

COOL IDEAS FOR HOT SUMMER DAYS

TOO WEARY FOR YARD WORK? TRY YOUR HAND AT THESE TOIL-FREE GARDEN PICK-ME-UPS. BY JOAN WATERS



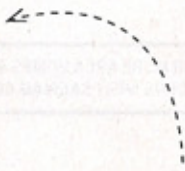
Lazy bones. That's me in August, the month I say no way to yard work. A little lightweight gardening, maybe. Sneaking out to browse a nursery or take a class, definitely. But projects that substitute creativity for down-and-dirty toil suit me best. Bare spots in the flower bed? I cheat by packing containers with annuals to disguise the barren areas. I like impatiens for shade and common geraniums for sun. I like white flowers because I can see them after dark when it's cool. If I need height, I upend one pot and stack another on top of it. Instant results. Deadheading is another task I can handle. It's mindless and rids the garden of bedraggled flowers and foliage. Sometimes my reward is a fresh wave of bloom. These things get me through the dog days, but they pale next to the ideas Sacramento landscape designer and contractor Gary Kernick of Change of Seasons shared with us this month. He's a master at combining color and creativity, and consistently enlivens his projects with imaginative and unexpected twists on the traditional. Take a look. Be inspired. Once you get started, you'll invent your own ways of giving your garden a lift—without wearing yourself out.

Special delivery

Landscape designer and contractor Gary Kernick enhanced the cottage feel of an East Sacramento garden he renovated by fitting an ornamental obelisk around the mailbox and planting a vibrant, purple blue clematis at the base. "The garden needed a fun focal point, and, of course, the clients needed a mailbox," he says. Yes, mail is delivered to the box.

To brighten a spot in his own Arden Park garden, Kernick planted Geranium 'Rozanne'—known for its violet-blue blooms—contrasting it with the vivid greenish-gold foliage of edible oregano. Both plants pack a color punch and are relatively trouble-free.





Accentuate the cool factor of a bench in the shade with ferns—some of the least needy plants on the planet.

NEED A NEW LOOK? CHECK YOUR YARD FOR SOMETHING OLD

There may be no more worthy candidate for a mid-summer pick-me-up than that workhorse of the backyard—the Adirondack chair. “This is a project I did with my daughter, Callie,” says Gary Kernick. At the time, Callie was 7 years old and picked the paint colors—the same ones she had in her room—lime green, aqua blue and white. She’s 15 now, and the colors still look fresh. “It was so easy, the paint makes the chairs look brand new and injects some fun into the yard,” Kernick says. “Using bright, contrasting colors can really make a space look less confined.” If your chairs are plastic instead of wood, Kernick suggests Rust-Oleum Specialty Paint for Plastic Spray. The label says you don’t need a primer, and the paint can be applied to PVC, fiberglass, vinyl plastics and polypropylene. Because he’s a great dad and a landscape contractor, Kernick also made Callie a little creek in the private space he carved out of the previously unused side yard for the chairs. No-mow fescue sod from Delta Bluegrass in Stockton provides the perfect groundcover for bare feet.

