

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

OCTOBER 2020

PLANT QUESTIONS


We have brown patch in our St. Augustine lawn. I was told "winterizer" fertilizer would be a waste of time.

Is that right? You still need to "winterize" your lawn but take care of the Brown Patch with a fungicide like F-Stop. Brown patch starts in low spots in the lawn that stay wet, you may want to raise the grade on those low areas by one inch or more with a soil mix. Fertilizers work on grass that has functioning roots and grass blades.

Is it too early to plant snapdragons? October is a good time to plant snapdragons. It gives the plants time to develop some size before cold weather arrives. Wait until November to plant pansies, primrose and cyclamen.

If we plant zinnia seed now is there time to harvest the blooms before the freeze arrives? I wouldn't expect any new plants or newly seeded plants to last long enough to bloom. The zinnias that are in bloom now will last until the first hard freeze.

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.



Daffodil bulbs are easy to plant, require nearly no maintenance, and they multiply rapidly. They are conspicuous flowers with six petal-like sepals surmounted by a cup- or trumpet-shaped crown. They come in white, yellow, orange, or pink colors. The bulbs lie dormant in the beginning after planting. The flower stem and leaves originate from the bulb, to emerge in Spring.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Planting Flowering Bulbs

Bulbs are truly some of the simplest of flowers to grow. They are also easy to care for and inexpensive. All they ask is to be planted in the fall, and, in return, they will reward you with weeks of early spring color, fragrance and beauty. Good bulbs will produce flowers the first season and the larger the bulb, the larger the bloom.

Spring flowering bulbs are not fussy about soil. They will grow in sandy or clay soil, as long as the soil drains well. Waterlogged bulbs rot, especially when dormant. Rich soil is unnecessary because bulbs contain the food they need to produce foliage and flowers in the spring. Bulbs are also forgiving when it comes to light. A spring bulb garden can be planted in either sun or shade. Since the flowers appear early in the season, they have often matured by the time trees leaf out and shade the garden.

(MORE BULBS 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.

PLANT FACTS

Are Marigold and Calendula the same?

By Mary H. Dyer, Credentialed Garden Writer

The simple answer is no, and here's why: Although both are members of the sunflower (Asteraceae) family, marigolds are members of the Tagetes genus, which includes at least fifty species, while calendula are members of the Calendula genus, a smaller genus with less than twenty species. You could say the two colorful, sun-loving plants are cousins, but marigold and calendula differences are notable.

Size: Calendula plants often reach heights up to twenty-four inches. Marigolds range in size from six to forty-eight inches.

Aroma: Calendula have a slightly sweet aroma, while the odor of marigolds is unpleasant and strangely pungent or spicy.

Shape: Calendula petals are long and straight, and the blooms are rather flat and bowl-shaped. Marigold petals are more rectangular with rounded corners. They aren't flat, but slightly wavy.

Why all the confusion? Probably because calendula is often known as pot marigold, common marigold, or Scotch marigold, though it isn't a true marigold at all. Marigolds are native to South America, southwestern North America, and tropical America. Calendula is native to northern Africa and south-central Europe.



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
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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.

Milberger's Nursery October Features

Autumn in South Texas

IT'S THE BEST SEASON
FOR PLANTING

Trees & Shrubs
Bedding Plants
Garden Vegetables



It's Coming Soon!

Milberger's PUMPKIN PATCH SPOOKY-er THAN EVER



It's growing and growing. Come see for yourself!



Milberger's Halloween Blood Drive
Sat., Oct 24 • 10am 'til 2:00pm

Planning for a Water Garden?

Milberger's has Pumps for
your water garden, Koi, Water Plants
and expert advice.

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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GARDENING EXPERTISE

Planting of Flowering Bulbs

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Most spring-blooming bulbs should be planted between late September and early November in well-drained soil. The soil can't be soggy at any time of the year. They need sun to part shade. A location with only morning sun is good because the flowers last longer if they aren't in the warmer afternoon sun. Planting under deciduous trees is also ok because the trees lose their leaves in the fall allowing the bulbs to get sun during the winter and spring when they are growing.

Planting your bulbs in groups shows the flowers to a better advantage. Larger bulbs should be planted in groups of at least three, smaller bulbs are better with five or more in a group. This also makes planting easier. Dig one hole large enough for the number of bulbs you are planting. Spacing is up



Spring flowering bulbs display well together and can add color and dimension to almost any garden setting. Here **Narcissus** (Daffodil) and **Muscari** bulbs join in an attractive focal point.

“Fun fact about daffodils-if you don't plant them deep enough they will use their roots to pull themselves down to the depth they want.”

to you but remember, if you plant too close together you will need to dig and divide the bulbs sooner to maintain good flowering. Bulbs should be planted with the pointy end up. They need to be planted three-times deeper than they are tall. That means that the smaller Ipheion, Grape Hyacinth, and species tulip bulbs will be planted in holes three-to-four inches deep. The larger daffodil bulbs should be planted in holes five-to-six inches deep.

When planting naturalizing bulbs (under normal conditions you can expect them to come back every year) it would be good to mix compost or fertilizer into the soil at the base of the bulbs and into the soil when you cover them. Water the bulbs well after planting to settle the soil and cover your bulbs with three-to-four inches of organic mulch. It helps maintain moisture in the soil and moderates the soil temperature. Organic mulches (like wood chips) also break down over time into compost which then acts as a slow release fertilizer.

You can find excellent quality mulches at **Milberger's Nursery** for all of your garden beds and landscape needs. Choose a mulch that will not float away in our next downpour. A layer of mulch will protect your fall planted blooming plants. Apply at least two inches of mulch around the base of your trees to protect your plant investment.

YOUR FALL GARDEN BED

Cool Weather Color on the Way

Many of our summer blooming plants bloom until cold temperatures arrive, but there are also some special fall blooming plants that can make a major impact in the fall landscape.

Cape honeysuckle has tubular orange-red, one inch flowers. The foliage and flowers resemble trumpet creeper in miniature. Beginning in September, they are blooming machines until the first freeze. In addition to the color, the blooms are a favorite nectar source for the waves of hummingbirds that visit San Antonio every autumn.

Firespike grows and blooms in deep shade. It makes an excellent container plant or can be grown in the shrub border where it dies back to the roots every winter. The plant is so shade tolerant that container grown firespike can be taken into the house during the winter where it makes a decorative foliage plant. With its shiny green leaves, the major show in the fall comes from the spike of red blooms that arise a foot or more above the foliage. Firespike is not a xeriscape plant. It does best with regular irrigation.



Autumn sage or *salvia greggii* is another fall blooming plant. It also has a bloom flush in spring and has a few blooms even in the hottest summer. Autumn sage is available in many bloom colors including red, pink, salmon, and white. It is best to cut this evergreen perennial back to the ground every few years to prevent it from becoming too leggy.

Purple coneflower will also naturalize for fall blooms. It prefers full sun but is just as drought-tolerant and pest-free as *salvia coccinea*. In addition to attracting hummingbirds, purple coneflower is a favorite butterfly food source and provides seed for the finches and cardinals. Coneflower is a part of every wildflower seed mix or they can be purchased as large plants in containers at area nurseries. Deer do not seem to eat purple coneflower.

Blackeyed Susan is a *Rudbeckia* just like purple coneflower. The flowers resemble sunflowers with richer colored, lush petals and can be quite spectacular in the autumn garden, but they do not over-winter or reseed as well as purple coneflower. Use blackeyed Susan for yellow fall blooms that attract butterflies. Grow them in morning or full sun.

Mexican mint marigold makes a mound of golden yellow flowers up to three feet tall. They are pest-free, drought-tolerant and require well drained soil to prosper. Mexican mint marigold is like fall aster in its ability to become a visual center of the autumn landscape. Like fall aster, they require full sun to bloom to their full potential. Mexican mint marigold has a longer bloom period than fall aster.

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. Visit the nursery for expert advice on plants and trees and take advantage of South Texas' warm winters to improve your landscape.

LAWNCARE

When to Lay Sod in South Texas

By Zodega

Creating and maintaining a healthy and attractive lawn means you will need to know the best time to plant sod. Knowing when to lay sod can dramatically increase the chances of establishing a healthy lawn the first time around. While south central Texas is famous for its warm and dry climate, there are several varieties of grass that thrive here allowing you to have a healthy and green lawn year-round.

Best Time to Lay St. Augustine Sod: St. Augustine grass thrives in warm temperatures with full sun. This grass can withstand some shade, but too much leads to thinning, which affects its appearance and health. Growing St. Augustine from seed is quite difficult, so using sod is best.

Best Time to Lay Bermuda Sod: Bermuda grass has tendencies that work well in many Texas

regions. While it can withstand drought, it grows best in areas that have medium levels of rainfall. Bermuda grass is durable and able to withstand lots of foot traffic, which works well for athletic fields, commercial properties, and homes with children. While it's possible to install this Bermuda sod during most seasons of the year, early fall or late spring is ideal. **For the best outcome, consult professionals that know how to install Bermuda sod.**



Sod installation works best when the temperature is between 80 and 100 degrees. In Texas, that means laying this sod between the late spring and late summer to early fall months

“Early fall or mid-fall tends to be the best time to lay sod. This is because the temperatures have cooled down from the summer highs and you tend to get more precipitation during these months. There is plenty of time between fall and winter for the sod to root and establish prior to dormancy which means in the winter, your lawn will be healthy, full, and easy to green up in the spring.”

~ SodSolutions®

Best Time to Lay Zoysia Sod: Zoysia sod grows well in hot temperatures and full sun, but it can also handle moderate shade. Zoysia grass creates a thick mat that can choke out weeds. Zoysia sod is extremely difficult to establish from seed, so experts recommend using sod. Laying sod in winter during the Zoysia dormancy period is possible, but the best time to plant Zoysia sod is during the spring and fall.

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.

TREES AND SHRUBS

October is Tree and Shrub Planting Time

By Dr Calvin Finch

Late fall through early spring is the best time to plant trees and shrubs in South Texas. The plants have time to develop roots in the cool soil before they face the stress of a hot, dry summer. The process of selecting and planting a tree or shrub is not overly complicated, but it deserves some thought. If you select well and care for the plant adequately, it could be providing benefits for a long time.

Some basic guidance will help make the tree or shrub an asset rather than a burden to you.

☞ Determine where you want a tree or shrub and what you want to accomplish with it. Shade is one reason to add permanent plants, but you will not accomplish your goal if you plant the shade tree on the North side of the house.

☞ Determine what size tree or shrub you want to fill the available space. Select the species and variety based on mature size not the size that the plant is in the nursery.

☞ Despite our belief that plants grow slowly, most grow quickly and can outgrow their spot in the landscape unless you have selected well.



Dwarf Buford Holly will give you glossy deep green foliage throughout the year and in winter their red berries will attract birds to your yard. Its compact growth habit will add a strong evergreen border statement or hedge to your landscape.

☞ Purchase a reasonable size tree or shrub. Small plants are less expensive and easier to plant. Sometimes they even reach mature size before larger, more expensive specimens because they become established more easily.

☞ Select the right plant for the amount of light that is available. It takes a shade-tolerant plant such as viburnum to produce a nice plant in deep shade.

☞ When planting, dig the hole as deep as the container and two or three times as wide. The top of the root ball should be even with or higher than the surrounding soil.

☞ An application of mulch applied on the surface of the soil over the root ball will contribute to faster growth. You can use leaves that you have

raked up from your yard, bark, shredded brush, or any available organic material.

☞ Determine which plant you want by doing some research. Notice what looks good in the neighborhood or nearby parks.

OCTOBER GARDENING TIPS

Growing in South Texas' Second Spring

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

October is a great time for gardening and landscaping. Many plants can be set out now, and this is the perfect time to be replacing plants lost due to the summer drought.

Plant flowers: The most popular of the cool season flowering annuals to be set out now are pansies. There are so many types and colors of pansies it might be hard to pick just one. There are pastel shades, varieties with no faces, and miniature flowers, so you should have no trouble finding one you like. One tip for flowering annuals – the brighter the color, like reds or yellows, the easier they will be seen from a distance. Blues are best viewed up close.

Besides pansies, other bedding plants that can be planted now include dianthus, flowering cabbage and kale, snapdragons, violas, and calendulas.

Wildflowers and seeded annuals like California poppy, oriental poppy, larkspur and bluebonnets should be sown early this month.

October is also a great month to divide and plant spring-blooming perennials like native columbines,

daylilies, phlox, Louisiana and bearded irises, dianthus, coreopsis, coneflowers and daisies. If you have extras after dividing, give to or trade with a gardening friend or neighbor.

Trees and Shrubs: The fall season is also a perfect time to establish new trees and shrubs. Plants set out now undergo less stress, and their roots have months to grow and become established before spring growth begins and summer heat and drought arrive next year.

Fertilizer: October is time for the most important lawn fertilization of the year – application of a winterizer fertilizer to condition the grass for winter survival. Wait until the lawn grass slows growth and mowing every two weeks is adequate before applying. A light application of garden-type fertilizer will boost annual and perennial flowering plants.

Grass: Tall fescue and ryegrass can also be planted in early October. It is too late to sow Bermuda or centipede seed. Beware that armyworms could quickly devour newly sprouted ryegrass.

For more detailed and complete Gardening Tips for this month visit www.MilbergerNursery.com.

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Typically ranging in hues of blue to purple, the **Fall Aster** blooms in October and provides a thick and colorful display when other flowering plants may have faded. The plants mound around two to three feet by sending out stolons. Fall Asters can grow up to one to three feet tall. The stems are slender and rigid and the leaves at the bottom are larger than leaves at the top.

Photo by Ramez Antoun.