

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

OCTOBER 2019

PLANT QUESTIONS

Is it alright to use the Potassium Chloride water from my softwater system on my tomato plants? No. Potassium Chloride is a salt and salts are very damaging to plants of any kind.

Acorns just make a mess and get in my dog's paws. Is there any way to prevent acorn production in live oaks and Texas red oaks

I have not heard of any management practice or herbicide that prevents acorn production. Many of us value the acorns because they are an important food for birds and other wildlife. To see the doves, blue jays, and other birds feed on the acorns makes it worth the effort to remove a few acorn shells from the dog's paws..

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, primula and cyclamen.

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.



FALL IS FOR PLANTING

It's Tree-Planting Time!

There are many good reasons to plant trees in your yard. Trees benefit both the people who plant them and everyone around them. They improve air quality for the entire planet by producing oxygen and storing carbon. They moderate the effects of sun and wind, thereby making your home more comfortable and utility bills less costly. In addition to making your property more attractive, they make it more valuable when it comes time to sell. The list goes on and on and includes important things such as: a climbing opportunity, a pole for dancing around, and shelter for birds and other wildlife. Just being in an environment rich with trees helps us relax and reduces stress.

(TEXAS TREE PLANTING TIPS 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.

OCTOBER GARDENING EVENTS

Sat., Oct 12 – 10:30 'til Noon FREE ADULT SEMINAR
Fall is for Planting Trees and More! Fall is an ideal time to plant in South Central Texas because our cooler night temperatures and better rain chances promote faster root and plant growth. Join David Rodriguez, Horticulturist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at our Earth-Kind seminar and learn what you can do in your specific landscape this fall. David will show you how to correctly select, properly plant and efficiently maintain blooms for winter color.

Sat. & Sun., Oct 26 & 27 FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY
Free Halloween Weekend Events. Bring your kids for a fun-filled weekend of free Halloween events at Milberger's. Find your way through our FAMOUS HAY MAZE (open daily during regular nursery hours starting in late September). Snap memorable photos in our PUMPKIN PATCH. Employee Costume contest, Halloween Teat Bags, Moon Bounce and treats.
210-497-3760

Sat., Oct 26 – 10am 'til 1:30pm
Milberger's Blood Drive. South Texas Blood and Tissue Center will be conducting our fall Blood Drive. To support this drive Milberger's will offer a \$10 gift certificate to each person willing to donate, whether you qualify or not. And two certificates for any dual donations. Plus, everyone who does donate will be entered into a drawing for a \$200 certificate, two entries for dual donors. Winner will be drawn at the conclusion of the drive. 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
San Antonio, TX 78247
(210) 497-3760

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

Milberger's Nursery October Features

Autumn in South Texas

IT'S THE BEST SEASON
FOR PLANTING

Trees & Shrubs
Bedding Plants
Garden Vegetables



Scariier than Ever! Milberger's Boo-TIQUE & PUMPKIN PATCH



Saturday and Sunday
October 26 & 27 Milberger's
HALLOWEEN WEEKEND
EMPLOYEE COSTUME CONTEST

Bring your kids or all ages and let them run through our **Monster Maze** ride **The Terror Train** or take a memorable photo in our **pumpkin patch**.

A donation from food purchases go directly to the SAN ANTONIO FOOD BANK.

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.

FALL IS FOR PLANTING

Texas Tree Planting Tips

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

When the weather cools down, that's the signal to get trees into the ground so they can settle in and grow roots before the springtime warm up.

When considering trees for your landscape take a good look to see what space is available. Do you have a big yard, a small yard, over-hanging wires? Trees need space to grow, even smaller trees, so make sure you have the space before you start digging.



The pecan is the state tree of Texas. Large, shapely, graceful trees prized for both shade and delicious nuts. These stately beauties reach heights between 60 and 80 feet at maturity and have expansive branches. Texas pecan trees make excellent shade trees, and you'll love having a yearly harvest of pecans.

“Remember the old saw: *It's better to plant a \$4 tree in a \$40 hole than a \$40 tree in a \$4 hole. That means, dig it wide and loosen the soil you set aside.*”

Find out about the trees you are considering before you buy. How big will the tree get? Does it do well in your climate? How much water does it need? Consider native trees because they are better adapted to our climate. Consider trees that produce food – nuts and fruit – because they do double duty. Look around your neighborhood and see what kinds of trees are thriving.

Buy locally if at all possible. There are many exotic and glamorous sounding plants available but many of those will not do well in our climate. Talk with you Extension Agent or to the tree experts at Milberger's.

Milberger's knows what grows well in our South Texas climate, soils and conditions. We offer varieties that are reliable and healthy. Our years of experience make us familiar with such things as the cooling requirements of peach trees and the kinds of oaks less susceptible to wilt. A tree is a long-term investment.

To start your planting dig a wide hole, not a deep hole. One big mistake people often make is planting their tree too deep. Roots can turn into trunk bark but tree trunks will not turn into roots. A tree planted too deep is in danger of suffocation from lack of oxygen. Dig your hole three to five times wider than the container it is growing in. Move the soil to the side. Make sure the walls of the hole are rough, not smooth like a pot. You want edges the roots can grab on to. The hole should be wider at the top than at the bottom.

Milberger's has the largest selection of fresh, well-rooted trees 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 more practical information on planting trees.

WILDLIFE IN YOUR LANDSCAPE

Time to Feed the Birds

By Dr. Calvin Finch

It is the time of the year to consider feeding the birds again. They probably do not need our seed and suet to survive, but it is fun to be able to observe them at the feeders. To enhance the bird feeding experience, there are several things you should consider.



- ☞ Place the feeder where it is easy to observe. Outside windows with a view from the kitchen table or sink where you spend time are ideal. It is also great to be able to sit on the patio and watch the action.

- ☞ Place the feeders so they are easy to access for cleaning and filling. It becomes a real burden to service the feeder if you have to climb a ladder to fill it.

- ☞ Select feeders that maximize easy access for your favorite species and discourage less desirable birds such as grackles. Squirrels are a special problem because they chew up wood feeders. Use the steel feeders with weight-sensitive perches to reduce access by the heavy consumers such as white-winged doves.

- ☞ Feed suet to attract the insect eaters. Woodpeckers, kinglets, chickadees, wrens, and starlings are especially fond of suet blocks, but even some warblers will show up at the suet feeder.

- ☞ Many birds also like fruit. Apples, oranges, grapes, bananas, and other fruits that are past their prime will attract orioles, tanagers, cardinals, house finches, and woodpeckers.

Select the seed based on what birds you want to attract. This White-breasted nuthatches relish black-oil sunflower seeds, one of the most popular seeds. They also attract cardinals, inca doves, chickadees, titmice, American sparrows, and jays. Goldfinches eat sunflower seeds, but they especially like thistle seed which is not a favorite of other species. Safflower seed is a favorite cardinal food, but is passed up by squirrels.

- ☞ Ground feeding doves, towhees, thrashers, and sparrows like scratch grain, millet, and sunflower seeds, but so do rodents. Feed seed on low platforms and only leave enough seed to last until early afternoon to discourage night feeding rodents.

- ☞ Water can be very important to wintering birds in South Texas. Keep one or more bird baths clean and full. For more action, outfit a small pond or bird bath with a recycling pump. Migrating birds will spot the moving water and stop for a bath and/or drink. Warblers, buntings, and orioles are especially prone to visit the water features.

The Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, on the south side of San Antonio, invites to you bird watch with them this fall. Their mission is to connect people to nature through conservation and community education focused on birds and their habitats. You can find out about their many programs and visiting hours on their web site mitchelllake.audubon.org or call them at (210) 628-1639.

FALL COLOR

You really can't go wrong with Fall Aster

Asters are daisy-like perennials with starry-shaped flower heads. They bring delightful color to the garden in late summer and autumn when many of your other summer blooms may be fading. Bees, butterflies, and other insects love this plant for its fall nectar. Fall aster is a perennial and is hardy all the way to USDA zone 4, so it has no trouble at all with our winters here in Central Texas.

The plant can be used in many places, such as in borders, rock gardens, or wildflower gardens.

“Fall aster is a very hearty plant and it can be grown in just about any soil the great state of Texas has to offer. Plant this hearty and beautiful plant now and you will be rewarded with stunning borders for many Octobers to come.”

~ Jay White, *The Masters of Horticulture*

Growing asters is a simple garden chore. They may be started from seed in spring, but are most often purchased as a potted plant. Plant into a full sun to part sun location in loamy, well-draining soil. Keep new plantings moist and continue watering until blooms cease. It prefers well-drained soil and needs very little water once established, so be careful not to overwater it.



Fall Asters will give you a lovely natural looking mounding perennial that blooms in the fall with masses of daisy-like lavender flowers. They are wonderful when standing alone or when blended in with your wild flower bed or in combination with mums.

Appropriate care of aster includes watering at the base and not splashing the foliage. Getting water or fertilizer on the leaves encourages powdery mildew and other fungal diseases. Organic mulch can hold in moisture and supply nutrients as it breaks down. Apply within a few inches of aster stems, but not against them. Fertilize growing asters with a balanced plant food about once a month. Asters need little in the way of maintenance. Care of asters may include deadheading for more blooms and occasionally includes controlling powdery mildew.

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.

IN YOUR ROSE GARDEN

Enjoy the Fall and Prepare for the Winter

Sue Adee, Smith County Master Gardener, Texas Agrilife Extension Service

“The peak rose bloom season should begin in mid-October. So, take action now to insure that you don’t miss our second spring and the beauty of the roses that can adorn it.”

Your roses will treat you to a fresh new bloom season as the weather cools down. Though the temperature is usually lovely this is the time to think about preparing your roses for winter. These steps will help your plants survive the ever-changing South Texas weather.

Roses need one or two inches of water each week during the growing season. As cooler weather sets in, reduce the amount of water, but do not allow them to completely dry out.

Plants need water during dry spells, even during the winter months.

Continue spraying for black spot fungus. Watch for insects, and treat only if a problem develops. Use pesticides labeled for the pests you are targeting, and follow label directions. You should

have stopped fertilizing your roses in the later part of the summer. To slow down the plant growth and allow the plant to harden off, leave the rose hips on the bush after the last blooming cycle.

Add additional mulch to protect roots and conserve moisture. Roses grown in containers need to be put in the ground, container and all, in a protected area of the yard. To prevent wind damage on

large bushes, cut the canes back to three feet. By taking these simple steps, your roses should make it through the winter just fine.



October’s cooler temperatures stimulate rose bush growth and intensify the color of the rose blooms. Many people do not prepare their roses for this second spring, so they miss the most spectacular, longest-lasting bloom period.

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 pastels 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 pinks, 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.

Fertilize: 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 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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IT'S HERE!

**Milberger's Pumpkin Patch
And Monster MAZE**

Bring the kids. Bring your camera for some
Halloween Fun For The Entire Family



Cyclamen is a shade loving winter flowering plant that blooms continually until May. It is a wonderful plant in containers and extremely unique in the winter landscape. They look delicate, but cool-weather cyclamen are actually tough soldiers on the planting fields. They spend part of the year in dormancy, and when conditions are right, they stand at attention. You can find them at Milberger's Nursery in red, white and an assortment of rich pastels in standard and miniature sizes.