog with what's new in gardening, health care, and household hints.
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- ▶ How-to videos to guide you through the growing season.
- ▶ Jerry's favorite tips and tonics—you're just a click away from a super solution!