

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

AUGUST 2019

PLANT QUESTIONS

I'm confused about deadheading annuals and perennials. Are you supposed to take just the flower head or cut all the way down the stem? The purpose of deadheading is to prevent the setting of seed. With annuals in particular we pluck off (deadheading) the spent flower blossom, thereby making it bloom again. It doesn't matter how this is done as it is really a matter of aesthetics. So what ever looks good to you.

I keep my Everblooming Hibiscus in a pot on my screened porch. It produces a lots of buds, but many of them are falling off before they are fully developed. What am I doing wrong?

Hibiscus buds abort because of too much shade and, primarily, damage by very small insects called thrips. Give the plant as much light (at least 8 to 10 hours of direct sun daily) as possible, feed often with hibiscus food and spray with insecticide. That should stop the bud drop.

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.



Your **Bougainvillea** requires full sun to perform best. It blooms better when the container is allowed to dry to the point of wilt before more water is applied. When you do irrigate, provide enough water so that it soaks the soil and leaks out the drain holes. The plants also must be root bound to bloom best. Grow the plant in a 10- to 12-inch container to keep the roots snug in the pot.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Bougainvillea for Hot Summer Color

Bougainvillea is a drought-tolerant plant that rarely needs to be pruned or fertilized. For busy homeowners in South Texas, bougainvillea is a nearly perfect plant as it thrives on neglect and features brilliantly colored bracts in hues like magenta, purple and bright white. Whether planted in your garden bed or in containers, Bougainvillea in the garden will give you brilliant blooms when it is hot out and green foliage year-round. They are extremely drought-resistant and thrive in almost any well-draining soil. Bougainvillea is a tropical plant, meaning that it does not tolerate freezing temperatures. With proper care, they will last for many years.

(MORE BOUGAINVILLEA 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.

AUGUST GARDENING EVENTS

Thurs, Aug 1 – 8am 'til 12:30pm

Backyard Basics Expo. Expert speakers on a range of topics for your landscape. Vendors and more. San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N. New Braunfels. \$20. List of topics and more info at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/BexarCounty>

Sat., Aug 17 – 10am 'til 1:30pm

Milberger's Blood Drive. Take advantage of this opportunity to give the gift of life. South Texas Blood and Tissue Center will be conducting our next scheduled Blood Drive May 19. To support this drive Milberger's will offer a \$10 gift certificate to each person willing to donate. And two certificates for any dual donations. Everyone who does donate will be entered into a drawing for a \$200 certificate, two entries for dual donators. Winner will be drawn at the conclusion of the drive. 210-497-3760.

Sat., Aug 31 – 10 'til 11 FREE

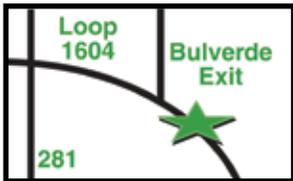
Fall Vegetable Planting for Kids. Your children will have fun learning the basics of fall vegetable gardening. This class will include "little" hands-on planting and seeding tips as well as craft activities.. Milberger's Kids Gardening Classes are free and we provide all the materials but be sure to call to reserve your spot because class size is limited. 210-497-3760.

Sat., Sept 21 –

starts at 10:30am FREE ADULT SEMINAR

Fall and Winter Vegetable Gardening. Preparing your fall vegetable garden presented by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist for Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service. David will answer your specific questions about your gardening issues. Bring a notebook. 210-497-3760.

**Find more Gardening Events, visit
www.MilbergerNursery.com**



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
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(210) 497-3760

Or on the World Wide Web at
www.milbergernursery.com
nursery@milbergersa.com

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 August Features



It isn't easy to become a **Texas Superstar™**

Every plant earning the **Texas Superstar** designation undergoes years of extensive field trials. They must prove to be **SUPERIOR PERFORMING PLANTS** under **Texas** growing conditions. You can find selected varieties **on sale** at **Milberger's**.

THIS MONTH look for fresh shipments of your favorite varieties including **GOLD STAR ESPERANZA, NEW GOLD LANTANA, FIREBUSH, BLUE PLUMBAGO, DWARF MEXICAN PETUNIA** and more.

Fresh **Hanging Baskets**

for sun and shade
are arriving almost every day.
THESE ARE THE PRETTIEST BASKETS OF THE SEASON

Fall Garden Mums and Asters

ARE ABOUT TO MAKE THEIR DEBUT.
GET YOUR GARDEN READY FOR FALL!

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

Bougainvillea

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

When planting bougainvillea place these woody vines in a site with full sun and well-draining soil. Although bougainvillea vines tolerate many types of soil, they prefer loamy soil that contains clay, sand and silt in equal parts. Amend it with organic matter to allow nutrients to easily reach the roots.

If your bougainvillea are in the ground you won't need to worry much about water once the plants mature. Irrigate only when the plants start to wilt and the soil is dry.

If your bougainvillea is in hanging pot or container you will have to be sure to water it thoroughly every time you water it. Fill the pot over and over again. Do not place a pot in a saucer as the roots will rot if left to stand in water. Frequency of watering will be



One of the best plants for the patio is **bougainvillea**. It is available in several versions of pink, red, variegated and lavender. If you transplant to a larger container, the leaves will grow but it will not bloom while the plant settles into its new pot.

“Bougainvillea are cyclical in their bloom, with a six-week period of color followed by three or four weeks without flowers. Bougainvillea requires full sun to perform best, and it appreciates being root-bound.”

~ Calvin Finch, retired horticulturist and director of the Texas A&M Water Conservation and Technology Center.

determined by the temperature, amount of wind it receives, and how root-bound your plant is. Do not allow the plant to wilt, as tiny roots are lost when they get that dry. When the soil is visually dry, or if you pick up the pot and it seems light, that is the day that you water.

The vines do need food. Fertilize your bougainvillea every month in spring and early summer.

Cold Weather Protection: In temperatures below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, the bougainvillea leaves and bracts may wilt. Bougainvillea planted in pots should be brought indoors when temperatures outside drop down to 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Bougainvillea planted outside must be protected in other ways.

Pruning Damaged Areas: You can prune late in fall or very early in spring. Pinching is a gentler form or pruning that works well for bougainvillea. Pinch off the soft, growing tips of young plant stems to encourage thicker, fuller growth. Bougainvillea plants that experience a hard freeze will die to the ground and return in the spring, though in less severe weather they may experience less damage. Damaged plants must be pruned in the spring. It is important to wait until then because pruning can induce the plant to sprout tender new growth vulnerable to cold weather. Remove damaged, dead canes that exhibit no evidence of new growth with sanitized pruning shears. Cut the canes down to the base of the bush.

FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING

If you want fall tomatoes, plant them now!

By Rebecca Perry

It's August and it's time for another round of tomatoes to be set into your vegetable garden or even into your large containers. When you get your tomato transplants you will need to get them into your garden immediately. You can plant them throughout the month but the sooner they go in the ground, the better your chances for having a good harvest before frost kills them.

When planting tomatoes in late summer, it helps to choose varieties that mature relatively quickly. You want the tomatoes to have time to mature before our days begin to shorten and you want them to produce well before the first frost, which, on average, comes in mid-November. 'Sungold' cherry tomatoes, for instance, will mature in about 57 days and the popular 'Celebrity' tomato matures in about 70 days; it might take 100 days for the tasty heirloom 'Brandywine' to mature. Do the math: a hundred days from now, it will be November and the first frost date will be creeping up on your garden. As Fall approaches the shortened hours of daylight interfere with growth and maturation and cold weather will likely be right around the corner.



If you want **fall tomatoes** it is time to get your transplants into your garden. Producing autumn tomatoes often requires that you also be ready to harvest full size fruit before it turns red. Tomatoes that have changed color from green to a light orange, or even a whitish green are physiologically ripe and will turn red in your kitchen or store room.

The other trick to planting tomatoes for fall production is helping them survive the summer heat. Water them consistently and mulch with a thick layer at least three inches deep for best results.

Choose healthy, dark-green transplants and put them in a sunny location with well-draining, reasonably rich soil. Bury the tomato transplant a little deeper than it was growing in its original

container, snipping off the pairs of leaves that would be below the soil level.

Some experienced South Texas gardeners say they have had good results claim good results when planting two transplants deeply in one hole. "My dad taught me that establishes a great root system" said Jeanette Howeth Crumpler, who has been growing tomatoes for about 70 years.

Add a cupful of soft rock phosphate or a handful of fertilizer denoted as tomato food to each planting hole. Water the planting area well before setting your transplant in, then water again after planting. Try to keep the soil consistently moist, but not consistently soggy, as long as temperatures are extremely high.

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 well stocked with hardy varieties of fall vegetables ready to put into your garden. To see what is on sale each week visit our web site at www.milbergernursery.com.

PERENNIALS

Perennials for South Texas Landscapes

Perennial plants may be defined as those which endure or persist from the same root part year to year. Once a prominent part of nearly every Texas landscape, perennials are often overlooked by today's gardeners and nurserymen. Although many species still can be found in private gardens, their availability is often restricted to sharing among friends and neighbors.

Most perennials are easily propagated by division, seed or cuttings. Division is particularly successful since it not only provides new plants but is often necessary for the continued vigor of plants. Perennials can be highly useful and attractive in the home landscape. They often persist for many years and usually require less maintenance than annuals. They can provide long seasons of color and cut flowers while enhancing overall landscape development. If a perennial border is more than you care to attempt as your initial experience with

“Perennials are plants for the landscape that live more than one year. Most of the perennials that we rate as desirable offer color for the landscape. The advantage of decorating your landscape with perennials is that they are relatively permanent and they are generally easier to care for and use less water than annuals.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons, Bexar County Horticulture Expert

perennials, try adding a few to existing plantings. Many perennials have attractive foliage and are an asset even when not in flower. Division is an important cultural requirement of many perennials. Without an occasional thinning, most of these plants will slowly lose their vigor. Most perennials will tolerate relatively poor growing conditions but respond very favorably to well-prepared planting areas containing high percentages of organic materials and moderately high fertility rates.



Fanick's phlox will grow to about three feet tall and three feet around. Topping off the shiny leafed foliage are clumps of pink blossoms with darker pink etchings. They are blooming now in gardens and at area nurseries and there will be a second bloom period in the autumn. The blooms are attractive to view, but the most distinctive thing about Fanick's phlox is the fragrance of the blooms.



Daylilies are reliable and relatively carefree perennials that bring beauty and color to the spring and summer garden. They qualify as xeriscape plants and make an excellent groundcover after their summer bloom show. The upright foliage is lush and attractive in its own right. Grow daylilies in well-drained soil such as a raised bed or garden enriched with compost.



Shrimp plant is available with a rust-colored or golden plume-shaped bloom that is showy all growing season long. They are disciplined growers to two feet tall in sun or partial shade. Hummingbirds, are very fond of the plant as a nectar source. Because of its disciplined growth habit, shrimp plant is effective when used as a border of massed plants or a row of single plants.

Ask the gardening experts at Milberger's Nursery for more suggestions on how to keep your garden blooming. 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

The Versatility of the Oleander

By Jackie Carroll

Oleander plants are among the most versatile of shrubs, with dozens of uses in southern and coastal landscapes. They tolerate a wide range of conditions, including difficult soil, salt spray, high pH, severe pruning, reflected heat from pavements and walls, and drought. But the one thing they can't withstand is winter temperatures below 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

Oleanders bloom from summer to fall, with fragrant flowers in shades of apricot, copper, pink, lilac, red, purple, salmon, yellow, and white, depending on variety. The plants are best adapted to the west coast, southern states, Florida, and Texas and will withstand dry conditions and wind,

as well as salty, marshy soils, making them popular in coastal regions. Oleanders grow 6 to 12 feet tall and wide, and some varieties can be trained to grow into small trees up to 20 feet tall. The flowers are very fragrant. All parts of plant are poisonous to humans and animals if ingested; the plant's sap can cause skin irritation in some individuals.

Even in the garden, oleander shrubs require minimal care. Although the shrubs are drought-tolerant, they look their best when they are watered during dry spells. However, take care not to over water them. Yellowing leaves indicate that the plant is getting too much water.

When planting an oleander select a site with full sun to light shade and well-drained soil. However, oleanders are adaptable and will withstand dry conditions as well as marshy soils. Plant in the spring or fall. Space plants 6 to 12 feet apart, depending on variety. Water plants during the summer if rainfall is less than 1 inch per week. Prune oleander after the main bloom period to encourage bushier growth and more flowers, and to reduce the size of the shrub.



Oleander care is easy and this makes the shrub popular with highway departments. You'll often see masses of oleander shrubs planted in highway beautification projects where they provide an outstanding display of long-lasting flowers with very little maintenance.

Milberger's has the largest selection of fresh, well-rooted trees and shrubs in the area. Our South Texas landscape and tree experts can give you advice on which A&M recommended trees would be most suitable for your landscape. Visit our web site at www.milbergernursery.com and click through to our on-line tree lot for section and planting guidelines.

AUGUST GARDENING TIPS

Time To Prepare for Your Fall Garden

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

What you do in your garden and landscape in August will make a big difference in how things come up in the fall. When you are out there working be sure to drink plenty of water, use sunscreen, and work in the gardens early in the morning or late in the evening. Take plenty of breaks and don't get overheated. Just relax and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

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. Start over in the vegetable garden. The new "Tomato 444" can be used but is not technically a heat-setting variety so some late cold protection may be required to produce vine-ripened fruit if unusual weather conditions occur. Other popular vegetable crops to plant in August for fall production are beans, sweet corn, cucumber, eggplant, lima beans, black-eye peas, peppers, and squash.

Lawncare: Remember when laying new sod, roll the turf to insure good soil-root contact and water thoroughly on a daily basis until the grass is established – in a week or 10 days.

Trees: Windmill palm, Mediterranean fan palm and Sabal palm are especially well-adapted to this area, and now is a good time to plant them. Palms require warm soil to establish their root systems.

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. 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.

Odd Jobs: Mulch throughout your landscape and gardens to reduce water needs and eliminate weeding. Water (soak) thoroughly rather than applying frequent light sprinklings.

For more detailed and complete Gardening Tips from Jerry Parsons go to www.MilbergerNursery.com and follow the newsletter link that reads "Monthly Gardening Tips."

SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE FREE

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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Planning for a Water Garden?



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

Firebush, also called firecracker plant, is one of the best plants for butterflies and hummingbirds. The gorgeous, flame-colored flowers of the large shrub tolerate intense heat and sun. With blooms starting in midsummer its intense color will continue through fall. Plants are typically perennial throughout South Texas. Plant your firebush in full sun and in well-drained soil. Irrigation demand is low once establishment is completed in the landscape. Firebush does well in containers as well.

