

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

FEBRUARY 2022

PLANT QUESTIONS

The freeze damage surprised us. Will the lantanas come back? How about crape myrtles, Pride of Barbados, a desert rose, and a knockout rose?

Yes, all the plants listed are deciduous or root hardy. They will resprout in early spring. At some point you can cut back the killed foliage of the Pride of Barbados and lantana. New leaves will appear on the stems of the roses and crape myrtles.

Does it make sense to plant snapdragons or stocks this late in the winter? Yes! The winter annuals including snapdragons, dianthus, stocks, sweet peas, and calendula will bloom into May in most years.

We love our new pansy blooms in our new flower bed. Will Liquid Fence® help keep them from being eaten?

Deer love pansies. It's one of their favorite foods. The Liquid Fence® may protect the plants for a short time, but I wouldn't count on it. In some situations, calendulas and snapdragons seem to be left alone, especially if you spray Liquid Fence® once per week for six weeks.

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.



The ideal South Texas vegetable garden area gets full or nearly full sunlight and has deep, well-drained, fertile soil. The garden should be near a water outlet but not close to competing shrubs or trees. However, if you modify certain cultural practices and select the right crops, almost any site can become a highly productive garden.

SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING

Time To Start Your Best Vegetable Garden

By D. Hairlloyde, The Accidental Gardener

We vegetable gardeners are eternal optimists by nature. Every spring we go out to turn our soil and start our new garden certain that this year will produce our best garden ever. Our gardens are continually changing and there are no guarantees. What worked one year may not work so well the next. One of the most affirming and enjoyable things about gardening is the fact that we keep getting another chance to get it right. If a planting fails just pull it up and replant. Each season is a new chance to learn, to experiment and to gain expertise. February is a good month to begin vegetable gardening in the San Antonio area. We have an opportunity to make a planting of cool weather vegetables that can be harvested through June.

(MORE VEGETABLE GARDENING 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., Jan 29~ 10am 'til 11:30am

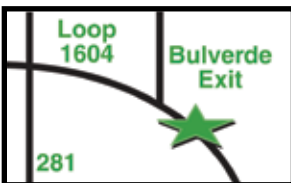
Planting Fruit Trees. FREE Adult Seminar.
 Learn all you need to know about backyard fruit production. Bexar County Extension Agent, David Rodriguez, will share his experience and expertise in growing fruit trees in your yard or on your patio. In addition to citrus trees, this seminar will address a variety of fruit trees as well as plant selection, planting and maintenance, and insect and disease control. The seminar will be followed by a question and answer session.

Sat., Jan 29 ~ 10am 'til 3 pm

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 encouraged but walk-ins are welcome. Go to <https://donor.southtexasblood.org/donor/schedules/geo> to schedule your appointment or call 210-757-9505.

Sat., Feb 19 ~ 10am 'til 11:30am

Spring Clean-Up "To Do's" for Your Lawn and Landscape. FREE Adult Seminar. Get your landscape ready for the spring with this seminar with Bexar County Extension Agent, David Rodriguez. What you do now in your landscape and garden will benefit you greatly though out the spring and summer.



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
 February Features**

**SUPER BOWL
 WEEKEND**

Before you settle down to the **BIG GAME** stop by Milberger's and score



**10% OFF
 EVERYTHING**

(Except Turfgrass and labor.)



Selected each year at the **San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo**

THE **2022 RODEO TOMATO**
 Will be announced and **ON SALE** at **Milberger's** on **SAT., FEB 5.**

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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SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING

Your Best Vegetable Garden Ever

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Whether you have an established vegetable garden or are starting a new one, here are some vegetables to consider growing this year. Traditionally we plant broccoli, cabbage, spinach, and chard transplants now. Plant carrot, beet, radish, English pea, rutabaga, lettuce, and turnip seeds. Green bean seeds can be planted about March 15. Tomato transplants can be planted in early March. Go ahead and try something new. Growing your own vegetables can be quite rewarding.

Don't limit yourself to just the yellow squashes, There are many delightful flavors and shapes to explore. Peruse the pages of several seed catalogs and pick out some interesting squash varieties to try this year. Squash plants need fertilizer and water at appropriate intervals. If your squash suddenly wilts and dies, it probably has been invaded by the dreaded squash borer.

“One of the most affirming and enjoyable things about gardening is the fact that you always get another chance to get it right. If a planting fails just pull it up and replant. There are few things in life where you can fail so miserably and just start over with a clean slate.”

If you are planting potatoes be sure to have them planted no later than Valentine's Day. Harvest around the time the kids get out of school for the summer.

Although asparagus is traditionally planted from late January to early February, you must be patient, for you will not be picking any for two years. The asparagus roots need time to get established.

Cantaloupes and watermelons make a great addition to the garden, as they provide vitamin C in larger amounts than most vegetables.



Cucumbers and **beets** make excellent companion plants. Beets are cold tolerant, so they can be planted in early spring, several weeks before the last frost date. Plant your cucumbers two weeks after the last frost in order to establish the vines that will give you fresh cucumbers all summer long.

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 good advice and creative suggestions for your specific landscape and gardening needs. To see what is on sale each week visit our website at MilbergerNursery.com.

PERENNIAL COLOR

One of My Favorite Perennials

By Dr. Calvin Finch



'Texas Gold' columbine is a Texas native from the Big Bend region and a Texas Superstar™ plant. It has large yellow blooms and great heat tolerance. The neat rounded growth habit works well in formal landscapes. In mass planting it will provide a spectacular spring show.

Here you have a gorgeous spring blooming perennial that you should think about putting in your garden to give it some brilliant lasting color. 'Texas Gold' columbines are perennials with yellow shooting star blooms that rise above the lush soft green foliage. They bloom in March and are a favorite of the migrating hummingbirds. They are one of my favorite plants because of several other desirable characteristics. 'Texas Gold' columbines are shade tolerant. They grow best in mottled shade under deciduous trees, at the edge of landscapes or under high live oak crowns. In addition to the great blooms, "Texas Gold" columbines are a good groundcover for shady areas. The foliage resembles maidenhair fern. It is attractive in the spring, autumn, and winter.

A bed of 'Texas Gold' columbines will spread by seed. Plant a few transplants in good habitat and watch it spread over the entire bed. At my former home in the Village of Westcreek the columbines prospered under

the closely growing but thin crowned live oaks. Every winter the beds spread into the zoysia grass lawn, but only lasted until May when the hot sun quickly destroyed those plants that germinated outside the shade of the live oaks.

The bright, butter-yellow flowers with large, graceful cups and long, dramatic spurs are held well above attractive, blue-green leaves. The blooming season is long for a perennial, beginning in mid-March and flowering through early May. This makes the plant a nice compliment for azaleas, and the yellow flowers can be matched by yellow pansies or tulips in sunnier areas of the yard.

Unlike some perennials which at times look rather weedy, the scalloped, bluish gray-green leaves and compact, rounded growth habit of 'Texas Gold' make it attractive year-round.

IN YOUR ROSE GARDEN

Lots of Roses to Choose From

Deciding to plant roses in your garden can be exciting and at the same time intimidating. Buying rose plants does not need to be intimidating if you know what to look for. Growing roses in Texas requires that you pay attention to the watering and shading needs of the plants. Texas summers are scorcher and the ever-present sun can increase the water requirements of these moisture-hungry plants. Frosty Texas winters are another problem for roses, and plants need adequate protection to withstand the cold temperatures common during December and January of each year. Choose from hardy, disease-resistant varieties for the best types to grow in Texas conditions.

“If you’re new to gardening and want to try your hand at growing roses, landscape roses may be your best option. These roses are easy to care for and disease-resistant. They’ll look stunning just about anywhere.”

Decide on color. How will the color of your roses affect your garden? Look at different catalogs, as well as your neighbors’ gardens, to get an idea of the colors you like best.

Consider size. In addition to color, the size of the roses you choose is an important consideration.

Think about climate. In order for your roses to grow healthy and mature, you will need to select a variety that will thrive in our South Texas climate.

Consider maintenance. There are several types of roses which are very high-maintenance. Although they will look beautiful in your garden, they will require a lot of your time. The classification known as “Modern Roses” are very beautiful, long blooming, and highly fragrant, however they are very high maintenance and are prone to disease.

Choosing a Rose Bush. Thank goodness there are thousands of rose varieties; more every year. Rose gardeners have all sorts of hopes for their rose gardens. Whether you want a prize-winning hybrid tea rose, old fashioned cabbage roses, sprawling ramblers and climbers or just a whiff of the way you remember roses smelling, there’s a rose for you.



If you’re growing modern, ever-blooming roses like hybrid teas (including Knockouts and Belinda’s Dream), February is the time for renewal pruning. Since these cultivars bloom on new — not old — wood, last year’s growth needs to be removed to provide a fresh canvas. A few weeks after their February pruning, rose bushes will start putting out the new growth that shows us spring is here and beautiful roses will soon follow. However, if you’re growing **old-fashioned garden** or **antique roses** and climbing roses, you have a little more flexibility. Many old-fashioned roses and climbers bloom only once a year, flowering on last year’s wood.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Pruning Your Shrubs

By Julie Day

Well pruned shrubs and trees are a hallmark of a carefully tended yard or garden. Foundation plantings are lush and full, and blooming shrubs display their blossoms on shapely branches that accentuate each plant's unique style. Pruning is easy—a basic understanding of plant growth, and a few simple techniques, and you'll be ready to go. Most pruning jobs will involve a combination of these pruning techniques.

Pinching back: Simply use your fingers to pinch off the terminal bud of the branch. This will encourage lateral branches to form.

Heading back: This method removes the terminal bud, resulting in more branches. The bud nearest the cut determines the direction the branch grows, with the outward facing bud usually resulting in the best shape.

Thinning: Thinning involves removing branches while leaving the terminal bud. Make the cut just outside the branch collar, which is the bulge where the branch meets the stem, but don't leave a stub.

Renewal or rejuvenation pruning:

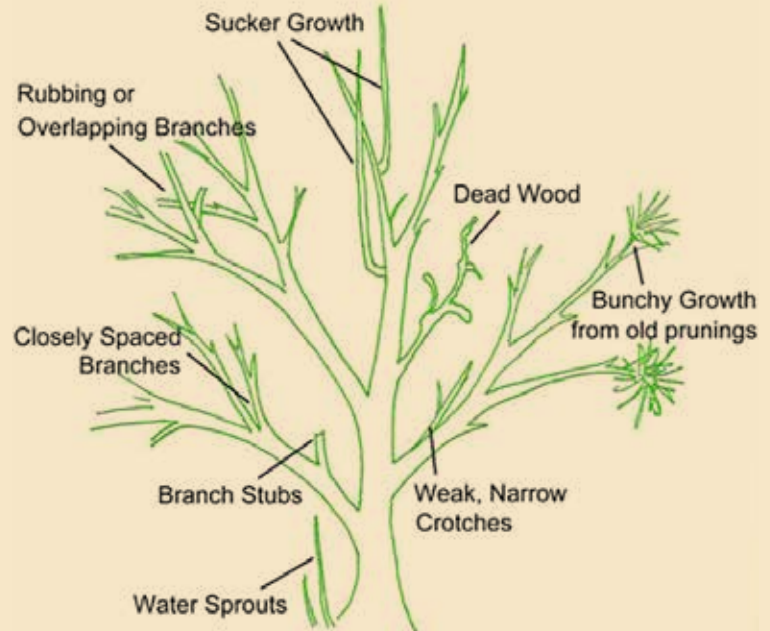
Renewal pruning involves removing the oldest stems and branches at the base, then thinning or heading back the younger stems to promote regrowth.

Shearing: Shearing involves trimming off the tips of branches and is best used only for formal hedges.

“For most shrubs, pruning is a forgiving task – once you learn how each plant grows, you can correct previous pruning mistakes as you go. With a little practice, pruning becomes intuitive and is a quick way to revitalize your yard or garden.”

Choosing the Branches to Prune

Start by removing any of the branches that don't belong.



Next, look at your shrub with a critical eye while considering the following questions:

- What is this shrub's natural size and shape (rounded, arching, tree-like)?
- What is the design purpose of this shrub (hedge, foundation planting, specimen plant)?
- Does the plant growth need to be influenced to achieve that purpose?
- Is the shrub healthy and growing evenly?

A well-pruned shrub looks natural, and in most cases doesn't look like it has been pruned at all.

FEBRUARY GARDENING TIPS

Preparing and Planning for Spring

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

Plant: Select ornamentals and trees for adaptability, permanence and durability, not just for fast growth. February is the month to begin spring gardens with crops such as asparagus, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower (transplants only), Swiss chard, collards, kohlrabi, lettuce (leafy), mustard, onion plants, Irish potatoes, radish, spinach and turnip. A good method of getting the jump on the normal spring season is to grow portable transplants of recommended tomato and pepper varieties. Try the virus-resistant tomato variety named 'Tomato 444'. Use disease-free transplants of recommended short-day onion varieties such as 1015Y, Granex (Vidalia) and Grano.

Look for this year's Rodeo Tomato that will be announced at the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo this month.

Prune: Finish up the pruning that you should have started last month. Do any major fruit or ornamental tree and shrub pruning. Spring pruning of roses in South Central Texas is normally done between the third week of February and the first week of March.

Lawncare: "Scalp" the lawn late in the month to remove winter-killed stubble. Set the mower down one or two notches. Remove browned tissues from Asian jasmine, liriope and mondo grass. Reshape lanky nandinas by pruning the tallest one-third of canes back to within 2 inches of the ground. New shoots will fill in from beneath.

Fertilize: February is the ideal time to fertilize healthy trees. Fertilize winter bedding plants. Wait at least another month to fertilize the lawn.

On the Lookout: Wait for a time period which will ensure temperatures above freezing for at least 48 hours to apply a dormant oil spray to euonymus, hollies, oaks, pines, pecans, and fruit trees which are prone to scale.

Odd Jobs: If you want to treat for ball moss, February is the ideal month. Ball moss does not kill trees. Divide summer and fall-blooming perennials, including cannas, mallows, fall asters, mums, coneflowers, lythrum and perennial salvias before growth begins.



In South Texas, February is a good month to transplant your annuals: pansies, violas, calendula (wildlife plant), snapdragon, stock, larkspur, ornamental kale & cabbage, bluebonnet transplants, poppies. Transplants are preferred over seeds at this point.

Get paid to plant trees in your yard. CPS' Green Tree Rebate Program will reimburse customers \$50 per tree for approved trees planted between Oct 1, 2021 and Apr 30, 2022. Visit our web site MilbergerNursery.com for complete information, reimbursement application forms, and instructions.

HOW TO

Grow Peace Lilies Inside

These eye-catching plants are super-easy to grow, and thrive in the low light inside your house but there's a trick to getting those gorgeous blooms. Peace lilies are perfectly happy growing in containers, but they don't like sitting in pots much larger than their root balls.

- 🌱 Place plants in bright, indirect light.
- 🌱 Keep the soil consistently moist but not soggy.
- 🌱 A month after planting, you can feed plants with Miracle-Gro® Indoor Plant Food.
- 🌱 Repot when the plant's roots have completely outgrown their container.

Peace lilies will practically grow in the closet, but that doesn't mean that's where you should put them. When grown in low light, these plants will rarely bloom. If you want flowers, though, place it where it will receive bright, indirect light. Just make sure there aren't any drafts—since they're tropical, peace lilies are sensitive to cold temperatures.



The name "**peace lily**" came about because the white flowers look like white flags of peace—though they aren't actually lilies. Instead, they're tropical perennials, meaning when you practice good peace lily care, these plants can live for years and flower over and over again.



Prized for its spectacular display of fragrant, bright yellow flowers, **Carolina Jasmine** is a well-mannered vine that climbs beautifully on a trellis, arbor or over fences and walls without smothering surrounding trees and shrubs. If you allow it to sprawl unsupported it makes an excellent mounding ground cover in South Texas landscapes. The best way to maintain this spreading vine as a groundcover is with a yearly cutting in late spring. Evergreen to semi-evergreen Carolina jessamine tolerates either full sun or partial shade although you will find that flowering is more prolific and foliage growth is denser in full sun.