

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

APRIL 2021

PLANT QUESTIONS

My 15 ft. shade tree took some freeze damage in February. Can I top and shape it to give it a more rounded appearance? Try not to top the tree. Rather, cut it back to a major limb which is growing laterally or spreading.

What does it mean if our onions are producing seed heads? It means that the onions with seed heads will not grow bulbs any larger than they are now. Harvest and use the onions producing seed heads first. The bulbs on those plants will also not store very long. Use them up.

I spread Bermuda grass seed last winter and didn't have any luck with germination. When should I do it? Sometime around May 1 is usually a good time to seed your prepared site. It is best if you apply enough compost and soil, so you have six inches of soil for the grass.

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.

Zinnias stand out among the best summer blooming annuals for South Texas and they will bring you color well into the fall. They love heat with full sun to afternoon shade, but they do need good soil and extra water in hot, dry times. The low-growing, edging-perfect 'Profusion' series blooms for months and attracts butterflies. Or you may choose the taller zinnias varieties for your cutting bed at the back of a bed or border.



GARDENING EXPERTISE

Annual Color: Put It Right Where You Need It

Annuals provide instant color to your landscapes and offer more seasonal variety and colorful accents than most other plants. Adding annuals is easy and affordable. The key to success with annuals is to plant only the area that can be adequately cared for. Remember, color can have more impact on the landscape than any other design element. However, nothing has a more negative impact than a poorly maintained color area. There is a wide range of annuals to choose from, including both flowering plants and plants to give you lots of foliage. Keeping your landscape beds attractive year-round may require at least two or three successive plantings of annual plants through the year.

(MORE ANNUALS 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.

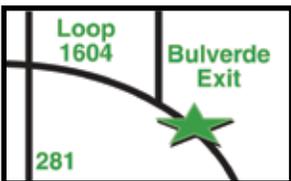
NEW TO GARDENING?

Planting Perennials

By Sasha Kodet, SAWS Conservation Planner

Follow these easy steps to a garden full of perfectly planted perennials that will continue to delight year after year.

- 🌱 **Measure the fit.** Check the plant tag to see how wide and tall your new plant will be at full size. Get out a measuring tape and make sure it fits in the area you plan to plant it.
- 🌱 **Prepare the area.** If you're planting more than one at a time, set them all out in the center points. If it's a new bed, thoroughly remove the grass. Clear any weeds from the area, making sure to remove all the roots.
- 🌱 **Dig the hole.** Briefly water the area to make the soil easier to remove and moist for the new plant. Make the hole twice as wide as the pot with sloping sides.
- 🌱 **Plant in garden bed.** Set the perennial in the ground and make sure it's level. The goal is to make sure it's planted at the same depth it was in the pot. Test with a stick.
- 🌱 **Fill the hole.** You may want to mix in a little organic material like compost or old leaves to enrich the soil as you fill in the hole. Use your hands — not your feet — to press the soil down.
- 🌱 **Water.** Give your new plant a good soaking and check to make sure the plant is still level.
- 🌱 **Mulch.** Top with a two-to-four-inch layer of mulch to keep the soil moist and prevent weeds. Keep mulch a few inches away from the stem to avoid issues with crown rot, pests and diseases.



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

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

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 REBATES 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.

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

Follow us



@milbergerssa

call 210-308-8867 or 1-866-308-8867

"LIKE" us



Facebook.com.milberger's nursery

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Summer Annuals

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

When planting your summer annuals, soil preparation is perhaps the most important aspect in maintaining seasonal color areas. This begins with the addition of large quantities of organic matter to obtain optimum aeration, drainage and water holding characteristics. Generally speaking, beds should consist of at least 50% organic matter for best results. In addition, bed areas should be raised to a minimum of four to six inches to avoid “drowning” during wet, rainy weather.

Handling Your Transplants. Just prior to planting, water the plants in their containers. Plants in peat pots should be soaked in a bucket for 10-15 minutes to ensure thorough wetting. Ideally, the



Low growing **Moss roses** and the similar plant, **purslane** are extremely easy plants to grow, almost to the point of becoming weedy. The biggest thing to consider when planting moss rose is location. Moss rose hates wet areas, and one of the few ways to kill this plant is by overwatering. Grow moss roses in beds, containers or hanging baskets in full sun. Moss roses have strong pastel colors. They are available in pink, white, yellow, red, and orange.

“Annuals must be planted in mass to make a strong statement in the landscape. In designing a flower bed remember to take advantage of color combinations. Contrasting colors, like whites and reds or yellows and purples, make a strong, bold statement.”

~ Dr Calvin Finch

garden bed should be moist, too. If the soil is dry, be certain to water the plants thoroughly, immediately after planting. When planting time has come, mark the beds based on specified planting distance.

Plants are generally placed on four-to-eight inch centers. Jumbo packs and 4-inch materials are most frequently planted on one foot centers. The spacing selected will be determined by species, plant size, time of year and cost.

Lift plants from cell packs or pots carefully, keeping the root ball intact. If the container is pliable, gently squeeze or push up the bottom of the container; otherwise turn it upside down to let the plant fall into your hand.

Occasionally you will find plants in a tray without individual cells. If this is the case, separate the plants gently by hand or with a knife. Do this just prior to planting so the roots don't dry out.

Watering. Deep, infrequent watering is generally better than frequent, light watering, since the former encourages deep root growth. Don't allow plants to remain for extended periods in puddles of standing water. This situation encourages root diseases and overwatering symptoms such as yellow leaves. Water your annuals about as often as your turf.

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 BEAUTY IN YOUR LANDSCAPE

Make a Butterfly Garden for Your Yard

From the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center

Establishing a butterfly garden is a rewarding approach to attract these exquisite insects while simultaneously aiding their conservation. You do this by simply growing the native plants that will nourish and protect butterflies

The Pollinator: A butterfly's contribution goes far beyond its good looks. They contribute to regional ecosystems by pollinating the flowering plants that desperately need this service to survive. Pollination – to transfer pollen from an anther to the stigma of a flower – is an essential part of a balanced environment and needed equally by both plants and butterflies.

Unfortunately, butterflies face tremendous barriers to their survival, posing threats to entire ecological

communities. One of the most imminent threats to pollinators is the systematic destruction of their habitats when wilderness becomes developed for human existence.

Creating a Butterfly Abode: Because butterflies and plants depend on each other for survival, using a wide variety of native plants is imperative. The nectar plants that adult butterflies use for a food source are entirely different than the host plants that butterfly larva grow on.

Color Aides: Among other things, butterflies are guided to the nectar source by colors and patterns. Thus, choose flowers with bright colors like pink, orange, yellow and white.

Flower Form: Butterflies are not apt hovercrafts and need an easy place to land without much delay. Flowers originating from a single apex or with large petals enable quick and easy landing and immediate access to nectar. Plants such as zinnias or daisies have landing platforms – the rays – so that butterflies can sip easily from the multitude of disk flowers.

Scent: An aromatic garden will serve as the butterfly's main attraction – select pungent flowers that are ever-enticing to the butterfly's olfactory element. Plants that have strong attraction to butterflies include: butterfly milkweed, Texas lantana, woolly butterfly bush, blackeyed Susan and purple coneflower.

Sizing Things Up: You can start small with your butterfly garden. A window box is enough to start; or you may opt to transform that wild patch out back into a monarchial playground.



Butterflies are flying wonders. Observing them dancing with the plant-partners you've provided as hosts will bring endless satisfaction, as will the contribution you are making to your region's ecosystem. The benefits of your garden will extend to other wildlife, broadening the scope of preservation and aid to nature.

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 find more on butterfly gardens on our web site milbergernursery.com.

LAWNCARE

The Groundcover Alternative

By Diana C. Kirby

Whether you want to plant a flower bed border or replace dying grass under your shady trees, groundcovers are your best solution.

Spreading plants that fully cover soil surface, groundcovers serve a variety of functions in the garden. From filling bare areas to offering options for grass removal or softening hardscapes, they offer a water-wise and drought-tolerant option. They also help control weed growth and prevent erosion.

Growing up to four inches tall, you can choose from evergreen or deciduous varieties, both flowering and nonflowering, in a wide variety of shapes and colors. Dense, lower ground covers are well-suited to areas between flagstones or pavers where they can handle foot and paw traffic and soften hardscape.



The most popular groundcover in the San Antonio area is **Asiatic jasmine**. It has shiny evergreen foliage and can be grown at any level between four inches and 18 inches tall. The plant does well in sun or shade, but it is most often used to replace St Augustine grass on sites where it has become too shady for the grass to prosper.

“Groundcovers require less care such as mowing, they are less likely to be bothered by insects and diseases and you can save lots of water if you want a green lawn area all summer.”

~ Dr Calvin Finch

You may consider using ground cover to act as a transitional design element – an understory to taller perennials, shrubs and trees, providing contrast and horizontal interest. Groundcovers often serve as the first layer in a planting bed, followed by additional layers of plants in increasing heights.

Before you begin planting, weed and turn the soil, adding more if necessary. You'll want to keep a close eye on the plants if you begin your project at this time, or you can wait until the weather cools in the fall, when planting creates far less stress on plants.

When planting your groundcover be sure you understand terms on plant tags before choosing a ground cover. Different groundcovers require different amounts of daylight.

Determine which of these options is best suited to cover your area. Some ground covers spread quickly and fill large areas easily. Others take their time and seem better suited to small spaces.

Looking for turf grass? 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. Visit www.milbergernursery.com.

TREES AND SHRUBS

The Tough Native Beauty of Texas Mountain Laurels

Texas Mountain Laurel trees are a favorite flowering tree that is a native plant of Texas and the Southwest, and it's one that is sure to add curb appeal to your landscape. This small tree turns heads, especially when the fragrant, early spring bloom of attractive flowers make an appearance, attracting hummingbirds and helping to make your yard the most attractive one on the block. Their smaller size makes them perfect for tight spaces, so they are lovely when planted in courtyards, in a front entryway, or in a sunny patio area.

Like many woody plants native to rocky soils, it is slow growing. Texas Mountain Laurel is an evergreen, usually multi-trunked shrub or small tree ranging from just a few feet tall to more than 30 feet in height—though its usual height at maturity is ten

to fifteen feet. The dense, dark green, and glossy compound leaves are composed of shiny, leathery leaflets that are rounded on the ends. You will find the bluish lavender flowers shaped like wisteria blossoms with an intense fragrance that has been compared, not unkindly, to grape flavored Kool-Aid. These flowers eventually give way to thick seed pods containing bright orange seeds.

There's no doubt that the Texas Mountain Laurel tree is an ornamental beauty and it gets bonus points because it's an evergreen with a sturdy structure that can keep its leaves all year long. They like to grow in a location that gets plenty of full sun exposure, and they're water-wise too, so once established they will have little to moderate watering needs.



The **Texas Mountain Laurel** is a species of flowering shrub or small tree in the pea family, Fabaceae, that is native to the southwestern United States and Mexico. Common names include Texas mountain laurel, Texas mesalbean, frijolito, and frijolillo.

THIS IS THE LAST MONTH to get paid to plant trees in your yard. CPS' Green Tree Rebate Program will reimburse customers \$50 per tree for approved trees planted between now and Apr 30, 2021. Visit our web site www.MilbergerNursery.com for complete information, reimbursement application forms, and instructions.

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, Brussels 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.

For more detailed and complete Gardening Tips from Jerry Parsons go to PlantAnswers.com where you can find answers to all of your questions about gardening, lawncare, and tree care in South Central Texas.

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

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.

TO RECEIVE this free newsletter, complete this form and return it to **Milberger's Nursery** or by calling (210) 497-3760. You can sign up on-line at www.milbergernursery.com.

We respect your privacy. Your name will not be shared with anyone not associated with Milberger Nursery.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL _____

Milberger's Landscape Nursery
3920 N Loop 1604 E
San Antonio, TX 78247

PRSRT STD
U. S. Postage
PAID
Kerrville, TX
Permit 89



Looking for Sod?

We carry fourteen varieties of sod, including the newest releases of turf grass that have been tested and judged reliable in our area.



April is the time you enjoy your roses. It is too close to summer to put in new roses and your pruning should have been done months ago. You can deadhead spent blooms to encourage new blooms. Always cut blooms above a five-leaflet outward growing leaf. For best blooms your roses should be on a regular feeding schedule and do not let your roses dry out. Watch for insect pests and if powdery mildew is present, rinse foliage with water wand early in day.