

# MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 2020

## PLANT QUESTIONS

**Our broccoli is coming in and is being fed upon by caterpillars. We are trying to handpick them off the plants, but we are only partially successful. What else can we do?** The most effective way to control cabbage loopers is to spray the foliage with the organic insecticide B.T. This insecticide only affects caterpillars that feed on foliage where it has been sprayed. It does not hurt butterflies or caterpillars in the rest of the landscape.

**My 3-year old dwarf Burford and a dwarf yaupon needs shaping. Is it OK to shape these shrubs now?** Your evergreen shrubs will re-leaf faster if you wait until early spring to do your pruning. Pruning now will not hurt the plant but you will get to “enjoy” the baldness for several months until next spring.

**Is it time to fertilize our lawn for the fall?** The best target date is October 1. Use a product identified as a winterizer with a 3-1-2 nutrient ratio. The product with 18-6-12 is an example.

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.



## SOUTH TEXAS' SECOND SPRING

### Your Fall Vegetable Garden

Fall vegetable gardening is very productive and has different and distinct advantages over spring vegetable gardening. Rainfall is generally more frequent in the fall; thus watering chores are reduced. Insect pest populations are on the decline, not increasing as in spring. Your vegetable crops will mature as the days are getting shorter and cooler; the quality of your broccoli, cauliflower and lettuce will be much better and there is less chance of bitter taste developing.

Plant your short-term, frost-susceptible vegetables together so that they can be removed after being killed by frost. Frost-susceptible vegetables include beans, cantaloupes, corn, cucumbers, eggplants, okra, peas, peppers, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, tomatoes and watermelons.

Likewise, you should plant your long-term, frost-tolerant vegetables together. Frost-tolerant vegetables include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, collards, garlic, kale, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, spinach and turnips.

(MORE FALL 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](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.

**TIME TO FERTILIZE YOUR LAWN**

# September Lawn Tasks



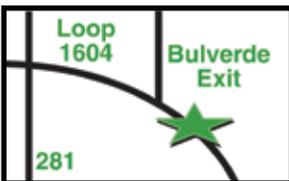
It is time to fertilize your lawn for autumn. Fall fertilization contributes to cold survival and fast green-up in the spring. You should

seek out a fertilizer that is labeled "Winterizer." The title indicates that it has a high level of available nitrogen and potassium. Phosphorous is less necessary in our soils, but some "winterizers" do include phosphorous.

It is not too late to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent winter weeds. Use XL or Amaze to prevent annual blue grass, rescue grass, and rye. For dandelions, bedstraw, thistles, and henbit, apply a product that lists the weeds you want to control. The pre-emergent needs to be applied as soon as possible because those weeds germinate with the first cool weather that arrives. Follow the instructions on the bag precisely for the most effective results.

You may have especially dry areas in your lawn: areas that are in full sun or along driveways. Dry areas can also occur under trees and at areas where soil is compact. Hand-watering in the evening a couple times per week will green-up the dry spots in the lawn.

Fall lawncare advice from Dr. Calvin R. Finch, retired Director of Water Conservation at the Texas A&M University System



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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[www.milbergernursery.com](http://www.milbergernursery.com)  
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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](mailto:mhess@hctc.coop).

# 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 **LARGEST SELECTION** to choose from.

## It's Coming Soon!

# Milberger's PUMPKIN PATCH SPOOKY-er THAN EVER



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

### Planning for a Water Garden?

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your water garden, Koi, Water Plants  
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## SOUTH TEXAS' SECOND SPRING

### Your Fall Vegetable Garden

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

If your spring garden was successful, the same location should work well in the fall. When planning a new garden, keep in mind that vegetable crops need good sunlight and should be planted where the soil drains well. If you're using an established garden area, pull out all plant material that remains from your spring crop and any weeds that have grown up in the garden.

For a new garden site you will need to remove all the grass. Just tilling it into the soil will not eliminate all the grass sprigs; they will continue to grow and interfere with the garden. Likewise, for a raised garden, remove all turf before building the frame and filling it with new soil. Do not locate your new vegetable garden within six feet of hedges, shrubs or trees. Not only will your larger,

“Working in the garden is much more pleasant in the fall. The heat of the summer is in the past, the garden is much more vibrant and beautiful.”

~ Steve Chancy, TAMU AgriLife Extension Agent

more permanent plants compete for light, but they also gobble up nutrients and water necessary for healthy vegetables.

- Plant your crops where they will receive at least six hours of direct sun daily.
- Good air circulation and easy access to a water source are important.
- Success lies in an organically enriched, loose and well-draining soil.
- Mulch to conserve soil moisture, moderate soil temperatures and discourage weeds.



Fall crops generally do better when started from transplants than from seed. Transplants should always be used for growing tomatoes and peppers. Even with the hot, dry weather of South Central Texas, your transplants will survive as long as you provide adequate watering to each and every transplant. It will take about two weeks for a transplant to establish a large enough root system to begin fast growth of the stems and leaves. During these two weeks you will need to provide light watering on a daily basis along with a good layer of mulch to keep that moisture in and around the plants.



Make better use of your garden space by intercropping. Plant shade-tolerant crops, such as greens, broccoli, cauliflower and root crops between taller growing vegetables such as tomatoes and peppers.

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Fall's milder temperatures bring out the best flavors in home vegetable gardens. Healthy transplants are the key to a successful fall garden in South Texas and you will find Milberger's stocked with hardy varieties of fall vegetables ready to put into your garden.

## WILDLIFE IN YOUR LANDSCAPE

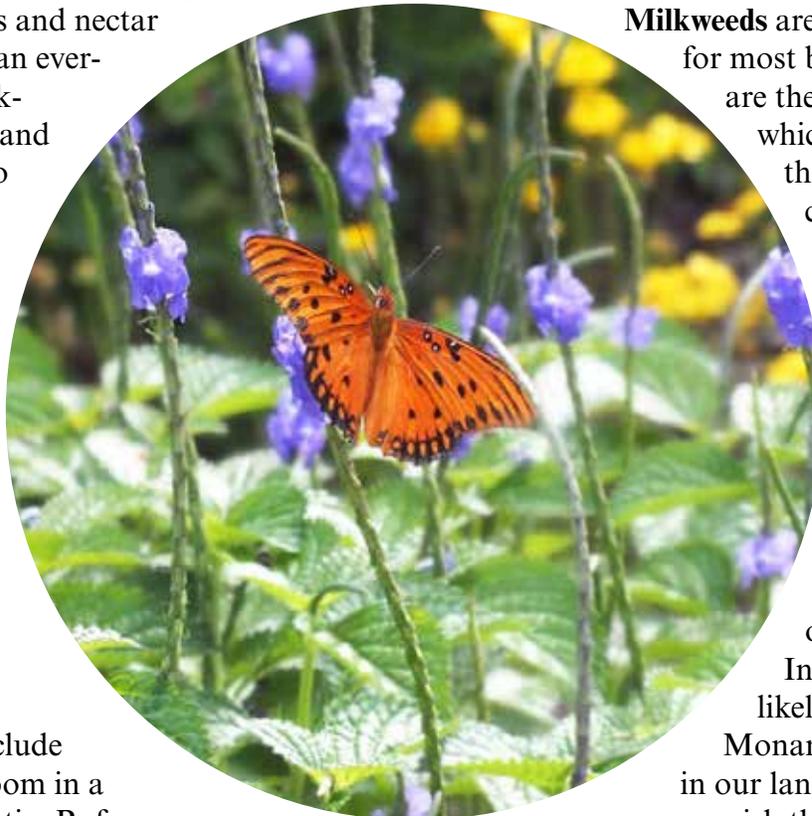
# Fall Blooms that Attract Butterflies and Hummingbirds

There is a lot of butterfly, hummingbird, and other pollinator traffic in autumn. Your landscape can be an important part of the action if you have some of the plants being sought out.

Hummingbirds migrate in the fall. If you have sugar water feeders and nectar sources you can expect an ever-changing group of black-chinned, ruby-throated and rufous hummingbirds to interact and compete for the available nectar sources. In the garden, **Mexican honeysuckle, cape honeysuckle, zinnias, salvia, lantana, shrimp plant, Turk's cap** and **esperanza** will be visited by the migrants.

For especially close observation of the competing migrants, include some **firebush** in full bloom in a container on a sunny patio. Rufous hummingbirds are the smallest of the migrating species but when it comes to taking possession of firebush, they are usually the most aggressive.

If your patio includes shady areas, **pentas** can replace the firebush. Pentas are not winter hardy so if you do not have a greenhouse-like shelter to protect them from the cold, you will have to purchase new plants next spring. Pentas are available in red, white, pink, and lavender colored blooms.



**Porterweed** is a favorite nectar source of butterflies, hummingbirds, and bees. The plant is deceptive with small red or purple blooms that move up the weeping stems, but, because the nectar is so potent, bumble bees, butterflies and even hummingbirds will compete with each other for a place on the flower.

Butterflies that are flying right now are seeking nectar from plants such as **mistflower, milkweed, zinnia, lantana, salvia, and porterweed**. Soon the migrating Monarchs will arrive on their way to the wintering grounds in forests near Mexico City.

**Milkweeds** are a favorite nectar plant for most butterfly species and are the only plant species on which Monarchs will lay their eggs. The potent chemicals contained in the milkweed foliage are transferred to the feeding caterpillars and make them and the adults less desirable to potential predators. In the spring the migrating Monarchs will often lay eggs on our local milkweeds.

In the fall it is most likely that the migrating Monarchs will use the plants in our landscapes for nectar to nourish them to finish the trip south. The caterpillars hatching on milkweed in San Antonio landscapes in the fall are usually those of the Queen butterfly, a Monarch cousin.

Other showy fall blooming plants that are sought out by Monarchs and other butterflies are **mint marigold, fall aster, duranta, and Mexican flame vine**. Quite often the hanging purple flowers on the duranta will be completely covered by queen and Monarch butterflies in the fall.

Visit the butterfly garden at Milberger's Nursery to see exactly how you can transform a portion of your landscape into a beautiful haven for butterflies and hummingbirds. Our garden has been certified by the North American Butterfly Association. Keep an eye on our [website milbergernursery.com](http://www.milbergernursery.com) where you can find our weekly sale items.

## LANDSCAPE OPTIONS

## Mexican Petunia ~ Your Choice

Mexican petunia is a ruellia—the genus that includes a number of wildflowers and groundcovers that range from being desirable landscape plants to being invasive. Ruellias in general are called Mexican petunias. The Ruellia that most of us know is the **full-size Mexican petunia**. It is a leggy invasive plant that reaches up to three feet tall with blue-violet blooms on the leggy stalks. This full-sized Mexican petunia will take over a dry site in full sun quickly through reseeding and underground roots. This is good if you want a tall groundcover to attract wildlife and protect the soil, but not so good if you are trying to grow other types of plants.

The **Blueshade ruellia** is a more desirable selection as a ground cover. It is a fast-spreading groundcover that can grow in shade or sun. It has a quarter-size violet-blue bloom that attracts hummingbirds and butterflies. A planting of two-inch rooted cuttings on 12-inch centers will cover

“All Ruellias are good xeriscape plants that provide blue flowers (white and pink for some) all summer. They attract butterflies and hummingbirds and are disease and pest free.”

~ Dr. Calvin Finch

an area in one growing season. The cuttings can be planted directly into killed St. Augustine grass and produce a blooming, low water use groundcover for less than the cost of most sods.

Mexican petunias are very adaptable and will tolerate wet and dry soils. They prefer full sun but will tolerate shade; however, since flowering is light-related, the plants will flower less in shade.

If you have not tried Katy or blueshade in your landscape, definitely do so. The full-size Mexican petunia may work in some situations, but it is too leggy and invasive for many Texas gardeners.



An easy-to-grow groundcover, **Baby Katie Mexican Petunia** is a densely packed mound of dark-green foliage that flowers rampantly throughout the warmer seasons. Though the foliage appears lustrous and delicate, this perennial thrives in a variety of conditions and requires little to no care. It does well in both sun and shade, but will flower more in full or afternoon sun. Added to beds, pots, or in borders, this plant will be a lush, tropical-looking addition to your garden.

Ask the gardening experts at Milberger's Nursery for more suggestions that will help get your fall 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

# It's Tree Planting Time

By Janet Laminack, County Extension Agent, Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Fall is the perfect time for planting trees. Planting in the fall allows a tree to establish itself in the cooler temperatures of fall and spring. When choosing trees, people often want a quick-growing tree.

Quick growing sometimes means quick-dying, so it's best to be patient and pick a quality tree. Some good choices for our area include oaks — burr, chinkapin, red oak and live oak. Lacebark elm, cedar elm and pecans also make nice shade trees. Smaller trees are a good option, especially on urban lots, and include redbud, crape myrtle, desert willow and wax myrtle.

When deciding where to plant a tree, consider the mature size of the tree. Consider how big this tree will be in 10, 20 or 30 years. Make sure you don't plant a tree too close to power lines, buildings or other trees. You also need to check that the tree isn't too close to anything underground as well. Before you dig, call 811 to have the underground utilities in your lawn marked for free. Planting trees or shrubs might seem like minor digging,

but not knowing where underground lines are could put you in danger or disrupt service in your neighborhood.

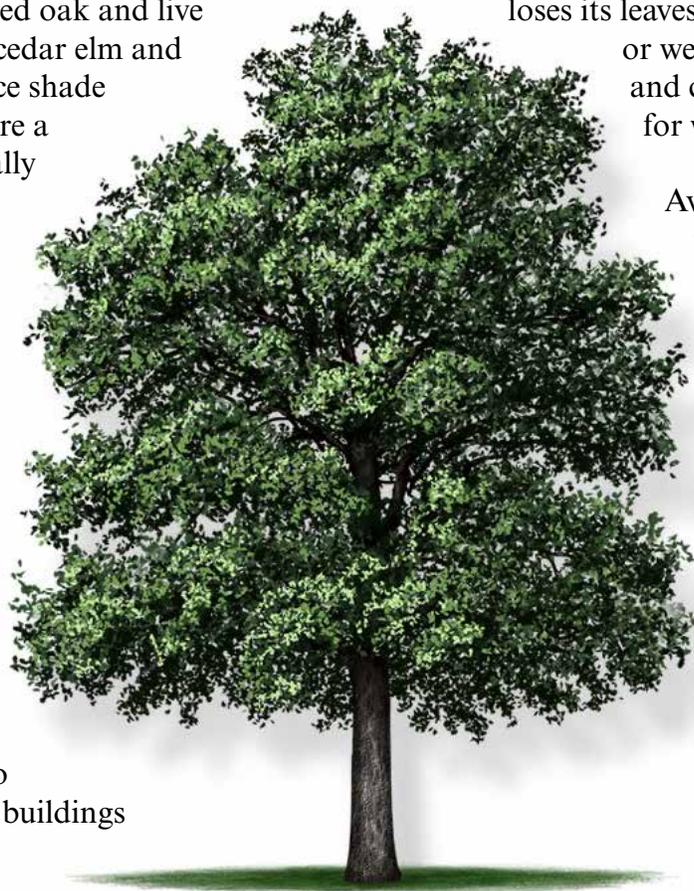
Trees can increase a home's resale value. Properly placed trees can also help with heating and cooling expenses of the home. A deciduous tree (one that loses its leaves in the winter) placed on the south or west side of a home provides shade and cooling in the summer and allows for warming up in the winter.

Avoid putting a tree in the ground too deep. Keep the same soil line on the trunk when it's in the ground as it was in the container. If this kind of exactness makes you nervous,

place the tree slightly higher. Some settling may occur and it is very important to make sure the tree is not too deep.

Once the tree is planted, don't forget about it. For the first three years, while it gets established, it will need more care such as supplemental water and

reducing the competition of weeds and grass.



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**Chinkapin Oak** is a good-looking medium to large shade tree quite at home in south central Texas. Its unique saw-tooth leaves are rich green, turning yellow to bronze in the fall. You will see this tree growing wild in well-drained bottomland soils and on limestone hills near water. It's adaptable to a range of soils and exposures. It's moderate to fast-growing and develops an open rounded crown as it ages.

## SEPTEMBER GARDENING TIPS

# Our Fall Gardening Season is Upon Us

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

**Plant:** Fall vegetable gardening should be in full swing. Flowering Annuals can be transplanted now: Alyssum, asters, calendula, dianthus (pinks), flowering cabbage and kale, pansies, petunias, phlox, Shasta daisies, snapdragons, and stock. If temperatures remain unseasonably hot, gardeners would be well advised to wait until October to transplant most of these cool-season flowering plants.

**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. Once you have done your light fall pruning, you can apply a cup of organic rose food per bush and follow this two weeks later with a liquid feeding. Don't feed with either liquid or dry foods after the beginning of October. 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.

**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. It's time to plant squash, bush beans, cucumbers, radishes, carrots, beets, sweet corn, and potatoes.

**On the Lookout:** Insects will be in “full swing” and their populations “full blown” by now. For further identification of what bugs you have and how to control them, see our web site. Tender seedlings and transplants must be protected from spider mites, stink bugs, grasshoppers and deer.

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

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

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## Milberger's Tree Lot

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well rooted, ready-to-plant trees in the area.**

To find the specific tree for your landscape visit with  
the tree experts at Milberger's Nursery.



It is time to look for space in the garden for the first planting of cool weather annuals such as **stocks**. They have relatively good heat tolerance and, if planted now, will provide early winter blooms in addition to blooms early next spring. These highly fragrant and attractive bloomers are often used to fill those bare spots among other blooms in spring-to-summer gardens. Stocks offer continuous blooms in sunny weather. Stocks like well-draining soil.