

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

MARCH 2020

PLANT QUESTIONS

Our lawn is already greening up. I mowed it the first time last weekend. When should we fertilize? The “rule” is to wait to fertilize until you have mowed actively green growing grass, not weeds, two times. If it was St. Augustine, Zoysia, Bermuda or Buffalo grass you mowed last weekend, then you could fertilize after you mow one more time.

The weather is nice. Why can't we plant tomatoes now?

Tomato and pepper transplants can be planted late in the month, but be prepared to replant if the weather stays cool. Cold soil causes tomatoes and peppers to stop growing. The setback will reduce the crop significantly. The “trick” to tomato production is to have a vigorous fast growing plant blooming in April and May to take advantage of the short window of fruit setting temperatures.

I would like to know if English ivy can be rooted in water? Yes, English Ivy can be rooted in water. If the water starts to look bad, you should change it for fresh water.

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 nothing better than harvesting fresh garden produce right out of a backyard garden. You want to plant most of your spring crops early as possible. Mid-March is the “average” last freeze date for our area, so crops sensitive to frost (like beans, corn and watermelons) can usually be seeded just prior to and after that date. Tomatoes can be transplanted before that time if you are prepared to give them frost protection.

GET YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN GOING

Don't Wait!

Our springs can be fleeting, so it's important to get a jump on your spring garden in February. You can easily have a continuous supply of vegetables coming out of your garden if you plan it correctly. Here in South Texas large gardens, small gardens or container gardening all do well. Determining what to grow will determine how large the garden should be. It is important to have adequate space between different types of plants due to cross-pollination and/or size. Planting tomatoes too close to jalapeño peppers may produce a hot tomato. Corn, for instance, needs adequate space and must be planted in blocks for proper wind pollination. Additional consideration for space is watermelon, cantaloupe and cucumbers. A large space on the opposite end of the garden is a good spot because they can produce runners up to five feet long. When to plant certain vegetables is critical to ensure a good crop since some things quit producing in high heat.

(MORE VEGETABLES 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.

MARCH GARDENING EVENTS

Sat., Mar. 14 ~ 10 to 11am.

Spring Vegetable Gardening for Kids. Your children will have fun learning the basics of vegetable gardening. 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 5 to 10. Milberger’s Kids Gardening Classes are free and we provide all the materials but be sure to call to reserve your spot because class size is limited. Call 210-497-3760 or sign up with any one of our cashiers.

Sat., Mar. 21 from 10am ‘til 2pm

Answers to Your Rose Questions. Rosarians from the San Antonio Rose Society will be at Milberger’s to talk to you about the roses in your landscape. Whether you are planting your first roses or you have had beautiful roses blooming in your garden for a longtime, you will enjoy discussing rose issues with these certified rosarians.

Sat., Mar 28 from 9am ‘til 2pm

Lions Club’s free KidSight vision screening at Milberger’s. Eighty percent of all visual impairment can be prevented or cured. Milberger’s Nursery is hosting Lions Club’s KidSight MOBILE EYE SCREENING UNIT. Have your kids vision screened free by trained and State certified Lions using a small hand-held camera. For children 6 months to 5 years old. Contact Pantusa, 210-326-3915

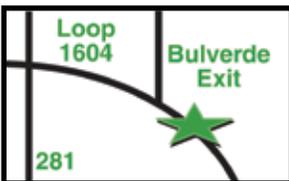
Sat., Mar. 28 from 10am ‘til 2pm

Milberger’s Blood Drive. Take advantage of this opportunity to give the gift of life. Milberger’s will donate one \$10 Milberger Gift Certificate for all who present themselves for donation and two[2] \$10 Milberger Gift Certificates for dual donors.

Sat., Mar. 28 starts at 10am

Tomatoes 101 & Spring Vegetable Gardening. Free Adult Seminar with David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist for Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service. Learn the tips that will get your vegetable garden off to a bountiful spring harvest.

**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
San Antonio, TX 78247
(210) 497-3760

Or on the World Wide Web at
www.milbergernursery.com
nursery@milbergersa.com

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.

**Milberger’s Nursery
March Features**

Milberger’s Landscape Nursery
**ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATION** 

March 18th thru March 30th

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Visit our website, and check our advertisements
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Just ask one of the
**South Texas
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We Have Your Roses!



ARRIVING MARCH 6

Milberger’s regularly carries OVER FIFTY VARIETIES of Antique and Modern roses that are recommended by the San Antonio Rose Society.



**Watch for our weekly sale specials in
The San Antonio Express-News
or at
www.MilbergerNursery.com**

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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IN YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN

Don't wait!

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)



Although a member of the bean family, **Sugar Snap Peas** do not open when they are ripe like other beans do. Sugar snap peas are like snow peas in that we eat the entire pod. A difference is that the pods of snow peas are flat and those of sugar snap peas are round. Most cultivars are climbing vines and need a trellis for support.

“Due to the great climate in our part of the state, vegetable gardening is productive any month of the year, depending on the type of vegetable you are growing. Many vegetable growers keep permanent vegetable gardens in their yard.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons

Whether you have an established vegetable garden or are starting a new one, here are some vegetables to consider growing this year. Traditionally we plant broccoli, cabbage, spinach, and chard transplants now. Plant carrot, beet, radish, English pea, rutabaga, lettuce, and turnip seeds in early spring. Green bean seeds can be planted about March 15. Tomato transplants can be planted in early March. Go ahead and try something new. Growing your own vegetables can be quite rewarding.

Don't limit yourself to just the yellow squashes, there are many delightful flavors and shapes to explore. Peruse the pages of several seed catalogs and pick out some interesting squash varieties to try this year. Squash plants need fertilizer and water at appropriate intervals. If your squash suddenly wilts and dies, it probably has been invaded by the dreaded squash borer. If you are planting potatoes be sure to have them planted no later than Valentine's Day. Harvest around the time the kids get out of school for the summer. v

Although asparagus is traditionally planted from late January to early February, you must be patient, for you will not be picking any for two years. The asparagus roots need time to get established. Cantaloupes and watermelons make a great addition to the garden, as they provide vitamin C in larger amounts than most vegetables.

When selecting vegetable transplants for your garden look for the Texas Superstar® label on the pot. Texas Superstar® plants are tested and selected by the Texas A&M Extension Service for their superstar performance in the Texas landscape.

A visit to Milberger's Nursery will help you get your spring garden going. You will find healthy plant stock that is selected to thrive throughout our South Central Texas summers. You will also find the good advice and creative suggestions for your specific landscape and gardening needs. To see what is on sale each week, visit our website at www.MilbergerNursery.com.

LAWN CARE

Timing Pre-emergent Herbicide

The old adage “A good offense is the best defense” couldn’t be more true when trying to keep your lawn weed free. Weeds are the inevitable enemy of your lawn and will take over if nothing is done to stop them. A single weed may be capable of dropping thousands of seeds, and then you hit that weed with the lawn mower and those seeds are spread literally everywhere. If you have convinced yourself you don’t have a single weed in your lawn, odds are your neighbor does, and a nice breeze will carry those weed seeds hundreds of yards where they can last upwards of 50 years just waiting for the right conditions to take root in your finely manicured lawn.

Fortunately for all of us, technology has lent us a hand at battling weeds. A preemergent weed control product isn’t a pre-emergent weed killer. It keeps the weeds from growing which is why it’s necessary for you to put down a pre emergent herbicide product twice a year.

When to apply pre emergent herbicides

March 15th & September 15th. Basically you want to control summer weeds and winter weeds. As soil temperature rise above 50°F the summer weeds begin to take root and begin growing. The major offenders, crabgrass and clover, will not emerge until the soil is consistently over 50°F. If you do live in a warmer area you may need to apply your pre-emergent herbicide before March 15th, so it’s not quite as simple as I first made it sound.

Late in the growing season the weeds begin to set new seed. This is where you want to catch any late growth with the application in September. Remember, keeping on top of the weeds will save you much time and aggravation next spring when the lawn mowing season begins again. Application of a preemergent herbicide too early may cause the elements to dilute or wash away the herbicide and allow the weeds to grow uninhibited. Application of the herbicide after the weeds start to grow will not stop the growth since it’s already rooted.



Wait until after April 1 to fertilize the lawn or until you have mowed real grass two times. St. Augustine, Bermuda, zoysia, and buffalo grass are warm weather grasses. They do not grow well or pick up nutrients efficiently until the soil and air temperatures are warm.

Looking for turf grass? Visit Milberger’s sample lawn areas. You are invited to examine and walk on these sample lawn areas to help you determine the look and feel of the turf you prefer. We also have information and specification sheets on the different sods. Visit www.milbergernursery.com.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

It's Time to Plant Your Gladiolus

By Danny Lipford

Your Perennials are going to come back year after year, spreading and filling in your garden beds. Start your perennial beds with a plan and choose plants accordingly, giving large perennials plenty of room to mature and arranging for many perennials to be planted en masse for greater effect. For the sunny perennial garden it is best to choose plants that bloom at different times of the year to create a dynamic garden with successive waves of color. For shady perennial gardens where flowering perennials are limited, focus on choosing plants with different foliage textures and colors.

Your perennials won't need as much water as annuals but they should be watered deeply to encourage the roots to go down rather than out. Be sure to keep the bed dressed with a three-inch layer of shredded wood mulch to curtail water evaporation and to choke out weeds. Shredded wood mulches also have the added benefit of decomposing over time, which puts more nutrients into the soil.



Keep your **Gladiolus** well cultivated and weeded. Use lots of water if your drainage is good. Deep soakings are preferred to light sprinklings. Gladiolus prefer at least one inch of rainfall or supplemental watering per week. Don't underestimate the value of water to gladiolus. They need it to grow well.

“Unlike other kinds of flowers, gladiolus take up very little space in your garden. You can plant one dozen or several dozen bulbs in a row, or group them in clusters for a massed effect. A small area devoted to gladiolus can produce a bounty of beautiful blooms.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons



Gladiolus can be planted most everywhere. They are especially impressive when combined with other summer annuals and perennials in the garden. They can be left alone to grow in rows, or brighten up a corner of the vegetable patch.

South Texas is notorious for dry alkaline, clay soil. You can add two things to fix this: expanded shale and compost. Expanded shale is a gravel-size rock that has been heated to a high temperature to create air pockets within that help to break up and aerate clay soils, aid in moisture retention and soil drainage. Expanded shale only needs to be added when you are first creating your perennial garden bed. Compost, on the other hand, should be added on a regular basis—at least once a year. Compost is organic matter that has undergone an accelerated decaying process in order to be used as a fertilizer and soil conditioner. Compost can be made at home or can be purchased in convenient bags at Milberger's Nursery.

Planning for a water garden? February is a good time to get started. Whether you want to install your own water garden or have it installed by professionals, Milberger's has the materials and expertise to help you add a water feature that will add value to your landscape. Visit our web site www.milbergernursery.com for ideas and information.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Crepe Myrtle: So Spectacular and So Easy to Grow

Few plants can match Crepe Myrtle for their combination of spectacular summer flowers, colorful autumn foliage, and handsome sculptural trunks. If you're thinking of adding one or more crepe myrtles to your landscape this season, the following tips will help you make a good decision.

Seeing a crepe myrtle in its full summer splendor sends some of us running to the garden shop to buy a plant the same color. But don't buy impulsively. Pay attention to the plant's tag. Make sure that it is not only the exact color that you want, but also the right size and look you hope to achieve.

Crepe Myrtles range in size from dwarf selections that grow less than 3 feet tall to several that reach upwards of 30 feet. Knowing the mature height of a plant before you buy it and planting the proper size for the site will save you much heartache and backache in the future. If you're in the Upper South, you should also look for selections that are extra cold-hardy.



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Be sure to choose the right size for your needs. The larger types need room to grow without encroaching on buildings, power lines, or walkways.

Medium-size selections that will grow from 12 to 15 feet are perfect for a small courtyard or garden home. The dwarf selections look great in large containers, foundation plantings, and even incorporated into perennial beds. Also, remember that crepe myrtles love sun. The amount of flower production is greatly reduced in light shade, and full shade can prevent blooming altogether.

Once Crepe Myrtles have bloomed and shed their first flowers, they will set seed. The small round seedpods or capsules usually weigh the limbs down, making them sag.

Using a sharp pair of clippers, cut off the seedpods. New shoots with buds will quickly appear, and you will get a second bloom. If the temperatures stay warm into the fall and you continue to remove spent flowers, you may get a third or fourth bloom.

FEBRUARY GARDENING TIPS

Get Ready for Spring Planting

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

February is the month that kicks off the Children's Vegetable garden Program at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. The 16-week program runs from February through June. Each child is allotted a 3.5' x 28' garden plot and will have fun growing different types of seeds, vegetables, and ornamental annual flowers with the guidance of Master Gardener volunteers. Children can also earn their Junior Master Gardener certification by participating in fun, hands-on activities each week after they have tended their garden.

In order to gain the most from the learning experience and to help ensure successful growing, participants are required to attend all sessions (two absences are allowed). Families are welcome to share the gardening experience with their child.

Plant: February is the month to begin spring gardens and is the ideal month to prepare your rose beds; be sure to check all the antique and modern roses as they are freshly stocked at Milberger's from now through April.

Prune: Finish pruning started in January in February. Do any major fruit or ornamental tree and shrub pruning. Spring pruning of roses in

South Central Texas is normally done between the third week of February and the first week of March.

Lawncare: Mid-February to Mid-March is the time to apply pre-emergent herbicides. Don't apply fertilizer to your lawn until you have mowed it two times.

On the Lookout: Wait for a time period which will ensure temperatures above freezing for at least 48 hours to apply a dormant oil spray to euonymus, hollies, oaks, pines, pecans, and fruit trees which are prone to scale.

Odd Jobs: If you want to treat for ball moss, February is the ideal month. Ball moss does not kill trees. Divide summer and fall-blooming perennials, including cannas, mallows, fall asters, mums, coneflowers, lythrum and perennial salvias before growth begins.

Take advantage of CPS's Green Shade Rebate to save \$50 per shade tree for qualifying customers. Visit our web site www.milbergernursery.com for a list of recommended Small Trees. You can also download information sheets on the varieties that are available and ready to plant.

For more specific details and complete Gardening Tips for this month visit www.milbergernursery.com.

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.

TO RECEIVE this free newsletter, complete this form and return it to **Milberger's Nursery** or by calling (210) 497-3760. You can sign up on-line at www.milbergernursery.com.

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Looking for Sod?

We stock sixteen varieties of sod, including the newest releases of turf grass that have been tested and judged reliable in our area.

It must be March. We are enjoying the large evergreen shrub that grows all over South Central Texas: **Texas Mountain Laurel**. Because the Mt. Laurel is an evergreen shrub or tree which can be eight to twelve feet tall or taller, this may be the ideal privacy plant for this area of Texas. The Mt. Laurel is practically indestructible as a landscape plant. It will survive in our poor alkaline soils. Nothing seems to bother the hardy, drought-tolerant, grow-in-a-stone Mt. Laurel. Hard freezes (below 20 degrees F.) eliminate blooms but won't kill the plants. These natives seem resistant to cotton root rot fungus which is deadly to 90% of all other Texas landscape plants. No foliage disease bothers the glossy, evergreen leaves. This native plant blooms in the spring.

