

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

JULY 2019

PLANT QUESTIONS

Can I share my large pampas grass plant with a neighbor without damaging the plant?

Pampas grass can be propagated by root or clump division. This is easiest done during the early spring, when the top of the plant is being removed because of winter damage. Simply dig out sections of the main clump on which roots are attached. It will not damage the Mother clump. Size of sections can be from one root per section to larger clumps with many roots. The smaller the clump section, the longer the plant will take to enlarge, obviously.

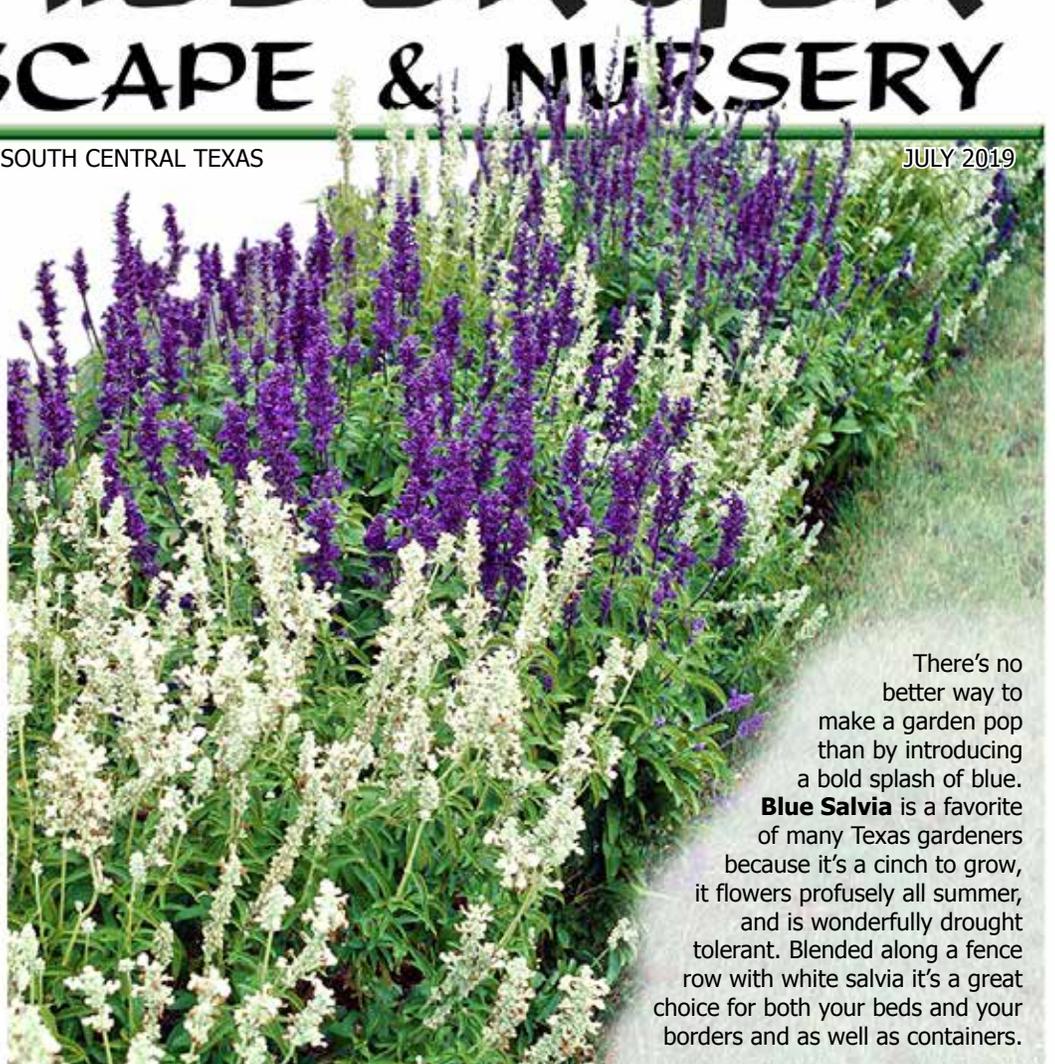
My impatiens has what appears to be deposits of "salts" on the stems. Is this natural and what is it called?

These "grains of sugar or salt" are honeydew secreted probably by aphids. Use a general purpose insecticide insuring complete and thorough coverage and you should eliminate your problem.

My pecan tree is in trouble. It is about six years old and the bottom of the trunk is splitting. It almost looks like it is growing too fast.

There is nothing wrong with your pecan tree. You are right in that the tree is simply growing fast, but that is not a problem. The outer bark is non-living tissue that the tree is sloughing off.

If you have gardening or landscaping questions we have the answers. Just ask any of the friendly, knowledgeable, and experienced nursery staff at Milberger's Nursery.



There's no better way to make a garden pop than by introducing a bold splash of blue. **Blue Salvia** is a favorite of many Texas gardeners because it's a cinch to grow, it flowers profusely all summer, and is wonderfully drought tolerant. Blended along a fence row with white salvia it's a great choice for both your beds and your borders and as well as containers.

SUMMER GARDENING EXPERTISE

Summertime Blues

By D. Hairlloyde, the Accidental Gardener

What would our South Texas garden beds and landscapes be without the cooling colors of Blue Plumbago, the shoots of a Texas Vitex, cheery Morning Glory, low growing Ajuga, Moss Phlox, Passion Flower or the long blooming Verbena? Blue's recessive quality serves as a beautiful blender for other colors and makes it appear warm or cool relative to its tint and plant companions. Cool, pale blue flowers, knit other colors together. Blue, in any hue, mingles well with pink, yellow, and its opposite: orange. Borders painted with blue, yellow, and orange or a trio of blue, red, and lime green, add pizzazz to summer landscapes. Blue has a stabilizing effect when placed near electric colors such as chartreuse, magenta, crimson, or hot pink.

(MORE BLUES ON PAGE THREE)

Our web site and the email version of this newsletter contain many color photographs, how-to-do-it diagrams, more complete articles, links to many gardeners references and many more answers to your gardening and landscape questions. Visit www.MilbergerNursery.com to sign up. We respect your privacy and we will not share your address or information with anyone not associated with this newsletter.

JULY GARDENING EVENTS

Sat., July 8 ~ 7:00 pm

San Antonio Rose Society. July Membership meeting with cake and ice cream. Open to the public at the San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N New Braunfels Ave. Contact Murry Warner 210-313-3371.

Sat., July 13 ~ starts at 10:30

FREE

Adult Bonsai Class. Bonsai is a fascinating art-form that combines horticultural techniques and Asian aesthetics in a unique way. The art originates in the Chinese empire and was copied and adapted by the Japanese to what we know now as Bonsai trees. Literally translated, "bonsai" means "planted in a container." Learn the art and history of the ancient centuries' old art of bonsai. You will not only learn the techniques, but will also build your own bonsai. The class is free but you must call 210-497-3760 to reserve your space and to insure sufficient supplies.

Sat., July 27 ~ Starts at 10:30

FREE

Adult Seminar presented by Davey's Tree Service: **Soil – The Root of Tree Healthcare.** Your trees are often under considerable stress simply because they are growing under artificial conditions. The trees and shrubs growing in our lawns are not benefiting from Nature's recycling process. Under natural forest conditions, the organic materials that fall to the forest floor decompose and replenish the nutrients in the soil. We, on the other hand, rake up and discard the leaves, grass clippings, and other litter. We seldom allow the natural recycling process to take place unless the plants are properly mulched. Fertilization can be defined as the addition of required nutrients to the soil to improve plant health.

Find more Gardening Events, visit
www.MilbergerNursery.com



To find us:
Take the Bulverde Exit off of Loop 1604. The entrance to Milberger's is next to the Circle K gas station.

Milberger's Landscape Nursery

Open 9:00 to 6:00 Monday to Saturday
And 10:00 to 5:00 on Sundays

3920 North Loop 1604
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Or on the World Wide Web at
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Milberger's Nursery July Features



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★ **and Safe** ★

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Gardening South Texas on the air at KLUP (am 930)
Saturday and Sunday 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.
To have your gardening questions answered during show hours ONLY

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Our Writers have the answers: **Dr. Jerry Parsons** is a well renowned Horticulture Specialist who is retired from the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in San Antonio; **Dr. Calvin Finch** is the retired Director of Water Conservation and Technology at the Texas A&M University System. The Gardening Newsletter for South Central Texas is edited by Marc Hess at mhess@hctc.coop.

SUMMER GARDENING EXPERTISE

Summertime Blues

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

The world's most favorite color is blue. Blue is the number-one color choice for everything from house paint to the jeans almost everybody wears. Yet it turns out that the color blue is surprisingly hard to come by in nature. Less than 10 % of the 280,000 species of flowering plants produce blue flowers. Those plants that do appear blue are in fact often using a red pigment known as anthocyanin. Through pH shifts and a mixing of pigments, combined with the reflection of natural light, the plants are able to generate the appearance of a naturally occurring, blue color. That's the reason why plants such as bluebells, hydrangeas and morning glories appear various shades of blue, when in fact, as renown biologist, David Lee (author of *Nature's Palette*:

“Blue is perhaps the rarest color among plants. Blue is not a common color in plant organs other than flowers which suggests that blue as a flower color has advantages for attracting pollinators that warranted its evolution in flowers.”

~ Jerry Parsons, Bexar County Horticulturist

The Science of Plant Color). “There is no true blue pigment in plants.” While that may be a fact of science, that should not stop us from choosing these blue flowering plants for our South Texas gardens.

Central Texas native, **Mealycup Sage** appears in spring with blue flower spikes all summer long. A short-lived perennial, it normally freezes back down to the ground in winter. Finches and other wildlife may be attracted to the seedheads.



Mexican Petunia is incredibly easy to grow in full to partial sun. It's one of the few perennials that grows equally well in wet soil and dry soil. I often see it thriving in traffic islands, gas station plantings, and strips between sidewalks and curb where it gets absolutely no care. Butterflies and hummers covet it. Individual flowers last but one day, but there are always new flowers opening.

Hyacinths are a perennial, bulbous spring flower that are as popular for their color as for their fragrance. Hyacinth is the common name for approximately 30 perennial flowering plants. The common **Grape Hyacinth** bears tight blooms in a raceme resembling clusters of grapes. After they bloom in spring, allow your hyacinths to grow until the leaves die off. They need time after blooming to store energy in the bulbs for next year.



The ease of growth, minimal basic needs, and negligible pest and disease problems make **Blue Plumbago** a good choice for gardeners who are looking for a year-round blast of blue in their landscapes.

To spice up your summer landscape with dramatic summer color visit our nursery where you will find Texas SuperStars® plants that will thrive in your summer landscape. Talk to the South Central Texas gardening experts at the nursery or take a look at our web site www.milbergernursery.com to find which plants are on sale.

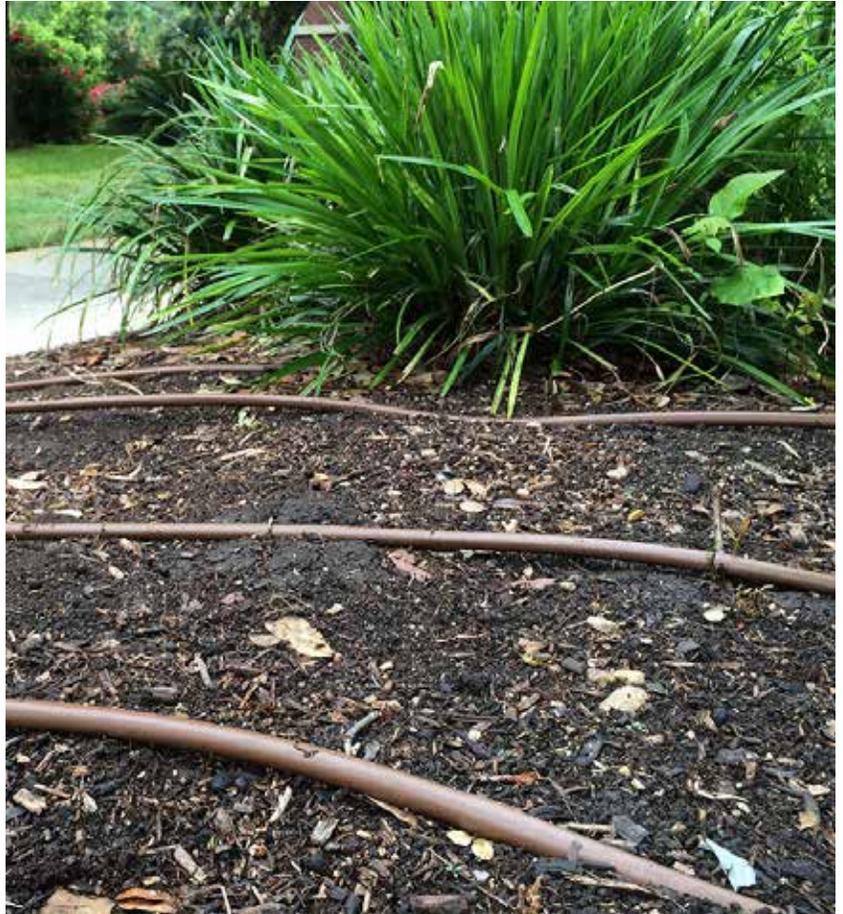
SUMMER WATERING

Why Install a Drip Irrigation System?

Drip irrigation targets water directly at the roots of trees, plants, flowers and foliage. This type of irrigation system results in extreme water efficiency and water conservation. From the dripped lines, water is slowly absorbed into your soil and distributed evenly across your soil for optimal growth and a healthy landscape. Below are additional benefits of installing a drip irrigation system:

Eight Benefits of Installing a Drip Irrigation System:

- 🌿 **Water efficiency:** Water is distributed slowly and exactly where needed at the root of the plant without high pressure.
- 🌿 **Save money:** Less evaporation on the surface level of your landscape and savings on your water bill.
- 🌿 **Avoid weeds:** The soil surface between plants remains drier, discouraging weed growth across your landscape.
- 🌿 **Improve growth:** Smaller amounts of water distributed evenly over time provides ideal landscape growth conditions.
- 🌿 **Environment friendly:** Saves water; drip irrigation systems use between 30-50% less water than conventional watering methods.
- 🌿 **Automatic irrigation:** Do less manual watering as the drip irrigation system waters for you.
- 🌿 **Adaptability:** Drip irrigation systems are easy to install and use with alongside other systems, no matter your landscape or lawn situation.
- 🌿 **Improve Value:** Improve your overall property value with a healthy and properly irrigated landscape.



Drip irrigation is quite simple. It basically involves delivering water to various parts of the landscape through a series of plastic tubes and applying it right where you want it through emitters that slowly apply it onto the soil surface.

When giving drip irrigation a try, start out small – perhaps with your vegetable garden or a set of color beds in the landscape. You’ll save on water for years to come while saving time dragging hoses and sprinklers. Best of all, your garden and landscape plants will look and perform their best.

Ask the gardening experts at Milberger’s Nursery for more suggestions that will help get your garden into full bloom. You will find healthy plant stock, good advice and creative suggestions for your landscape and gardening needs from the experienced nursery staff. To see what is on sale each week visit our web site at www.milbergernursery.com.

WATER GARDENING

Why Add A Water Garden?

By Julie Mancini

I received a wide variety of answers when I asked a group of water garden owners, “Why did you build your pond/water garden?” Some wanted to add beauty to their yards, while some wanted to camouflage less-desirable aspects of their neighborhoods. Others took advantage of accidents or pre-existing features on their properties. The reasons for building a pond or water garden are as varied as the water features that are created. Here are some of the most common responses:

“Compared with other types of gardens, water gardens require a minimum of attention. There is very little weeding, certainly no watering, and there are fewer insects or diseases which attack the plants. Clear water is usually the primary goal of any water gardener.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons, Bexar County Horticulture Expert

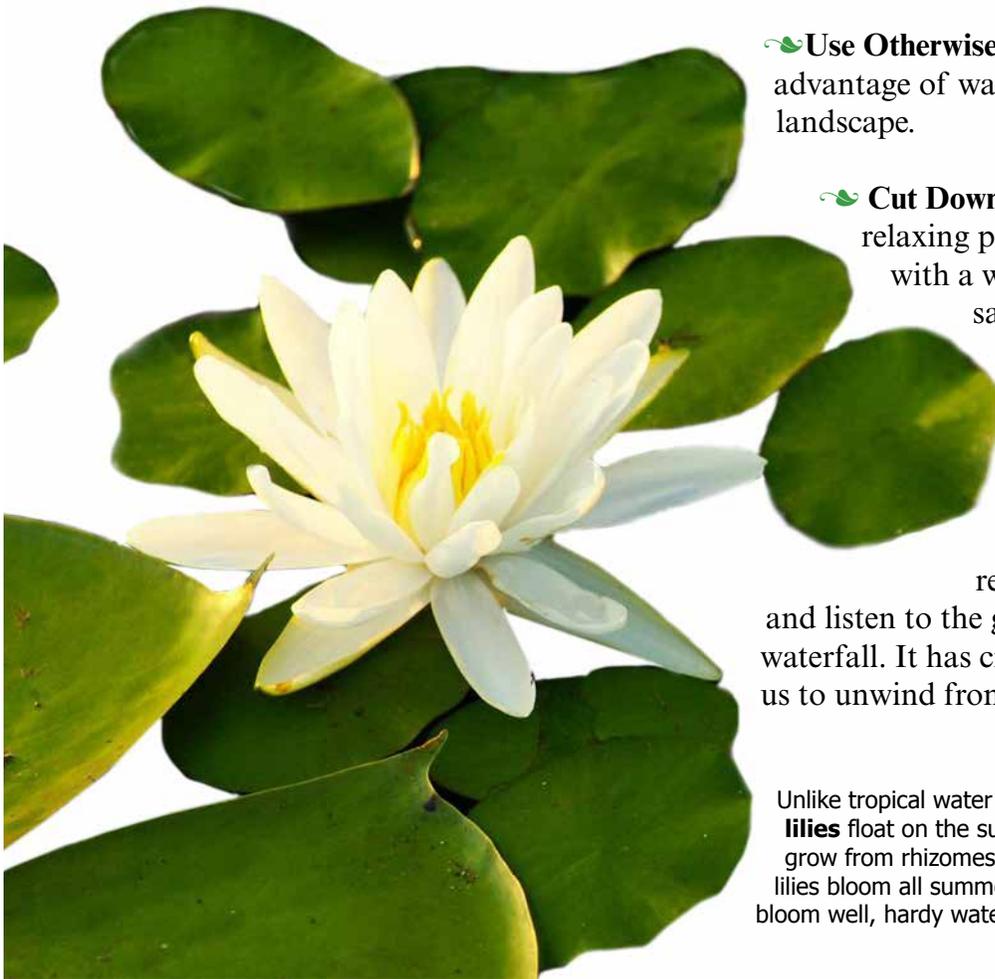
🌿 **Improve The Look Of The Property.** A water garden can be a soothing addition to your backyard

🌿 **Use Otherwise Wasted Space** and take advantage of wasted space in the corner of your landscape.

🌿 **Cut Down Street Noise:** “We wanted a relaxing place by our outside dining area with a waterfall to mask street noises,” said one respondent, adding that having dinner outside has been wonderful since the water feature was added to his property.

🌿 **Relaxation.** It is “very relaxing to sit in the backyard and listen to the gurgling water going over the waterfall. It has created a nice relaxing place for us to unwind from day-to-day stressful activities.”

Unlike tropical water lilies, the flowers of **hardy water lilies** float on the surface of the water, and the plants grow from rhizomes, not tubers. These perennial pond lilies bloom all summer long on your pond’s surface. To bloom well, hardy water lilies require abundant sunlight.



Milberger’s carries a complete line of aquatic plants, fish, and accessories. Milberger’s can provide you with all the tools you need to install your water feature or we can arrange to have your pond professionally installed and maintained by a professional service. Visit our web site at www.milbergernursery.com for information on adding a water feature to your landscape.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Helping Your Young Trees Through the Summer

Whether you have planted native or non-native trees on your property, they should be watered properly to face the local heat that is going to hit them hard in the next months. Frequent drought conditions and the Texas heat can take a toll on any shrub or tree, but it can be especially damaging to newly planted trees. The most limiting factor for newly planted tree growth and survival is a lack of adequate water.

Without enough water, young trees experience slowed root and shoot growth which can cause the tree to become stunted. Once stunting occurs, it is very difficult for a tree to make up the lost growth. Drought injury on tree leaves include wilting, curling at the edges, yellowing, smaller leaves that may drop early or stay on the branches even though dead and/or brown.

Drought stress might not kill trees immediately but it might set them up for decline, insects and diseases and other problems in following years.

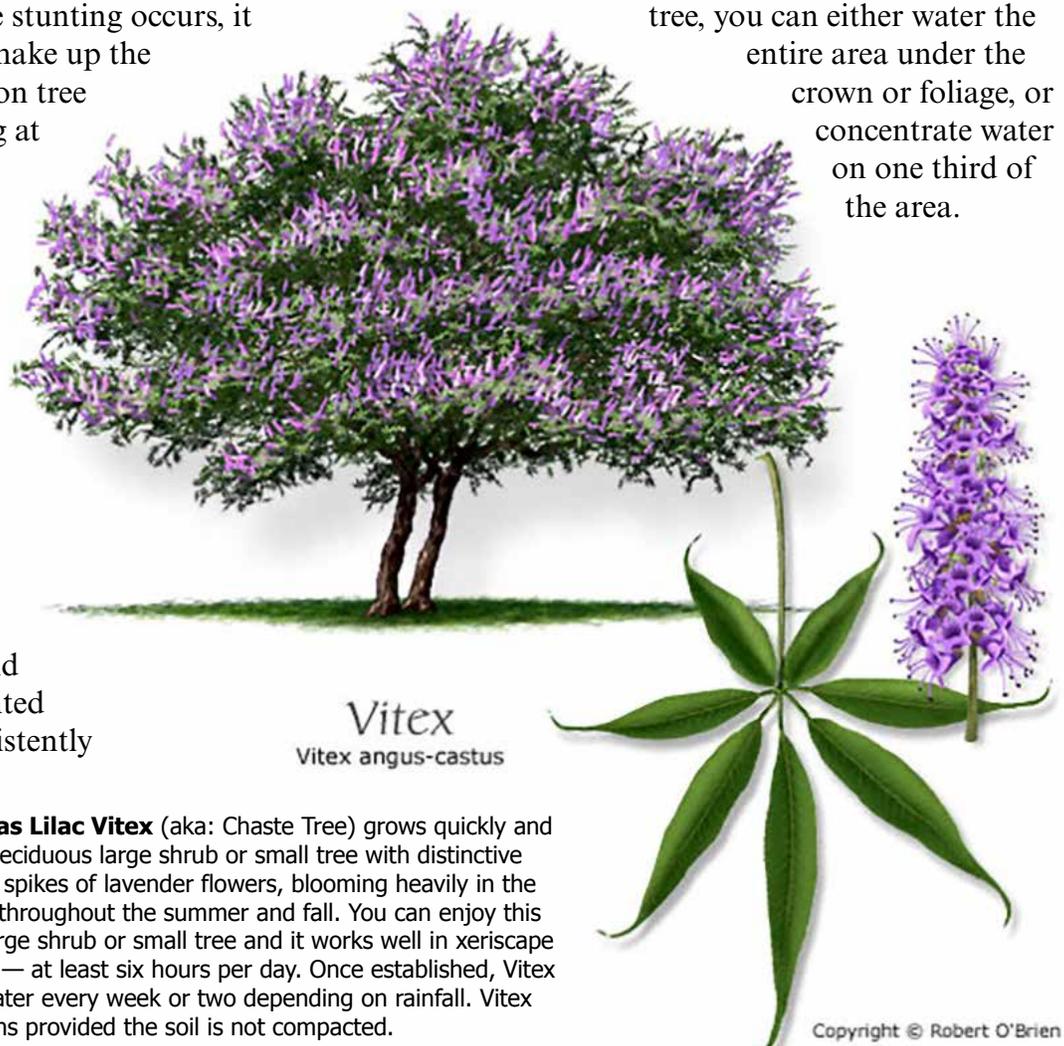
In order to ensure healthy and sustained growth, newly planted trees should be watered consistently

A favorite in Texas gardens, the **Texas Lilac Vitex** (aka: Chaste Tree) grows quickly and offers easy maintenance. Vitex is a deciduous large shrub or small tree with distinctive palmately compound leaves. Profuse spikes of lavender flowers, blooming heavily in the early summer, and then sporadically throughout the summer and fall. You can enjoy this Texas Superstar® plant as either a large shrub or small tree and it works well in xeriscape gardens. Vitex grows best in full sun — at least six hours per day. Once established, Vitex requires only a little supplemental water every week or two depending on rainfall. Vitex accepts a wide range of soil conditions provided the soil is not compacted.

for the first two to three growing seasons.

Depending on soil conditions and rainfall, newly planted and young trees should be watered once a week. Weekly watering should continue throughout the summer and fall months, or until the tree is well established in the landscape.

You do not generally need to water established trees. However, observe your older trees to see if they need additional water. The need for watering will most likely occur during periods of extended drought. If you do water an older tree, you can either water the entire area under the crown or foliage, or concentrate water on one third of the area.



Milberger's has the largest selection of fresh, well-rooted trees in the area. Our South Texas landscape and tree experts can give you advice on which A&M recommended trees would be most suitable for your landscape. Visit our web site at www.MilbergerNursery.com and click through to our on-line tree lot for section and planting guidelines.

JULY GARDENING TIPS

Planting for Summer Color

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

June is the time to pour yourself a long glass of ice tea and enjoy your garden and landscape. For color, firebush is a favorite hummingbird plant and lantanas are a great butterfly bush. Lantanas are deer resistant.

Plant vincas in full sun. Shade plants include coleus, caladiums, firespike and begonias. Leave the bougainvilleas in full sun and fertilize them regularly with hibiscus food or soluble fertilizer. Moss rose and purslane are showy all month long in full sun. Remove spent flowers from perennials for more blooms. Don't let the weeds get ahead of you.

Shade Trees and Shrubs. Your established trees and bushes should do well without supplemental watering. Newly planted trees, however, need deep watering by hand when the soil dries to one inch. Remember to mulch 4 inches deep around new trees so that they don't have to compete with grass. There are a large number of salvias available. Most species are deer resistant in some neighborhoods and drought tolerant. Keep them compact by shearing. Crape myrtles reach full bloom in June. Deadhead spent flowers for more bloom.

Vegetables. Harvest your vegetables on a regular basis to keep quality high. You can still plant southern peas, eggplant, and okra for mid-summer vegetables.

Lawncare: Irrigate the lawn grass only if it hasn't rained in the last two weeks, and then no more than 3/4 inch of water on the St. Augustine, less for Zoysia, Bermuda, and Buffalo. Water only the most important part of your lawn and let the rest go dormant until we get rain. Keep the mower blade sharp.

On the Lookout: Aphids on tender, young foliage; lacebugs on pyracantha, lantana and sycamore; bagworms on junipers; stinkbugs on fruit and vegetable plants; webworms on pecan trees. Chinch bugs can appear in St. Augustine lawns (except for Floratam St. Augustine which is chinch-bug resistant) anytime from now through late summer.

Odd Jobs: Use mulch generously around trees (but not piled on the trunks), shrubs and landscape and garden plants. Apply sufficient moisture to soak the soil to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. Watering early in the day is preferred to early evening or mid-day.

For more detailed and complete Gardening Tips from Jerry Parsons go to www.MilbergerNursery.com and follow the newsletter link that reads "Monthly Gardening Tips."

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE FREE

Subscriptions to Milberger's Gardening Newsletter for South Central Texas are free, compliments of Milberger's Landscaping and Nursery. The newsletter is published at the beginning of each month.

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**When you need
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Blue Princess Verbena is one of the showiest of perennial flowers in South Central Texas. It is a low-spreading herbaceous perennial with bright lavender flowers that attracts butterflies. Verbena has many attributes such as heat tolerance, everblooming and enduring. Discovered in England by former Bexar County Extension Horticulturist Greg Grant, it has since become a Texas Superstar® plant.

