

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

APRIL 2022

PLANT QUESTIONS

We are planting a vegetable garden for the first time. Is it too late to plant tomatoes? What else can we plant? You want to get tomatoes planted as soon as possible. Determinate varieties are recommended because they set and mature fruit before the hot weather shuts tomatoes down. Grow peppers, green beans, cucumbers, summer squash, and okra as well.

Do fire ants kill Monarch butterflies in the early stage of their life cycle? They may attack a few but I have never read about them doing it or seen it happen. I don't think it is a problem.

Why do you recommend that we wait to fertilize the lawn until we have mowed real grass twice? It seems to me that the grass growth would speed up if it was fertilized early? Unfortunately, if the lawn grass does not have enough foliage it won't have adequate roots to collect and distribute the nutrients in the fertilizer. If it has grown enough to be mowed twice it means the plants are capable of using the nutrients in the fertilizer.

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.



You will see the early flowering daylilies bloom in April along with the iris. Certain varieties will provide continuous blooming through August and early September. Some varieties will produce flowers in the spring and a second crop later in the summer. Deadheading or removing spent flowers will prolong the flowering season and will prevent seedlings.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Texas' Favorite Perennial

By Judy Barrett, Homegrown Texas

Daylilies are prolific and colorful bloomers. Few pests show any interest in them. They will grow in sun or shade, dry or wet soil, can tolerate both flooding and drought, and produce beautiful flowers throughout Texas. You can find tiny flowers and large flowers, compact plants and tall plants. You can even create your own varieties with relative ease. It is no wonder that every gardening expert recommends daylilies for the home landscape. Although daylilies will tolerate poor soil, you want them to bloom well, so take some time to prepare the soil. Daylilies require good drainage; they will rot if they are planted in a spot where they constantly have wet feet. Plant only to the base of the crown, the area above the roots on the plant where it is white in color and gradually goes to green.

(MORE DAYLILIES 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.

GARDENING EVENTS at the NURSERY

Sat., Apr 2 starts at 10am

Lawn Care Basics 101. Free Adult Seminar at Milberger's. David Rodriguez from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will discuss the basics of lawn maintenance through proper nutrition, mowing, weed control and irrigation. This seminar is very popular, so arrive early for best parking and seating. Seminar is free. 1.5 CEU's for Master Gardeners who attend.

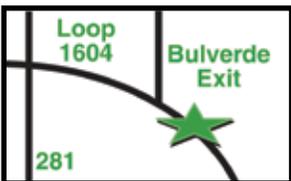
Sat., April 2 All Day

Celebrate Earth Day 2022. From growing our own food to using our city-provided recycling and organic waste bins, we made good use of our extra hours at home this past year. Here are a few more ways you can honor Mother Earth.

REDUCE: Can you limit your outdoor watering to only six times a year? How about four or even zero? It's much simpler than you think. Go to <https://www.gardenstylesanantonio.com/garden-resources/1/watering/> to learn how.

RECYCLE: The City of San Antonio provides receptacles for recyclable items (metal, glass, clean paper and plastic) and organic waste (leaves, grass clippings, twigs, non-protein food scraps). Composting is an easy way to reduce the amount of home waste.

REUSE/REPURPOSE: Before immediately tossing an item into the recycle bin, consider how it can be used for a different purpose. Empty glass beverage bottles inserted upside down in the ground make excellent garden bed borders. Large cans or glass pickle jars sunk upright into the ground and filled with a little beer or molasses make for effective slug and snail control. Empty glass jars are also the perfect catch-all for grease. ~ Mark Peterson, SAWS Conservation Project Coordinator.



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

**Milberger's Nursery
April Features**

APRIL is one of our most colorful months.

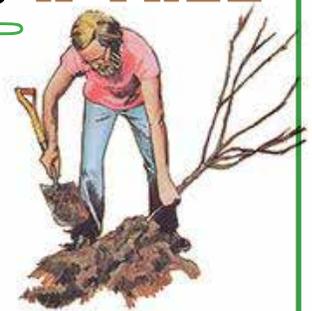
Trucks arrive almost every day with

BLOOMING ANNUALS and **PERENNIALS** in every imaginable color. Milberger's puts different plants **on sale** every week.

APRIL IS THE LAST MONTH to Get Paid to PLANT
with CPS Green Shade rebates **A TREE**

\$50 PER TREE

UP TO FIVE TREES REBATE PROGRAM EXPIRES APRIL 30 Just ask one of the **South Texas Tree Experts at Milberger's**



Keeping a green lawn in San Antonio is a lot easier with turf grass from Milberger's. St Augustine, Bermuda Grass, and Zoysia.



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.

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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Our Writers have the answers: **Dr. Jerry Parsons** is a well renowned 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.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Daylilies

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Daylilies have been called Texas' favorite perennial because of their carefree garden beauty. They tolerate our drought, heat, cold and floods. Feed them or not, they'll still bloom for you. Even when they're not in bloom, they make great border plantings or "frames" for other plantings.

For best growth and bloom of your daylilies, select a location that has full morning sun and some protection from afternoon sun. All-day sunshine in Texas is hard for most plants to take, and daylilies appreciate afternoon shade. April is a good time to plant one of the easiest to grow perennials. Water plants thoroughly after planting and continue to deep soak them until they are well established. Although they are drought-tolerant, consistent watering while budding and flowering produces better quality flowers. Blood meal, cottonseed meal, agricultural molasses, composted manure, sludge compost and compost are all good organic amendments for your daylilies

“Daylilies provide a maximum of color to the landscape with a minimum amount of effort. Blossoms now come in pink, purple, red, peach, apricot and all shades in between, including dramatic color combinations. Petals may be ruffled, twirled or flecked with eye-catching glitter called diamond dust.”

~ Texas A&M Agrilife Extension

and will keep them at the peak of health. Be careful not to mulch heavily around the crown of the plant to avoid rotting and maintain air circulation. In the spring, a good blend of fish emulsion and seaweed is a fine tonic to get them growing.

Daylilies grow from fleshy roots below ground with fans of leaves above ground, coming together at the crown of the plant. From the crown, flower stalks (scapes) will emerge in May and June, bearing typically 10 to 20 flower buds. Though each flower is only open for one day (thus the name), the buds will take turns opening, resulting in weeks of garden color. And many cultivars send up repeat scapes into June, July and August.



Hardy daylilies will make hardy perennial borders for your landscape. These plants will survive almost any abuse and still bloom. You will also have very little trouble with disease or insect pests. They produce an abundant display of flowers and the coarse, grass-like foliage retains its attractive green color during the entire growing season. Photo by Steve Bender.

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 web site at www.milbergernursery.com.

WILDLIFE IN YOUR LANDSCAPE

Landscaping to Attract Migratory Birds

By Seth Patterson, SAWS Conservation Consultant

A few well-chosen plants can make the difference between feast and famine for our feathered friends. Go native with a touch of wildscape and bring on the birds. Spring is always a fabulous time to be in Texas. The weather is cooler, wild flowers are blooming, and our magnificent diversity of migratory birds are dropping in for a visit as they make their long, arduous journey north. We are fortunate to live smack dab in the middle of the American Central Flyway which, with its rich ecological diversity, acts as an important stopping off point for many bird species migrating north in the spring and back south in the fall.

But not everyone knows about or notices these spectacular seasonal visitors passing through. One big reason is our urban landscapes. While many of us set out seed feeders and bird baths, not all birds are seed eaters and not all are attracted to bird baths set out in the middle of an open lawn.

The incredible diversity of insect-eating birds in our area is truly astonishing. Yet many of these species will outright avoid the green grass yards of our city because the insect diversity is severely stunted in these sterile, monocultured landscapes. There simply isn't enough biological diversity to support their dietary needs.

So, what can we do? It's very simple — get rid of the grass and diversify. Native shrubs, bushes, trees and perennials provide home and habitat for a rich diversity of insects and other invertebrates which, in turn, provide a perfect food source for an amazing assortment of birds.

What's more, native wildscapes are drought tolerant and well adapted to our climate with little to no supplemental watering needed. Excessive watering will be a thing of the past as you enrich the ecological health and diversity of our city at the same time.

In transforming your yard, you will start to notice a greater abundance of wildlife appearing to take advantage of this new biodiversity. Come spring and fall, if you watch closely, you may just notice a striking and colorful mixed flock of warblers flitting through your new shrubs and trees, moving in mass as they seek out the rich food source your native landscape now offers.



It's April and time for the hummingbirds to arrive in San Antonio. If you have crossvine, columbine, salvias or larkspurs blooming they are often the plants on which you first see our ruby-throat (shown in photo) and black-chinned hummingbirds. Another good way to attract hummingbirds is to provide sugar water in a feeder especially made for the nectar-feeding dynamos.

Milberger's butterfly garden has been certified by the North American Butterfly Association. Stop by and see exactly how you can transform a portion of your landscape into a beautiful haven for butterflies and hummingbirds. You can also find our weekly sale items on our web site www.milbergernursery.com.

IN YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN

Pruning Your Flowers for Spring

Pruning flowers include deadheading, cutting back, pinching, disbudding and thinning. Basically, you'll just need to remove dead flowers, leaves and branches and reduce the size of your plants to make room for new growth.

If you have a garden full of gorgeous flowers and blooming plants, chances are you would do whatever it takes to keep them healthy and beautiful. While cutting back your blooms might seem a bit harsh, seasonal pruning is beneficial to many plants and flowers for a number of reasons. According to Texas A&M University, gardeners use pruning to train their plants, maintain the health of their bounty and improve the quality of spring flowers, fruit, shrubs and leaves. While you might think that plants survive

“Pruning back your flowers in the early part of spring can extend the blooming time of your flowers, regenerate your plants and encourage hardy new growth.”

~ Laura Bellmore, Master Gardener

just fine in the wild without such methods, natural pruning does actually take place. Whether it's an animal breaking off a branch, dead leaves and twigs blowing off in a storm or competition for a light source that results in part of a plant dying, most greenery experiences pruning in one form or another.

Besides encouraging new growth, you can use flower pruning to control the flower size and the number of flowers on your shrubs, trees and landscaping designs, as well as the size of your houseplants. Pruning is also an effective way to keep plants from invading the space of others, and it can even help control pests and diseases. April—when the new growth and blooms have yet to appear—is a good time to start pruning your flowers.

Some shrubs, like rosebushes, should be pruned right after the flowering season has ended. If you're unsure of when to prune a specific species, it's best to do your research online before you begin. It can be a time-consuming process, but it's worth it if you want to enjoy big, gorgeous flowers.



Deadheading, the removal of spent flowers from the plant, is a necessary chore in any flower garden. This task can be less tedious if regarded as an opportunity to spend time outdoors on a nice day and enjoy the weather. Deadheading prolongs the blooming period of annuals by preventing seed formation. It also encourages many perennials to re-bloom. Proper deadheading encourages plants to grow bushier and produce more flowers. Soft stemmed plants can be deadheaded by hand or flower shears. Thick stems and woody plants may require pruning shears.

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 summer 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.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Make Room for a Monterey Oak

Like live oaks, Monterey oaks are semi-evergreen, meaning that they retain their leaves through the winter, but drop them all in the spring. Depending on the climate in which it is planted Monterey is leafless for just two to eight weeks.

The leaves of this oak tree are four to five inches long with smooth or serrated edges of varying degrees.

In lieu of a showy flower, the tree's small, young leaves display an attractive red-peach color before turning bright green and then maturing into thick, deep green leaves with a leathery texture.

This tree has a more upright shape than live oak, and the leaves are much larger. It can get up about 40 feet tall and it gets there quickly. With a growth rate of as much as four feet per year it makes a great choice for a large open landscape space.

The bark of the Monterey oak is rough and multi-layered.



The Monterey Oak does well in hard dry ground so it's perfect for the hot Texas climate. If you have a clay or other soft soil, or a very wet area, you will want to choose a different tree. The Monterey Oak serves as an excellent shade tree due to its larger leaf size and good canopy potential with limited pruning needed. Also called Mexican White Oak, it is a semi-evergreen medium sized tree which can grow to around 40 feet. Being a semi-evergreen means it does not lose its leaves in the winter months, but does shed and regrow leaves in the spring.

Its trunk can grow to be two feet in diameter. The Monterey oak's average lifespan is about 100 years.

Monterrey oak is typically a very healthy tree resistant to pests and diseases that haunt other oaks. A well-adapted and hardy species, this tree is extremely drought-tolerant. The Monterey oak performs best in well drained, even rocky soil, so if you have clay soil, you may want to choose a different tree. Since it is sensitive to being overly wet, once established, you really shouldn't water it. Even in deep summer when temperatures regularly hit triple digits you won't need to give them any supplemental water once they are established.

Because these trees are fast-growing, you'll want to regularly prune the lower limbs to raise the canopy but otherwise these oaks don't need much pruning or thinning. They aren't plagued by deadwood the way live oak trees can be. Assuming they are planted in proper soil and receive occasional rain, these green giants require no additional care.

APRIL GARDENING TIPS

April Gardens Are Blooming

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

April is usually the best month of the year for snapdragons. Keep them well watered. Resist the urge to cutback the wildflowers, larkspurs, columbine, and other naturalized flowers too early. The seeds must mature if you want a regrowth next year. Roses should be blooming now. Old fashioned roses benefit by sprays and irrigation, but it is less necessary.

Plant: In the vegetable garden, plant tomatoes and peppers by transplants; and okra, southern peas, and melons by seed. The spinach, Brussel's sprouts, carrots, and beets are still producing. If you planted potatoes, you can begin harvesting them when the flowers appear. There is nothing better than a mess of new potatoes boiled and buttered. The onions will be ready to harvest when the leaves fall over. It will probably occur in May. April is a good month to plant esperanza, lantana, the blue salvias, and Pride of Barbados for hot weather blooms. They require full sun. Crepe myrtles are available in every form from miniatures to 40' trees. Plant caladium tubers after mid-month.

Lawncare: If you have been anxious for action on the lawn, this is your month. Our grasses respond to the warm weather, and begin serious growth in April. Fertilize with slow release lawn fertilizer late in the month. Keep the grass mowed to help the lawn grass compete with the winter weeds that want to form seed heads. It is not too late to aerate and top dress the lawn.

Prune: Prune pillar or climbing roses, wisteria, and Carolina jessamine as soon as they have finished flowering. Vigorous landscape shrubs will need frequent pruning.

Fertilize: April is the ideal time to fertilize lawn grasses after the lawn grass has been mowed twice. Be on the lookout for: Weeds, snails, fireants and aphids.

Odd Jobs: Thinning vegetables is one of the most important follow-up activities in gardening.

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

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Just write your email address on the line below and hand it to one of the friendly folks who work at the nursery. Or you can mail it to us at Milberger's Nursery, 3920 North Loop 1604, San Antonio, TX 78347. (You can stop your subscription at any time you choose.)

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We always respect your privacy. Your email address will never be shared with anyone who is not associated with Milberger's Nursery.

HOW TO

Plant Tomatoes and Peppers in Containers

Your tomatoes and peppers will thrive in containers when planted correctly. Keep the containers anywhere outdoors that receives sufficient sunlight so you can enjoy fresh garden vegetables even in a small space.

🌱 Fill container with potting soil and a balanced slow-release fertilizer. Use 5-gallon pots for standard tomato varieties.

🌱 Plant one pepper or tomato transplant plant per container. Plant peppers at the same depth they were growing at in their previous pot and plant tomatoes slightly deeper so the lowest leaves are just above the soil. Firm the soil around the base of each plant gently with your hands.

🌱 Water your potted tomatoes and peppers every day or two until the excess moisture begins dripping out of the bottom.

🌱 Move pots to areas that receive at least six hours of sunlight daily. Taller tomato varieties may require a cage to support the plants as they grow.



Almost any variety of tomato or pepper that is recommended for our growing area will grow well in a properly prepared container. Tomatoes are heavy feeders. In addition to the Osmocote, it is wise to provide an application of a soluble container fertilizer dissolved in water every two weeks.



Plant or Transplant? Because of the cost involved, only certain vegetable crops should be transplanted. Whether or not a crop should be transplanted or seeded directly into the garden depends on (1) cost of seed (2) plant population needed (3) earliness of crop maturity desired and (4) convenience. Vegetables that should always be transplanted in the spring include eggplant, onions, pepper, sweet potatoes and tomatoes. All other vegetables should be seeded directly into the garden area as they are not economic when transplanted. Timing and the variety selected will determine the success or failure of directly seeded crops, as well as of transplanted vegetables.