



The heat is on ... and gardeners should take precautions

High temperatures have arrived, and the weather professionals are indicating it may stay that way for a while. While succulents can thrive in this hot weather, it's vital for gardeners to use the proper precautions when working outside in the heat.

As the summer heat intensifies, it's important to understand the difference between heat exhaustion and heat stroke. This knowledge could help gardeners avoid a medical emergency.

Signs of heat exhaustion include heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, nausea and an elevated heart rate. If these symptoms aren't addressed promptly, gardeners could then experience heat stroke, which is a life-threatening condition. Gardeners may be having a heat stroke if they experience high body temperature, confusion, no sweating, rapid breathing, seizures and even loss of consciousness.

Gardeners who experience any of these symptoms should take their temperature. A temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit could indicate heat exhaustion, while a temperature of 104 degrees Fahrenheit is a sign of heat stroke.

In this type of situation, seeking immediate medical attention is imperative. The situation may call for emergency transportation to the nearest hospital.

To help prevent getting into a heat-related emergency situation, here are some tips to help prevent gardeners from overheating:

- First and foremost, stay hydrated. Drink 2 to 4 cups of water every hour when working outside in the heat. The body loses water through sweating and it's important to replace those fluids.
- On the hottest days, try to get gardening activities done earlier in the morning or later in the evening to avoid sun exposure.
- Wear light-colored, light-weight clothing. A wide-brimmed hat will help shade your neck and face and help you feel cooler.
- If you must work outside during the heat of the day, take frequent breaks.

There are certain factors that can make a person more at risk for heat exhaustion or heat stroke. These include:

- Age: children under the age of 4 years and adults aged 65 are at increased risk.
- Prescription medication: some medications used to treat high blood pressure or heart conditions can reduce the ability to stay hydrated. Dehydration can cause heat exhaustion and heat stroke.

- Obesity: The human body retains more heat when it is heavier. Obesity also makes it more difficult to cool down.
- High heat index: If the humidity is high, sweat doesn't evaporate as quickly, making it harder for the body to cool down.

Gardeners who keep these symptoms in mind and follow the tips mentioned above are likely to get along just fine throughout the rest of the summer. And remember, it will start cooling down in just a few weeks.