

# MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

OCTOBER 2017

## PLANT QUESTIONS

**My back yard is very shady. Two plantings of St Augustine have declined. Would zoysia work better?**

Zoysia has some shade tolerance but not as much as St Augustine grass. If one of the St Augustine varieties failed because of too much shade, all the rest will too.

**Our tomatoes just started setting fruit last week. Will they enlarge and ripen before the cold weather arrives?**

You need a little less than 60 days for the tomatoes ripen on the vine. They should make it if you are ready to cover them if there is an early freeze. You can also harvest the fruit as it shows any color and let it ripen in the house.

**What are some flowering perennials that make a show in the autumn?**

Right now, cape honeysuckle, sky flower, flame vine, firebush, firespike, lavender lantana and Mexican bush sage are making an excellent show. Later this autumn, fall aster and Mexican mint marigold will be covered with blooms and become the focal point of the landscapes in San Antonio.

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.



**Japanese Holly Fern** is evergreen that grows in light shade to a height of 1-2 feet. Holly fern, named for its serrated, sharp-tipped, holly-like leaves, is one of the few plants that will grow happily in the dark corners of your garden. When planted in a flower bed, the lush, deep green foliage provides beautiful contrast as a background for colorful annuals and perennials.

## FALL GARDENING EXPERTISE

# Plants Made for the Shade

By Erin Conant, SAWS Conservation Consultant

Gardening, like life, sometimes presents us with challenges. Sunless voids in our landscape – aka shady spots – are prime examples. Many of Texas' most dramatic blooming plants require exposure to full sun and shaded areas prevent many popular plants from thriving. ranging from vegetables and annuals to roses and lots of well-loved Texas perennials. Thankfully, there are several shade-loving, leafy selections that are sure to win you over.

(MORE SHADE PLANTS 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](http://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 21 – 9am 'til noon

**Fall Floral Design Workshop** with Henry DeLeon, San Antonio Floral Design. Create fun designs to get you in the spooky spirit of the holidays. Tuition \$40. The San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N. New Braunfels. 210.824.9981

## Sat & Sun, Oct 28 & 29

**Milberger's Halloween Weekend Spook-Tacular.** Bring your kids of all ages for a fun-filled weekend of free Halloween events. Our Monster Maze and Pumpkin Patch are open daily. Many unique home and garden decorating ideas at our Halloween Boo-Tique. 210-497-3760

## Sat., Oct 28 –10am 'til 1:30pm

**Donating for life at 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 this Saturday. To support this drive, Milberger's will offer a \$10 gift certificate to each person willing to donate.

## Sat., Oct 28 - 10 'til 11am

**Pumpkin Painting for Kids** is one of our favorite Kids Classes. We furnish the pumpkins and the paints. You bring the kids. No sharp objects. Class is designed for children five to ten years of age. Classes are free but call to reserve a spot because class size is limited: 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 Valero 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 28 & 29** 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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## FALL GARDENING EXPERTISE

### Plants Made for the Shade

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

“For hedges in the shade, consider dwarf Burford or standard Burford holly. They make dense dark green evergreen hedges or attractive specimen plants. The red berries are spectacular if the plants are in the sun but are less showy in the shade. The Burford hollies are favorite bird nesting sites.”

~ Calvin Finch



The “Gulfstream” nandina, with small leaves on horizontal branches, is especially distinctive in shady areas. There are many versions of nandina to use in a shady landscape. The standard version reaches 7 feet tall and has attractive berries and colorful winter foliage depending on how much sun it receives.

First, determine your shade conditions. From partial to dappled to deep shade, each situation and the hours of sunlight a site gets each day should guide your plant choices.

Deep shade sites, usually under a heavy tree canopy, typically get less than two hours of sunlight. Holly fern, Turk’s cap, firespike and columbine all flourish in these conditions.

A moderately thick tree canopy and 2-6 hours of filtered sunlight create dappled shade. Consider American beautyberry, “Katy” ruellia and pentas.

Partial shade conditions, which usually get at least six hours of sun a day, are ideal for several plants. Consult the extensive SAWS plant list for a variety of options.

Most plants grown in shady areas require fewer applications of water – a benefit that yields lower water bills and less outdoor labor. And don’t rule out non-plant solutions for a dimly lit site; a permeable hardscape of crushed granite, stone or mulch can be beautiful and practical.

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Visit our nursery to find the fall blooming plants that will thrive in your landscape. Take a look at our web site [www.milbergernursery.com](http://www.milbergernursery.com) or look for our ads in the **San Antonio Express-News** to find which plants are on sale. Get expert advice on plants and trees and take advantage of the growing season in South Texas’ most productive season.

## DRAMA IN YOUR LAWN

# Dwarf Palmetto

By Sarah Galvan, SAWS Conservation Consultant

Its name means small in size, but the dwarf palmetto packs a big drought-tolerant punch. And it's a unique evergreen addition to your garden.

Is your garden in need of an evergreen plant that can handle variable soil moisture and lighting conditions? Meet the dwarf palmetto, also known as Sabal minor. You may have seen this small palm as you head east on I-10 when you leave San Antonio, with specimen occurrence increasing as you approach the Louisiana border. Dwarf palmetto belongs to the Areaceae family which includes other fan palms. Members of this plant family can be found all over the world in tropical and sub-tropical environments.

Historically, palms have been used to make wharf pilings, thatched roofs, rattan furniture, woven

mats and baskets. There are also many species that produce foods, such as the date palm and the coconut palm.

While the Sabal minor is typically found near moisture, it can actually be quite drought-tolerant once established. But one of my favorite things about this plant is its size: its height maxes out at about 5 feet (unlike other palms that can reach upwards of 50 feet), which means that it can be accommodated into smaller spaces.

Another uncommon characteristic of this plant is its ability to thrive in areas with poor drainage. It doesn't mind shade and will maintain its foliage throughout the winter months. Think dappled sun or shade under the protection of some large trees. It can grow in full sun too, but may require deeper soil and may need supplemental water, especially during the hottest months of the year.

Group with other plants that are capable of surviving similar conditions such as fall obedient plant, big bluestem, eastern gama grass, cardinal flower, bushy bluestem, Lindheimer's muhly.

Whatever your plan is for this palm, it will be a unique and delightful evergreen addition to your garden. It may even be the perfect solution to that pesky wet spot in your garden that never drains!



The **Palmetto** palm has a very large range and can be found all the way to the east coast. As a matter of fact, Central Texas is on the very edge of its western range.

**SAWS**, the San Antonio Water System, is dedicated to providing their customers with healthy landscapes – now and in the future – by conserving our precious water resources. You can find tips on caring for your landscape, conservation programs and rebates on their web site [www.saws.org](http://www.saws.org).

## LAWNCARE

# Fall Fertilization For Your Lawn

**David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist with Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service.**

We are quickly approaching San Antonio's first traditional frost date of mid-November. There are a couple of important tasks to do in October to insure the health of your lawn and landscape this winter. The most crucial is the fall application of fertilizer; this is commonly referred to as "Winterizing." If you were given the option of applying fertilizer only once a year to your lawn or landscape, the best choice would be a fall application.

“Our first freeze (normally after November 20) is quickly approaching and there are a couple of important tasks to do now to insure the health of your grass this winter. The most crucial is the fall application of fertilizer.” ~ Dr. Jerry Parsons

Fall fertilization is applied when shoot growth slows or around the time of the season's last regular mowing. Because of favorable environmental conditions (cool temperatures, short days, and high light intensity) nitrogen applied at this time aids the photosynthetic production of carbohydrates. These carbohydrates are stored for use the following growing season, providing an earlier spring green-up and an energy source for turf grasses to recuperate from drought and other related stresses.

Another reason for fall fertilization is to reduce the need for high amounts of spring-applied nitrogen. Too much spring fertilization can actually reduce carbohydrate reserves and root development by inciting rapid shoot growth. This is because growing shoots take priority over roots for carbohydrate use.

**Brown patch:** Brown patch is a fungus disease that attacks St. Augustine grass in cool, damp, fall weather, and will weaken the lawn going into the winter. It is identified as a circular area in the lawn, usually 3×10 feet in diameter. In the edge of the area you will see brown or yellow grass, yet the interior of the circle may be a healthier green. Pull blades of grass at the edge of the circle, if the blades pull easily away from the stems and look brown and rotted at the base of the blades, then your lawn has brown patch and should be treated.



The slow release nitrogen fertilizers are less beneficial in the fall since a quick uptake by the plants is important. In the fall we want the nitrogen to be available to the grass quickly so that it can be taken up into the plant and utilized. Besides, slow-release fertilizers are much more expensive because of their slow-release mechanisms.

**Fall is for Planting Winter Color and Trees.** FREE Earth-Kind seminar with David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist with Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service. At the nursery on Sat., Oct 28 from 10:30 to Noon. Join us and learn what you can do in your specific landscape this fall.

## TREES AND SHRUBS

# When To Harvest Your Citrus

Citrus trees are among the most popular home fruit trees in Texas. A couple of the most common questions regarding harvesting the fruit are, “When is citrus ready to pick?” and, “Should I pick all my citrus to keep them from being damaged by frost?”

Oranges and citrus turn colors, just about like the leaves on the trees do, they need a little cool weather and some bright, sunny days to make them really get an orange color, even though the sweetness is there. You can leave them on the tree and they will get sweeter but, so you won't have to eat a lot of fruit in a short period of time, you can go ahead and eat some of your fruit even if they are still somewhat green in October.

If the tree is loaded, consider picking one or two every week to determine if you can use it. Select a large fruit and one with some color change.

The prime harvest month of citrus in San Antonio is December and most citrus changes color when it is ripe. That being said, there is fruit that can be harvested in October and some of it is not completely orange or yellow. The advantage of harvesting fruit before December is that if your tree is full of satsumas, lemons, limes, tangerines, and/or grapefruit, you can be overwhelmed with fruit at that time. Better to spread out the harvest October to December.

Quite often what you will find in a satsuma, lemon or lime is that some of the fruit is suitable. If the sample fruit is sweet enough for fresh eating you can pick more fruit as you need it. If it is still not as sweet as you like it, use the sample fruit for cooking or drink flavoring and wait at least another week before you do any wholesale harvesting. As we progress towards December, the fruit will become sweeter in most cases.

Unless damaged by freeze, citrus fruit keeps longer on the tree than if picked and stored so you've not faced with an enormous harvest all at once. Also realize that a mere frost of 30 to 32 degrees F will not injure the trees or fruit. Rather, it takes an extended number of hours below freezing to cause damage to both the tree and fruit.



## OCTOBER GARDENING AND LAWCARE 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.

**Fertilizer:** 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 our newly redesigned website: **[www.MilbergerNursery.com](http://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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## Milberger's Tree Lot

**Has the largest selection of healthy,  
Well rooted, ready-to-plant trees in the area.**

To find the specific tree for your landscape  
talk to the tree experts at Milberger's Nursery.



**Petunias** are beautiful, carefree flowers that seem to fill a space with laughter, maturing into tumbling masses of blooms that show from spring to frost, and they happily adapt to containers for a splash of color nearly anywhere. Plant petunias for masses of flowers that almost completely cover the plants. They bloom all fall and love the mild fall weather and even tolerates frost. Choose your colors: red, white, or lavender.