

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

JUNE 2022

PLANT QUESTIONS

Can we mow down our poppies, larkspur, and blue curl now? Your blue curl may not have matured its seed by now, but it starts dropping seed early in its bloom period so there should be plenty on the ground. The poppies and larkspur should have distributed their seed and be ready to mow down.

Is there a trick to get bougainvillea to bloom? Ours are in full sun and we fertilize and water them. One of the most important issues with bougainvillea is not to over-water. Let the soil dry out between watering. Some gardeners even let the plants wilt before they irrigate. It sounds like that excessive irrigation may be your problem.

We used a long cane pole to rip open the webworm nest in our pecan trees. Right away wasps began carrying off the caterpillars. Can we use pressure sprayer to disrupt the other nests? Yes, the cane pole trick works well. It makes you appreciate the wasps. We should be less eager to destroy wasp nests. The pressure washer sounds like a good tool as well.

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.



Esperanza (aka Texas Bells) has blooms shaped like miniature bells. The showiest selections are bright yellow but there is also an orange version. Esperanza likes full sun. There is an initial heavy flush of bloom at this time of year and steady production of blooms through October.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Heat Loving Summer Bloomers

By Dr. Calvin Finch

Summer is here, and throughout South Central Texas, gardeners and homeowners are experiencing low rainfall and high temperatures. While many plants and flowers seem to be fainting away, there are others that sing merrily along through the mid-summer heat. Our growing area offers many choices for tough-as-nails flowering plants that will provide the color you want, while tolerating the most intolerable summer heat. The solution to successful summer color lies in the varieties that you choose: the yellow blaze of esperanza; the delicate and varied colors of purslane and moss roses; the preserving red flourishes of firebush and firespike as well as the shade tolerant favorite penta will keep your South Texas landscape lively throughout the dry months.

(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 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., Jun 4 ~ 10am 'til 3pm

Milberger's Blood Drive. Give the gift of life. The South Texas Blood and Tissue Center will be here at the nursery to conduct our regularly scheduled January Blood Drive. Your donation could save the life of someone in need. Appointments are preferred but walk-ins are welcome. To make an appointment call 210-757-9595

Sat., Jun 4 ~ 10:30am 'til 11:30

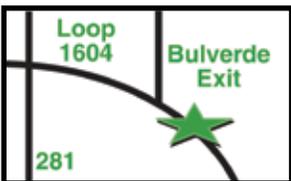
FREE SEMINAR

Color Plants, Crape Myrtles and More. Learn what you can do to keep your garden beds blooming throughout the heat of the summer, how to attract butterflies and humming birds and how to prepare your landscape for summer heat. Presented by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist. David will answer your specific questions about your gardening issues. Bring a notebook.



Look for **Texas SuperStars™** — plants that are highly recommended by Texas A&M AgriLife for South can add dramatic color to your late summer landscape.

Texas SuperStar® plants can help Texas gardeners stay alive as the blast furnace of summer heat revs up.



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
June Features**

Summer is here.

School is out. Days are longer. So it's time to pour yourself a **LONG GLASS OF ICED TEA** and enjoy your garden and landscape.



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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 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.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Heat Loving Summer Bloomers

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

If we select the right plants we can have blooms 12 months of the year in San Antonio. It will be seriously hot for the next four months so your plant selection has to include plants that thrive in the heat.

Purslane and moss roses are tiny when compared to the sunflowers but they are just as tolerant of the sun and heat. Use transplants or seed for low growing (four inches tall) flowers of pink, white, yellow, red, and orange. They look great in hanging baskets or other containers.

Another good container plant for the summer patio is Firebush. Firebush has small red tubular blooms that cover the plant. They are a favorite hummingbird nectar source. Firespike has a name

“Esperanza is a spectacular source of yellow blooms all summer in full sun and it has other characteristics that add to its appeal. Esperanza is an all-star xeriscape plant; it will bloom no matter how hot and dry the summer is.”

~ Dr. Calvin Finch

similar to firebush and is almost as popular with the hummingbirds, but it grows best in shade rather than full sun. The red blooms grow on tall spikes above attractive shiny green leaves. Use firespike in a container or in the garden. Summer in San Antonio is hot but it can be colorful if you utilize flowers that prosper in the heat.



Penta is a South Texas heat lover that will tolerate shade and is a favorite of hummingbirds. Growing in clusters of red, white, violet or pink penta flowers produce color all summer in the garden or in containers.



Firebush is a dependable and useful perennial for the southern half of Texas, where it freezes to the ground and resprouts each spring. It typically makes a four to five-foot mound of tubular, reddish orange flowers from early summer until late fall.

Visit our nursery to find the Texas SuperStars® plants that will thrive in your summer landscape. At the nursery you will also find expert advice on plants and trees and how to make them thrive in your landscape – just ask the friendly experts at Milberger’s Nursery.

TEXAS NATIVES

Native Shrubs for Local Landscapes

By Brad Wier, SAWS Conservation Consultant

It can be tricky to choose native substitutes for the cookie-cutter evergreens that populate so many suburban property lines. San Antonio is at the extreme endpoint of so many eco-regions — the Texas Hill Country, South Texas plains, Blackland Prairie and Post Oak Savanna. There's no shortage of native plant options and plenty of niches and micro-climates for them.

With this in mind, here are some suggestions for native screens and hedge-like plants that retain their leaves in winter. You will find these plants already easily available at Milberger's Nursery.



Agarita is signature Texas native (deer-resistant and drought tolerant) that has been replaced by Chinese holly and leather-leaf mahonia in the suburban landscape. Pair with yucca, evergreen sumac or mountain laurel to restore Hill Country flourish to your homestead.

Texas mountain laurel is a sentimental favorite, with mind-boggling purple flowers every year in time for Texas Independence Day. Mountain laurel is right at home in Hill Country rock. It's usually grown as a single tree. Left on its own to reseed, it forms thicket-like masses of lustrous dark green.

Yaupon holly's red Christmas berries are ubiquitous in irrigated residential and commercial landscapes across the North Side, since yaupon can be endlessly sheared, topiaried or trained up as an ornamental tree. In the wild, it's native from East Texas all the way to Bastrop, so it doesn't mind growing in clay, but it does prefer moisture more than rock.



Cenizo (Texas sage) is the ultimate South Texas shrub: it basks in summer sun with or without water, and tolerates hedge shears to boot. Among the most drought-tolerant of all big landscape shrubs, it makes a standard by which others can be measured. Humidity and rain will bring storms of pink flowers into cenizo's branches, earning it the nickname "barometer bush."

A good layer of mulch will help your garden beds thrive this summer. You can find excellent quality mulches at Milberger's Nursery for all of your landscape and flower beds. It won't float away and when you apply at least 2" of mulch to all your landscape and around trees, it will help protect your plant investment during our hot and dry South Texas summers.

IN YOUR ROSE GARDEN

Growing Roses in Containers

The scent of **Ashe juniper** (mountain cedar) at night is synonymous with the Texas Hill Country, but strikes horror into the hearts of allergy sufferers. Remember though, it's only the male plants that release pollen. Instead of cutting down all your cedars, keep an instant informal hedge by retaining a few females (just look for the blue berries.) Few landscape shrubs will ever be as well adapted as cedar to the harsh, hot, rocky conditions where it thrives. On its own in full sun, it grows as a large bush; pruning is seldom needed.

A fragrant Southern shrub from the Big Thicket, **wild cherry laurel** smells like cherry, grows vigorously and reseeds freely. In San Antonio it does well in understory around pecans, sycamores and other massive trees. At the San Antonio Botanical Garden it



Dwarf yaupon holly is another holly that deserves special mention, this one is a dwarf version that makes a low hedge of the "meatball" variety — similar to boxwood but with less pruning needed. Nursery specimens are invariably male (without the red berries). Like other native hollies, dwarf yaupons grow best in deeper soils.

“Native plants are local and occur naturally without human help in a given area. Many have thrived there for centuries. There are different types of native plants, including flowers, shrubs, trees, grasses and vines that you can use in your landscape.”

~ Stephanie Hendrickson,
TAMU AgriLife Extension Service

forms an irrigation-free screen comparable to xylosma or ligustrum.

It's almost an insult to reserve a last-place mention for **prickly pear**, but few plants are as easy to grow. It makes a great evergreen filler for holes in any shrub row and can be grown anywhere in Texas, as long as you've got gloves and boots.



A fast-growing coastal shrub, **wax myrtle** grows in clay loam or sandy soils (like those of southeastern Bexar County from Highlands all the way to Floresville.) It makes a great "instant hedge" and a native alternative to photinia and ligustrum.

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.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Summertime Care for Texas Trees

From droughts to flash floods, triple-digit temperatures, and relentless sun, summertime proves every Texan, whether human, animal, or vegetable, is tough. Older and more established trees are already adapted to the heat and humidity and will not need extensive summer tree care. However, if you don't take care of younger and newly planted trees they will not thrive. Excessive heat exposure can cause decay, stunted growth, and death of the tree.

Texas has no shortage of native trees — especially in South and Central Texas, the swampy southeast, and the tall piney woods. Take a look at what grows naturally next time you're out and about in a green space, and you can get some ideas for your own yard. Native plants like the Mexican plum tree, are best suited to thrive on your property without much maintenance. They're more heat-tolerant and drought tolerant than introduced species and can survive a string of days with triple-digit heat.

Newly planted trees or young trees don't have extensive root systems as mature trees. It is important you supply the tree with regular deep watering.



If you are looking for a tough, yet gorgeous, shrub or small tree that attracts butterflies, bees and hummingbirds then a **Texas Vitex** will suit your landscape. This versatile plant can be trained as a large shrub or small multi-trunked tree about 10 to 15 feet tall and wide. Shoal Creek vitex is more vigorous and produces larger flowers and deeper color than common vitex.

You need to thoroughly saturate the area directly around the tree trunk. A soaker or drip hose will help get the water directly to those roots.

For your mature trees the species, location, and soil characteristics will determine the amount and frequency of water. You need to pay close attention to the tree as you water. Reduce the amount of watering if you notice standing water or puddles. Trees in

shady spots don't need as much water as the ones in direct sunlight all day. Never water a tree daily. Your tree needs to spread its roots downwards for developing a strong and healthy root system. The tree would not need to grow its roots if it gets water at a shallow level. Such trees usually topple over during the many notorious Texas storms. It is best to consider a deep watering practice.

A good layer of mulch goes a long way in caring for your trees, no matter what season it is. In the summer, it helps maintain the soil temperature and keeps moisture from evaporating away from your tree's roots. It also adds organic material back into the soil, helping to sustain your tree.

JUNE GARDENING TIPS

Enjoying Your Summer Garden

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

June is the time to pour yourself a long glass of ice tea and enjoy your garden and landscape. For color, firebush is a favorite hummingbird plant, and lantanas are a great butterfly bush. Lantanas are deer resistant. Plant vincas in full sun. Shade plants include coleus, caladiums, firespike and begonias. Leave the bougainvilleas in full sun and fertilize them regularly with hibiscus food or soluble fertilizer. Moss rose and purslane are showy all month long in full sun. Remove spent flowers from perennials for more blooms. Don't let the weeds get ahead of you.

Shade Trees and Shrubs. Your established trees and bushes should do well without supplemental watering. Newly planted trees, however, need deep watering by hand when the soil dries to one inch. Remember to mulch four inches deep around new trees so that they don't have to compete with grass. There are a large number of salvias available. Most species are deer resistant in some neighborhoods and drought tolerant. Keep them compact by shearing. Crape myrtles reach full bloom in June. Deadhead spent flowers for more bloom.

Vegetables. Harvest your vegetables on a regular basis to keep quality high. You can still plant southern peas, eggplant, and okra for mid-summer vegetables.

Lawncare: Irrigate the lawn grass only if it hasn't rained in the last two weeks, and then no more than 3/4 inch of water on the St. Augustine, less for Zoysia, Bermuda, and Buffalo. Water only the most important part of your lawn and let the rest go dormant until we get rain. Keep the mower blade sharp.

On the Lookout: Aphids on tender, young foliage; lacebugs on pyracantha, lantana and sycamore; bagworms on junipers; stinkbugs on fruit and vegetable plants; webworms on pecan trees. Chinch bugs can appear in St. Augustine lawns anytime from now through late summer.

Odd Jobs: Use mulch generously around (but not piled on the trunks) trees, shrubs and landscape and garden plants. Apply sufficient moisture to soak the soil to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. Watering early in the day is preferred to early evening or mid-day.

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HOW TO

Grow Sunflowers on Your Patio

When planted in the ground, standard-sized sunflowers can reach heights of 15 feet, depending on the variety. Too large for your patio or balcony. However, dwarf varieties are perfect for container growing. Try “Big Smile,” “Sundance Kid” or “Elf” dwarf varieties that top out at only 12 to 24 inches.

- ☛ Fill a sturdy planting container with a good-quality potting mixture. Avoid garden soil, which becomes compacted and prevents free flow of air and water.
- ☛ Plant sunflower seeds in the container. A gallon container will hold three plants. If you’d rather not plant seeds, purchase small starter sunflower plants at a nursery or garden center.
- ☛ Water the seeds immediately after planting. Check the sunflowers daily, because soil in a container dries out quickly.
- ☛ Feed the sunflowers every week. A water-soluble fertilizer works best.
- ☛ Pinch the growing tips of the branching stems to promote a bushy, more compact plant. Don’t pinch the plant if you want a single, large bloom.



The **sunflower** is an impressive summer bloomer with big flowers consisting of golden yellow, creamy white or reddish petals that radiate from a dark brown center. By the end of the blooming season, the centers are plump with seeds that are harvested or left to provide food for songbirds.



Drift roses are a low growing ground cover, disease-resistant rose with abundant blooms in coral, apricot, peach, red and pink blooms. Look at them as a cross between a ground cover rose and a miniature rose bush. They are very compact to the ground and will only get about 2 feet tall and about 3 feet wide. They are perfect for sunny borders.