

# MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

JULY 2020

## PLANT QUESTIONS

### **My photinias look terrible. What is wrong with them?**

If your photinias are yellow with black spots on the leaves, the plants are in a highly alkaline planting area and will never get better. Once a photinia begins to show signs of “a bad location,” no amounts of iron supplement or fungicide spray will solve the problem.

### **My St. Augustine lawn is not as thick as it once was. The trees have grown larger, and it is shadier. What can I do to make the lawn thicker?**

If shade is causing the thin lawn, there is not much you can do. Even St. Augustine grass requires 4 to 5 hours of sun to prosper.

**We like okra but we're afraid it will take over our garden.** Okra can be huge. Some selections reach 14 feet tall and three feet around. A variety like Oscar, however, will only grow six or seven feet tall.

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.



Large, colorful **Tropical Hibiscus** blossoms create an eye-catching display during summer, attracting hummingbirds and butterflies and providing the look of a tropical paradise.

## SUMMER COLOR

## The Tropics of Central Texas

There's nothing more breathtaking than the bright-colored blooms and elegant foliage that tropical hibiscus plants provide through the spring and summer months. Tropical plants give us the opportunity to enjoy the exotic look of the tropics in our own front or back yards. Along with their awesome color displays, they offer many unique choices for foliage in various colors, shapes and sizes. They need a lot of light to bloom and perform well but they can't tolerate full sun from dawn to dusk in our usually dry summers. As its name suggests, tropical hibiscus is not cold hardy and requires protection when temperature go below 45 degrees F. This makes it practical to grow tropical hibiscus in containers.

(CONTINUED 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](http://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.

**SURVIVING THE SUMMER**

**Mulch for Your Landscape**

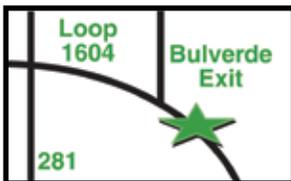


The use of mulch is vital in Texas. In the summer, proper mulching helps keep the soil cooler.

A layer of mulch on your garden beds allows the soil to soak up more water. It also reduces the rate of water loss from the soil.

Available in organic and inorganic forms, mulch comes in many shapes and sizes. Inorganic mulches include plastic, rocks, rock chips, and other non-plant materials. Organic mulches include straw, compost, newspaper, sawdust, and similar materials. Choosing the right one depends on where you plan to use it.

Mulch provides essential carbon and energy for all macro and micro organisms. These organisms breakdown the smaller carbon constituents and other organic matter into molecules that plant roots can absorb.



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BLOOMING TROPICAL HIBISCUS  
and BOUGAINVILLEA are  
ABSOLUTELY BEAUTIFUL  
AND LOVE SOUTH TEXAS WEATHER.**

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To have your gardening questions answered during show hours ONLY

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## SUMMER COLOR

### The Tropics of Central Texas

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Most hibiscus varieties have one-day flowers; the blossoms open early in the morning and wilt late that afternoon. Flowers of a few varieties remain open for two days. Most hibiscus are odorless, but a few varieties are slightly fragrant. Summer is the season for tropical hibiscus. Few summer-flowering shrubs surpass the tropical hibiscus for glossy, dark green foliage and nonstop flowers in shades and blends of pink, yellow, orange, white, lavender and scarlet.

Tropical hibiscus can be grown in the ground. They also adapt well to container culture, which also makes their protection from unfriendly weather convenient. Common container diameter sizes are 9-inch, 12-inch and 14-inch. Usually, a 14-inch pot is the largest size that mature plants will need. Pot tropical hibiscus using a light and porous potting mixture to provide good water drainage. There also are “custom” hibiscus planting mixes.

Tropical hibiscus prefer a sunny location and well-drained soil high in organic matter and nutrients. Along the Texas

“Tropical Hibiscus are probably the most recognizable and popular tropical plants used in today’s landscapes. Tropical Hibiscus offers a wide array of colors and blooms types including single and double reds, pinks, yellows and oranges. They can also be trained into patio trees, used as bushes, there’s even some that have braided trunks.”

Gulf Coast, hibiscus can be planted in the ground if winter protection is provided when temperatures are expected to drop below 40 degrees. Tropical hibiscus like frequent water rations to stay very moist, but they can’t stand wet feet, which means good drainage is essential.

During our hot summers when rainfall is low, hibiscus in pots have to be watered almost every day to keep the top of the container soil lightly moist. Once it is established, a hibiscus can be watered deeply once or twice a week during dry spells.

While tropical hibiscus can occasionally survive our typically mild winters, growers should plan early to protect them in the winter.

Growing tropical hibiscus is an easy way to add a tropical touch to your garden.



With proper care, **Tropical Hibiscus** can provide almost non-stop blooms from spring through the fall. When planted in containers they can be easily protected from cold weather.

## IN YOUR ROSE GARDEN

# Summertime Care of Roses

By Dr Jerry Parsons, Bexar County Horticulture Specialist

Like many plants roses need special care during hot weather. During the summer, many area gardeners lose interest in their roses because summer heat promotes small, faded flowers of poor quality. However, if gardeners are persistent, proper care during July and August will insure attractive foliage and an abundance of flowers throughout the fall and early winter.

Poor cultural practices and neglect during summer months will weaken plants and make it harder for them to withstand rugged winter conditions. Here are some suggestions on summer care of roses:

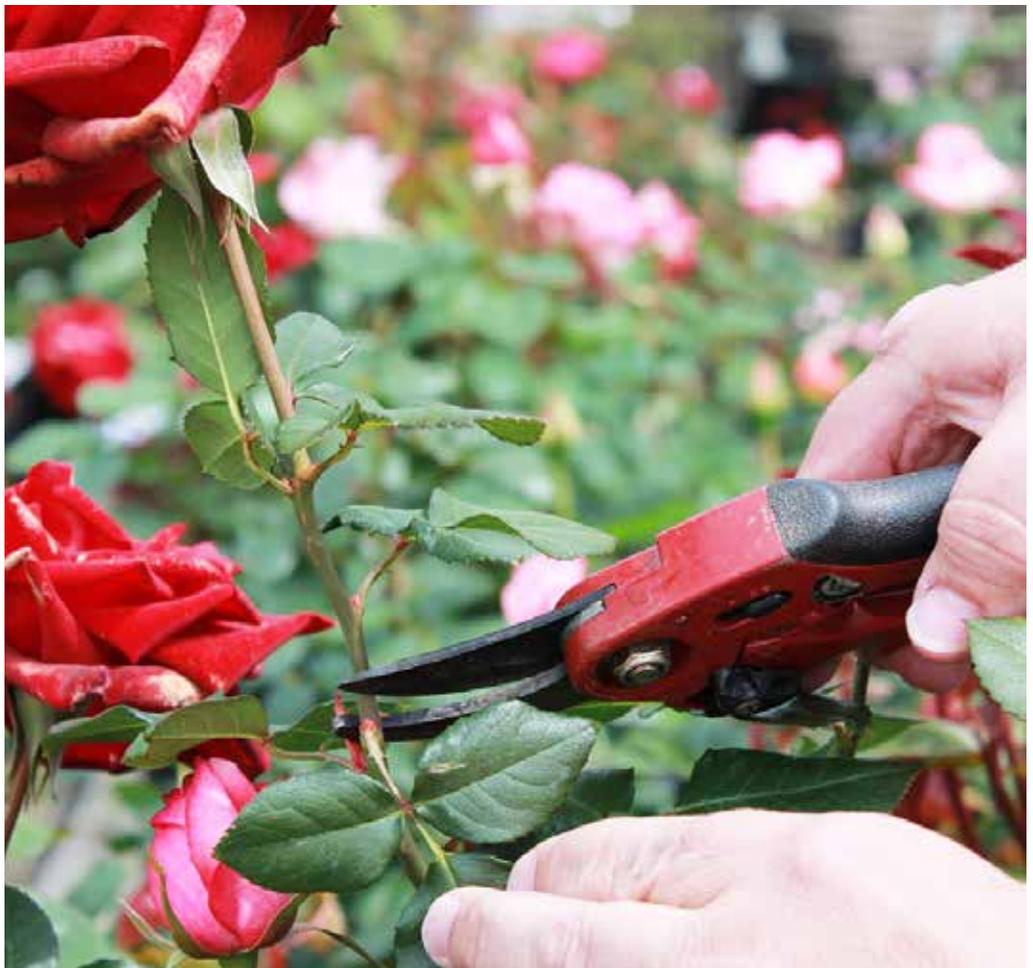
🌿 As flowers fade and petals fall, remove old flowers. Otherwise, food and energy will go into seed production rather than plant growth and flower production.

🌿 When removing spent flowers, cut just above the second 5-leaflet leaf above the main cane or branch.

🌿 Apply ½ pound of a slow-release fertilizer such as 19-5-9 every month as new growth develops following a flowering cycle. Do not fertilize after August 15, so that plants can mature and be less susceptible to winter injury.

🌿 During hot, dry weather, water rose beds thoroughly every week to a depth of 8 to 10 inches.

🌿 Control blackspot and mildew by spraying with Funginex or a fungicide containing bayleton every 7 to 10 days from the time new growth starts in the spring, and continue applications throughout the growing season until frost.



Deadheading is the process of removing wilted blooms from your roses. It is an easy way to give your garden a tidy appearance. It also encourages your plants to produce new flowers. In general, the easiest way is to just snip off the spent rose at the end of its short stem, above any foliage. Removing the old blooms stops the plant from putting energy into developing seeds, and instead encourages it to produce more flowers. A lot of shrub roses, including the famous Knock Out, are bred to shed spent blooms on their own. The good news is you might never need to deadhead these self-cleaning roses, but you still might want to clean them up.

Milberger's regularly carries over fifty varieties of Antique and Modern roses that are recommended by Texas A&M and the San Antonio Rose Society to do well in South Central Texas. Stop by the nursery and one of our South Texas gardening experts can help you choose the rose varieties that are best suited for your landscape and your gardening style.

## PERENNIAL COLOR

# My Gladiolus Are Falling Over!

By Amy Grant, [gardeningknowhow.com](http://gardeningknowhow.com)

Gladioli are extremely popular flowers grown for their lengthy profusion of colorful blooms that can last from summer through fall. Prolific bloomers that they are, you may find that the gladiolus plants are falling over due to the heaviness of the blossoms or during wind or rain storms. How do you hold up glads? Staking gladiolus plants will keep their brightly colored heads from dipping or breaking, and there are any number of items that can be used as gladiolus plant stakes.

## How to Stake Your Gladiolus

These perennial favorites are grown from corms planted in the early spring. You will need to support the plants as they grow taller. Along with staking the plants, plant them in groupings.

Grouping of glads are easier to stake and make for innovative solutions such as using a trellis to grow them through. Place a lattice supported by short stakes parallel to the ground over the area the corms are planted. Allow the gladiolus to grow through the lattice. Groupings of gladiolus can also be placed against

“If you want immediate gratification, plant one of summer’s favorite flowers, the gladiolus. Glads are especially impressive combined with summer annuals and perennials in the garden, or when cut, they make a superb arrangement of flowers.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons

a supportive structure such as a fence, trellis or even garden art. Use fishing line, jute or garden twine to tie the blooms to the support. Tie the

flowers closer to the top of the buds, ideally in the middle of the flower buds. Grouping the glads together not only helps to hide the ties, but allows them to help support each other.

If you do not plant the gladiolus in groups they can be tied in the same manner to a free-standing garden stake. Gladiolus plant stakes can be made of wood, bamboo or even a piece of metal rebar, whatever gets the job done.

Another easy way to support the gladiolus is individual stem flower supports. These make it super simple to support the heavy blooms without tying them up. They are made of coated metal that is curved just so to encase flower stems. In a pinch, even metal wire hangers could be straightened out and then bent to create a single blossom support.



Unlike other kinds of flowers, gladiolus requires very little space in your garden. You can plant a dozen or several dozen bulbs in a row, or group them in clusters for a massed effect. This small area devoted to gladiolus can produce a bounty of beautiful blooms. Many beautiful new hybrid varieties that have been introduced in recent years are available.

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](http://www.milbergernursery.com).

## TREES AND SHRUBS

# Surviving the Summer

By The Texas Tree Foundation

In spite of our wet winter and cool spring, the summer temperatures in South Central Texas will be soaring into the triple digits, with drying winds and a lack of rainfall. The Texas Trees Foundation receives calls daily from area residents asking the question, “How much water do I need to apply to my new and existing trees?”

Seventy percent of all water usage is in the landscape and much of that water never reaches the roots of the trees. The majority of tree roots are in the top 12-18" of soil. So, you must saturate the soil to water your tree. Sprinkling your lawn won't provide the amount of water needed to nurture your trees.

Summer tree care is important. Water trees at night with an open end hose and slowly trickle water until the soil is saturated to a depth of 12-18".

Water newly planted trees at the base of the tree making sure to saturate the entire root ball area. Water as needed, perhaps as often as twice a week during the first two years after planting and mulch with a minimum of 4" of mulch to help retain the moisture. Trees that are 2" in diameter or larger should be watered at the drip-line of the tree where the majority of the feeder roots are located. Water every two weeks – water more when there are high temperatures, windy days and not much rain.

String-trimmers and lawn mowers are the leading cause of tree death in urban and sub-urban areas when scars left by lawn care equipment allow fungi and insects to enter the tree.

The overuse of weed herbicides is the second greatest killer of landscape trees. You should be sure to read the label instructions and keep these herbicides away from trees, shrubs and flowering plants.

Improper planting, in holes that are too deep, especially in our clay soils, can suffocate newly planted trees. Always ask the advice of nursery experts when placing a new tree in your landscape.



**Sago palms** are slow growing to ten feet tall with frond-like leaves that emerge from a growing point at the top of the trunk. Some of the most impressive specimens in area gardens are protected from cold. Sago palms will tolerate sun, but seem to do best in partial shade such as on a patio with an Eastern exposure that is shaded from the Western sun. They are very tough in terms of survival, but the foliage often reacts to changes in season and light exposure by yellowing of some leaves. These hardy plants do not require much fertilizer or water. This long-living plant isn't actually a palm at all, though their foliage looks like palm fronds. Sagos are in the cycad family and are native to southern Japan. Cycads go back to the Jurassic Age, and with all of their armor, it's easy to see why they have survived so long.

## JULY GARDENING TIPS

# Enjoying Your Summer Garden

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

**Plant:** For summer color and fall beauty, plant Texas' tough annuals and heat-loving tropicals in beds and containers. To brighten a landscape in the heat of the summer, plant lantana, bougainvillea, mandevilla vine, allamanda, hibiscus, salvia, periwinkle, marigold, zinnia, portulaca, purslane, copper plant, and Bush Morning Glory.

**Prune:** Roses (except climbing varieties) should be pruned early August to insure fall bloom. Remove one third of the bush with old canes, dead canes, spent bloom stems comprising the majority removed. This will stimulate vigorous new growth and abundant fall blooms.

Keep tree pruning to a minimum during summer especially on oaks.

**Fertilize** hanging baskets and other containerized plants regularly with a water-soluble fertilizer. If you failed to make a second application of fertilizer to your lawn in June and moisture is available, do so now.

**On the Lookout:** Insects to watch for include white flies, spider mites, webworms, tent

caterpillars, aphids and grasshoppers. Symptoms of chinch bug damage can appear anytime in healthy St. Augustine lawns. Look for dry, burned-looking patches in the hottest parts of the lawn. Control with any contact insecticide.

Trees and shrubs may experience some leaf drop this time of year, caused by summer's heat and dry weather stress. There is nothing which can be done except mulch and hope for cooler weather. Fall webworms may appear on pecan, mulberry, ash, persimmon, and other trees.

**Odd Jobs:** Give special attention to water requirement of leafy garden plants such as coleus, caladiums and elephant ears during hot, sunny periods.

Mulch heavily. Maintain a heavy (two to four inches) mulch throughout your landscape and gardens to reduce water needs and eliminate weeding. Water plants when needed and not according to the calendar or day of the week. Water (soak) thoroughly rather than applying frequent light sprinklings.

For more detailed and complete Gardening Tips for this month visit [www.MilbergerNursery.com](http://www.MilbergerNursery.com).

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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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**Thryallis [Showers of Gold]**, a Texas SuperStar® plant, is an evergreen shrub with long spikes of yellow blooms that tolerates our summer sun. Plants develop a dense handsome canopy with flowers that draw the eye from a distance. The loose, open natural growth habit is ideal for informal plantings but it will need some pruning to keep from being too leggy. If plants thin out at the bottom keep the bottom of a hedge slightly wider than the top to allow sunlight to reach the lower foliage.