

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 2019

PLANT QUESTIONS

Our milkweed is blooming. When should we expect Monarchs to arrive? Also the ruby-throated hummingbirds have started to show up at our sugar-water feeders. Is this Fall coming early?

The Queens should be visiting your plants in large numbers now and some gardeners have had visits from Monarchs already. I would expect most of the Monarch action in October. Yes, there have been other reports of ruby-throats moving through. There was one gardener that also thinks that a rufous hummingbird visited his feeder.

Why do we have to wait longer to plant spinach than broccoli and the other greens? Spinach is more sensitive to high air and soil temperatures. Plant spinach in late October or November.

Our Meyer lemons are great except that some have black spots on one end. I don't know if it is insect damage or a fungus. About 10 % of the fruit is infected. Are lemons still usable? The black marks you are describing are probably caused by grackles pecking at the fruit. They seem to use the pieces of the lemon (or other citrus) to rub on their feathers as a grooming aid. Yes, the fruit is still usable. The pecks are usually very shallow.

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.



A stalwart in the landscapes across South Texas the native **Red Yucca** (aka: Hesperaloe parviflora, Red-flowered False Yucca) is not actually a yucca at all. It is a member of the Century-Plant family. Nonetheless its red blooms on six-foot tall stalks are quite showy in South Texas landscapes and they will attract hummingbirds to your landscape.

SOUTH TEXAS GARDENING EXPERTISE

Growing Native

By Jared Wright, Garden Style SA

Minimal maintenance, less watering and little-to-no use of fertilizers and pesticides are among the most touted benefits of going native in your landscape. In addition to these obvious advantages, a landscape with native plants and trees has hidden benefits to the environment and atmosphere. Native plants utilize photosynthesis to store carbon that would otherwise end up in the atmosphere as harmful carbon dioxide. A majority of that stored carbon ends up underground in the root systems and soil — instead of wafting about the environment. Native plants also create positive effects for the nitrogen cycle. Nitrous dioxide is hundreds of times more dangerous to the atmosphere than carbon dioxide. Native plants, on the other hand, require less fertilizer, if any, reducing runoff and the potential for nitrous dioxide to enter the atmosphere. Although conventional lawns can store carbon, they do so inefficiently since they require frequent watering and mowing. That adds carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

(MORE TEXAS NATIVES 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.

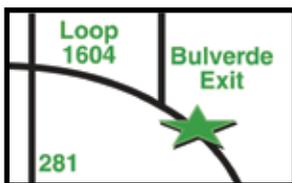
SEPTEMBER GARDENING EVENTS

Sat., Sept 21 – 10:30 'til Noon FREE ADULT SEMINAR
Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardening. It's not just spring. South Texas offers vegetable gardeners two great growing seasons every year. Fall's milder temperatures bring out the best flavors in home vegetable gardens. Insects and disease are less bothersome. And we can grow warm- and cool-season crops. *Preparing Your Fall Vegetable Garden* presented by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist for Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service. David will answer your specific questions about your gardening issues. Bring a notebook. 210-497-3760

Sat., Sept 28 – 10 'til 11 FREE KIDS CLASS
Potting 101. Your children will have fun learning the basics of potting plants. This class will include "little" hands-on planting and seeding tips as well as craft activities. Hands-on, fun-in-the-garden workshop for children five- to ten-years-old. Please call 210-47-3760 to reserve your spot.

Sat., Oct 12 – 10:30 'til Noon FREE ADULT SEMINAR
Fall is for Planting Trees and More! Fall is an ideal time to plant in South Central Texas because our cooler night temperatures and better rain chances promote faster root and plant growth. Join David Rodriguez, Horticulturist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at our Earth-Kind seminar and learn what you can do in your specific landscape this fall. David will show you how to correctly select, properly plant and efficiently maintain blooms for winter color.

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.

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Milberger's Nursery September Features

Take Advantage of South Texas'



"Second Spring"

Ornamentals ✿ **Shade Trees**
 ← → **Palms Trees** ← →

FALL is the ideal time to add **TREES** and **SHRUBS** to your landscape and Milberger's has the area **LARGEST SELECTION** to choose from.

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 Closer and
 Closer



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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 renown 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.

SOUTH TEXAS GARDENING EXPERTISE

Growing Native

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

As water becomes scarce due to ongoing drought conditions, it becomes more important to promote native plants and habitats. Our native grasses, wildflowers, trees and shrubs, which support habitats for wildlife, are being destroyed by the constant and progressive building on land supporting our native Texas heritage.

The importance of native plants lies in the benefits they offer:

- 🌿 Provide food sources (seeds, nuts, nectar and fruits for birds, bats, pollinating insects and butterflies)



A good native color plant for the fall is **purple cone flower**, a reseeding perennial included in many wildflower seed mixes. The low clumps of foliage produce sunflower-like blooms with lavender petals. Also called Echinacea these tough little native flowers will draw butterflies, bees, and birds to your garden.

“Native plants are more drought and stress tolerant, so they require less water and maintenance than non-native varieties. They will also thrive better on your property. There are several tree, shrub, grass, flower and groundcover native plants to choose from.”

~ Ben Collinsworth, Native Land Design

- 🌿 Attract insects for birds to consume

- 🌿 Provide habitats for birds, wildlife and larval host plants for butterflies

- 🌿 Requires less maintenance compared to introduced species

- 🌿 Tolerates and resists local diseases, pests, and lack of water

- 🌿 Protects the soil with long root systems

- 🌿 Protects water quality by controlling soil erosion

- 🌿 Minimizes the use of fertilizers and pesticides

- 🌿 Adds beauty to the landscape

- 🌿 Preserves our natural heritage to share with our children and their children

Visit our nursery to find the winter blooming plants that will thrive in your landscape. Take a look at our web site www.MilbergerNursery.com to find which plants are on sale. For expert advice on plants and trees and take advantage of South Texas' warm winters to improve your landscape.

LAWNCARE

When Should I Fertilize My Lawn?

By David R. Chalmers and James A. McAfee

Associate Professors and Turfgrass Specialist, Texas A&M University System

If you are in Texas, the warm-season lawn grasses in your yard are probably bermudagrass, buffalograss, centipedegrass, St. Augustine grass, zoysiagrass or a combination thereof. With any of these grasses you can have a green, healthy lawn and greatly reduce the risk of fertilizer runoff and leaching by applying fertilizer to your lawn according to need, at measured rates and at the right time.

Two practices—fertilization and irrigation—determine to a good extent the amount of work and money required to take care of a lawn.

What if I don't fertilize?

To be healthy and green, a lawn must have an adequate supply of essential nutrients. Lawns can get nutrients from minerals and organic matter in the soil, from returned grass clippings and from added inorganic or organic fertilizer. Without the proper nutrients, your lawn is likely to have more problems with diseases, insects and weeds, which increase the need for pesticide applications. The lawn will probably thin gradually, making it more likely for weeds to invade and the soil to erode. Thin lawns also allow more fertilizer runoff, and many people believe that poorly maintained lawns are not as attractive as those that are maintained well.

Test your soil. Soil tests determine the amount of nutrients that are available in the soil for plant use. The soil test also determines soil pH. Your soil test

report will show you which nutrients your soil lacks and which are present in adequate amounts. The test results will include recommendations on the amounts of plant nutrients that would benefit your lawn. Soil tests are easy and inexpensive. Forms and instructions are available through your county Extension office or on the Texas A&M Soil Testing

Laboratory's Web site <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu>.



How much fertilizer to apply.

Once you know what your soil lacks, you will need to figure out what kind and how much fertilizer to buy and apply. To do so, you need to know the size of your lawn. Many people do not know the size of their

lawns when they visit Milberger's to buy fertilizer and other lawn care products. This often leads to misapplication and inconsistent results. Lawn care products are often recommended in amounts to apply per 1,000 square feet of lawn area. You should take the time to measure and calculate the square footage of your lawn.

How to select a good fertilizer. To grow properly, all plants need essential nutrients. Those that are typically needed in the greatest amounts are nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. The best fertilizer for your lawn is one that contains the ratio of these three nutrients needed as indicated by your soil test results.

FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING

Get Your Fall Vegetables In

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

A fall garden often produces better quality and higher-yielding vegetables than a spring-summer garden. Cooler weather means a longer harvest period for many vegetables. Lettuce and leafy greens are sweeter and more tender. Lettuce, collards, spinach, broccoli, Brussels sprouts and Swiss chard will continue to grow to be a part of your Thanksgiving and, maybe even, your Christmas feast.

A fall garden requires careful planning. Planting must be timed to allow frost-sensitive vegetables to mature and to be harvested before frost. Those that will tolerate frost can be planted so that harvesting can continue after the first fall frost. Vegetables adapted to fall gardens can be divided into four groups, based on their tolerance of freezing temperatures.



Fall's milder temperatures bring out the best flavors in home vegetable gardens. Both warm- and cool-season crops thrive in our fall vegetable gardens, since temperatures drop and rain increases in the fall. Insects and disease also usually occur less frequently in the fall.

“Perennials are plants for the landscape that live more than one year. Most of the perennials that we rate as desirable offer color for the landscape. The advantage of decorating your landscape with perennials is that they are relatively permanent and they are generally easier to care for and use less water than annuals.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons, Bexar County Horticulture Expert

The first group includes some warm-season vegetables adapted to fall gardens—but killed by frost—are snap beans, southern peas, summer squash, winter squash, cucumbers, sweet corn and early-maturing pepper and tomato varieties.

The second group includes cool-season crops usually damaged by light frost when mature, such as lettuce, cauliflower, kohlrabi, celery, cabbage and broccoli.

The third group contains those that are moderately tolerant of repeated light frosts: carrots, parsnip, beets, leaf lettuce, endive, radishes, rutabagas and turnips.

Members of the fourth group, which tolerate night after night of freezing temperatures and have even survived a mild winter, include bulb onions, Brussels sprouts, shallots, spinach, parsley, collards, kale and Romaine varieties of lettuce.

Vegetables don't have to have their own bed. You can intermingle them among established ornamental plants in your flowerbeds, or grow them in containers. With containers, you can move them at will to catch the proper amount of sunlight.

Healthy transplants are the key to a successful fall garden in South Texas and you will find Milberger's well stocked with hardy varieties of fall vegetables ready to put into your garden. To see what is on sale each week visit our web site at www.MilbergerNursery.com.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Planting Trees and Shrubs in the Fall

By Dr. Douglas F. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist, Texas Agrilife Extension Service

Finally, fall is here. The weather is becoming slightly cooler, and gardeners are slowly migrating back outdoors after record-breaking heat this summer. Now is a perfect time to add a new tree or a grouping of shrubs to the landscape. Or perhaps you have an area in the landscape that needs “remodeling” or rejuvenating. The fall may be the best season to plant, surpassing even the spring.

Some people may prefer January through March for planting, but the fall months of September through December have distinct advantages. Fall planting follows the heat of summer, before a cool winter season, and trees and shrubs planted in the fall use this to good advantage. Plant roots grow anytime the soil temperature is 40 degrees or higher, which may occur all winter in Texas. During the winter months, the root systems of the fall-planted specimens develop and become established. When spring arrives, this expanded root system can support and take advantage of the full surge of spring growth.

The deciduous Cedar Elm is the most common elm tree in Texas, distributed



The deciduous **Cedar Elm** is the most common elm tree in Texas, distributed widely in East, South, and Central Texas. Most often found near streams, in solid stands on flatwoods near rivers, or on dry limestone hills. Also planted widely as a landscape tree. Flowers appear in late summer or autumn as hairy, short-stalked clusters in the leaf axils. A large tree to 75 feet tall with a tall straight trunk two to three feet in diameter and stiff branches that form a narrow, oblong crown.

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Fall is the optimum time to plant balled and burlapped trees and shrubs. Balled and burlapped plants have ample time to recover from transplanting and proliferate roots before spring growth begins. Remember, however, all bare root plants, including roses and pecan and fruit trees, should be planted in late winter when they are completely dormant.

All plants have growing requirements. Think about the plant's needs before you invest. Is it adapted to your area's soil? Will it grow in sun or shade? Does it need a wet or dry location? Is it cold hardy? Some nurseries have this type of information on tags beside the plant. If not, ask your Texas AgriLife Extension agent or one of the South Texas landscape experts at Milberger's Nursery.

SEPTEMBER GARDENING TIPS

It May Still Feel Like Summer But . . .

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

Fall Color: Add compost and fertilizer to your flowerbeds for a little extra kick that tired flowers need. Add instant color by planting annuals such as ornamental kale, calendula, dianthus, fall aster, and phlox. Continue to feed patio plants and hanging baskets with a water-soluble fertilizer. Rejuvenate heat stressed geraniums and begonias by lightly pruning, fertilizing and watering. Divide perennials like daylily and iris now.

Fall Vegetable Gardening should be in full swing. It's time to plant broccoli, spinach, cabbage, cauliflower and other cole crops and cool season vegetables. Protect young seedlings from hot sun. Old sheer-curtains do a great job. Mulching with oak leaves does a great job, too. 3-4 inches of leaves help keep the soil cool, stops weeds from germinating, and helps hold in the moisture.

Shade Trees and Shrubs: Plant trees and shrubs this month or later after the hot weather subsides. Check the requirements for trees and do your planning before planting any. Visit our on-line Tree Lot at www.milbergernursery.com to find out the mature height and width.

Prune: The fall pruning of roses is lighter than in the spring and consists of removing twiggy and unproductive growth along with any crossing or dead canes. All rose foliage is left on the bush at this time. Labor Day is a good time to do the fall "grooming."

Fertilize: With the advent of cooler weather and rain, your roses will begin their heavy fall blooming season. Vegetable crops benefit from a side dressing of fertilizer to enhance their growth and production potential. Lawns have been expensive to maintain during the prolonged heat and drought. Those with lawns still alive will have to beware of the brown patch fungus which occurs during cool, moist fall conditions.

On the Lookout: Insects will be in "full swing" and their populations "full blown" by now.

Odd Jobs: Select appropriate and recommended tree and shrub varieties that will complete or renovate your landscape.

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."

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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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Angelonia, the Summer Snapdragon, is a spreading annual with upright flower spikes that resemble miniature snapdragons. The Serena™ series are the only angelonias that are grown from seed. Flower colors available include white, pink, purple, lavender and lavender pink. Angelonia can be used as a border planting, a ground cover or as a trailing plant for mixed containers. This Texas Superstar® thrives in Texas heat.

