

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

SEPTEMBER 2015

PLANT QUESTIONS

I have several crape myrtles on my property. I have been fertilizing my crape myrtles with an all-purpose fertilizer. Someone told me that I should use an acid fertilizer. Is this correct?

It is not really necessary, but it won't hurt anything anyway. So-called 'acid' fertilizers do little if anything to acidify the soils that are buffered alkaline.

The seed pods on the mountain laurel are so ugly. Does it matter if we cut them off? No, it won't hurt the plant at all.

We cut our Bermuda grass to three inches tall. Our neighbor says it is too high; the lawn will look better and be less weedy if we mow it at 1.5 inches.

I agree with your neighbor. Golf courses in our area use Bermuda grass and mow it at a half inch tall. At one and a half inches, it makes a tight sod and competes better with the weeds. Bring it down to this height gradually over a month.

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.



Tropical looking tree with electric-orange blooms the **Mexican Bird of Paradise** (Pride of Barbados) is extremely heat and drought tolerant once established. It attracts hummingbirds and butterflies and is a Texas SuperStar™.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Fall: The Best Time to Plant

By Mark Peterson, SAWS Conservation Project Coordinator

The "green" industry regularly touts fall and winter as the best times to plant. In south Texas native plants have adapted to the hot, dry summers by germinating their seeds in the fall or by extending their roots during the temperate winter. By developing a deep and extensive root system during the dormant season, native plants can survive extensive summer droughts fairly well. "How can roots grow during the dormant season?" Our south Texas soil does not freeze like northern soil, so plant roots are able to grow, albeit at a slower rate, throughout the fall, winter and early spring months. Extensive root systems helps the survival and growth of plants. So planting during the fall and winter provides the absolute best opportunity for plants to grow and thrive for the rest of their lives.

(CONTINUED 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.

SEPTEMBER GARDENING EVENTS

Tues, Sept 2 – 10 am 'til Noon

Indoor Plant Décor. San Antonio Garden Center Clubs presents feature Austin designer and author Jenny Peterson. Free and open to the public. San Antonio Garden Center Clubs, 3310 N. New Braunfels at Funston. (210) 824-9981

Thurs., Sept 10 – 6:30 'til 8:30 pm

San Antonio Herb Society September Program presents Cheryl Koch from Koch Ranches. Koch Ranches, Inc. is a family business that is owned and operated by seven generations of Texas farmers. Free and open to the public at the San Antonio Garden Center at 3310 N. New Braunfels. 210-826-6860.

Sat., Sept. 12 – 10:30 am 'til Noon

Fall Vegetable Gardening, Free Earth-Kind Seminar presented by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist for TexasA&M AgriLIFE Extension Service. David will answer your specific questions about your gardening issues. Bring a notebook. At Milberger's Nursery. (210) 497-3760

Sat., Sept 26 – 10:00 'til 11:00 am

Kids Gardening Class on Snakes. Snakes can be beneficial partners in your garden. In this class your child will learn a myriad of facts about these egg-laying vertebrates. Some people love snakes. Others dislike or even fear them. No matter how you feel about snakes, they play an important role. Free but call to reserve your spot. At Milberger's Nursery. (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.

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(210) 497-3760

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

Milberger's Nursery September Features

Take Advantage of South Texas'



"Second Spring"

Ornamentals  **Shade Trees**
Palms Trees

FALL is the ideal time to add **TREES** and **SHRUBS** to your landscape and Milberger's has the area **LARGEST SELECTION** to choose from. 

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**Watch for our weekly sale specials in
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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 known Horticulture Specialist who is retired from the Texas AgriLife Extension Service in San Antonio; **Dr. Calvin Finch** is the Urban Water Program Director for the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources. The Gardening Newsletter for South Central Texas is edited by Marc Hess mhess@hctc.coop.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Fall Planting Season

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

As nights get cool again, plants are flowering and the sun is still shining. These are a few of the plants that you may want to consider adding to your landscape this fall. Be aware that water needs of plants (including grass) drop dramatically in the fall. Over-watering in the fall can lead to plant disease.

Fall Aster is also called Aromatic Aster. It blooms best during fall months although it may also bloom in the spring. During summer months, the plant puts on growth and can be cut back mid-summer to keep it compact. It will need no special care and very



little water to provide traffic-stopping purple flowers in the fall. (width 2-3 ft/height 2-3 ft)

Autumn Sage is popular for its long-bloom, compact size, toughness and wide range of colors. It has a very long blooming period that starts in the spring and peaks in the fall. During most winters this salvia will stay evergreen. Cutting back the plants several times a year keeps them lush and less woody. (width 2-3 ft/height 3-4 ft)

Mexican Feather Grass is a fairly recent addition to ornamental grass choices that include the Muhly, Fountain, and Maiden varieties. Ornamental Grasses add texture and draw the eye as they sway with the breeze.

“With temperatures still soaring, it may be hard to believe that the fall planting season is just around the corner. The milder temperatures, still warm soil and typically higher rainfall make fall a perfect time to plant a new garden or enlarge an existing bed.”

~ Vickie Castilleja, SAWS Gardening Expert

Seed heads at the tips of the grasses seem to glisten in afternoon sunlight. Varieties mentioned here are not bothered by disease and thrive in dry, neglected places. (width 6-18 in/height 18-24 in)

Mexican Bush Sage is one of many hardy salvias recommended in San Antonio, but it is unique in having peak blooms in September. The most common varieties have purple and white spikes of blooms. It also has a soft, fuzzy appearance that softens xeriscape gardens. Grow it next to yellow fall blooming plants such as Mexican mint marigold or Copper Canyon daisy. (width 3-4 ft/height 3-4 ft)



LAWNCARE

Fall Lawn Preparation

By Bill Kelldorf, Master Gardner

The massive drought conditions in most of the whole state of Texas make it extremely important to treat for new grass growth next spring. Late September and early October is the best time to strengthen and prepare your lawn for strong root growth this winter and next spring. The prolonged droughts dramatically effected grasses of all kinds, and proper replacement and additions after recent rains are vital for survival. Bill says that you need to begin with attention and work in the following three areas: fall diseases, pre-emergence weed control, and feeding.

Fall Diseases: Some lawns may be suffering from Brown Patch and Take-All Root Rot which are two fairly common fungal diseases that affect St Augustine grasses. With our recent rains and high humidity, both could become active once the severe, intense stress your lawn has endured due to the terrible summer heat gives way to milder, wetter weather.



The key is to mow often enough so that no more than one-third of the leaf blade is removed at any one time. For example, if the lawn is being mowed at a 2-inch height, then once it reaches a 3-inch height, it is time to mow, according to Texas AgriLife Extension Service specialists. (Texas AgriLife Extension Service photo by Dr. Brent Bean)

controlled now with a product like Amaze or a pre-emergent herbicide with dimension

Feeding: In order to “over-winter” lawns/grasses, an even application of a 18-16-12 winterizer fertilizer now will give a strong “boost” to your

spring growth. However, do not overdo it. Lush, thick growth is more susceptible to fungal problems now and frost later. Since most fertilizers are “salts,” be sure you water in thoroughly.

Fall Lawn Tips:

- ☞ Water during the winter – 1/2 inch/week if rainfall is lacking.
- ☞ Aerify new sod – water, food and air must get through to the roots.
- ☞ Don’t “scalp” your lawn in the fall – mow grass and leave at least 2 inches high.
- ☞ Get a proper soil test, which is now available from the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, or

Pre-emergent Herbicide: Fall and winter weeds such as henbit, chickweed, or bluegrass may best be

evaluate and apply fertilizer and as indicated by the results of the report.

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.

LANDSCAPE IDEAS

Time to Tackle Transplanting

By Erin Conant, Conservation Consultant

Fall in San Antonio is generally beautiful and happens to be the most favorable time of the year to relocate your existing plants. Both the weather and the soil are cooler, creating a less stressful environment.

Here are a few basic guidelines that apply to most transplanting situations.

“Perennials should be divided and transplanted every three years. When perennials are too crowded they produce less flowers and wilt easily because too many roots are vying for water and soil nutrients. Among the perennials that require dividing and transplanting are: daylilies, Shasta daisies, Bearded irises and Spider lilies.”

~ Rebecca, The Experiential Gardener



When dividing perennials divide the main clump then gently remove extra dirt from the roots while holding the roots only.

Timing: Mild temperatures mean less stress on the plant, giving it a better chance of survival. Your planting area should be well prepared, especially the soil.

Digging: Make your planting hole about twice as wide, but the same depth as the root ball. Planting too deep can cause poor root growth, disease and ultimately death in transplants.

Planting: Trim or pull apart any matted or tangled roots within the root ball and then trim the roots so that they aren't bent and fit nicely inside the planting space. You may also need to lightly trim the top of the plant to compensate for the missing roots.

Filling: Fill the planting space with the original soil, making sure to keep it the same level as the surrounding soil.

And of course, finish off by thoroughly soaking the area with water and adding about 2 inches of mulch. This conserves moisture and reduces the need to water as often.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Planting Trees and Shrubs in the Fall

By Dr. Douglas F. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist, Texas Agrilife Extension Service

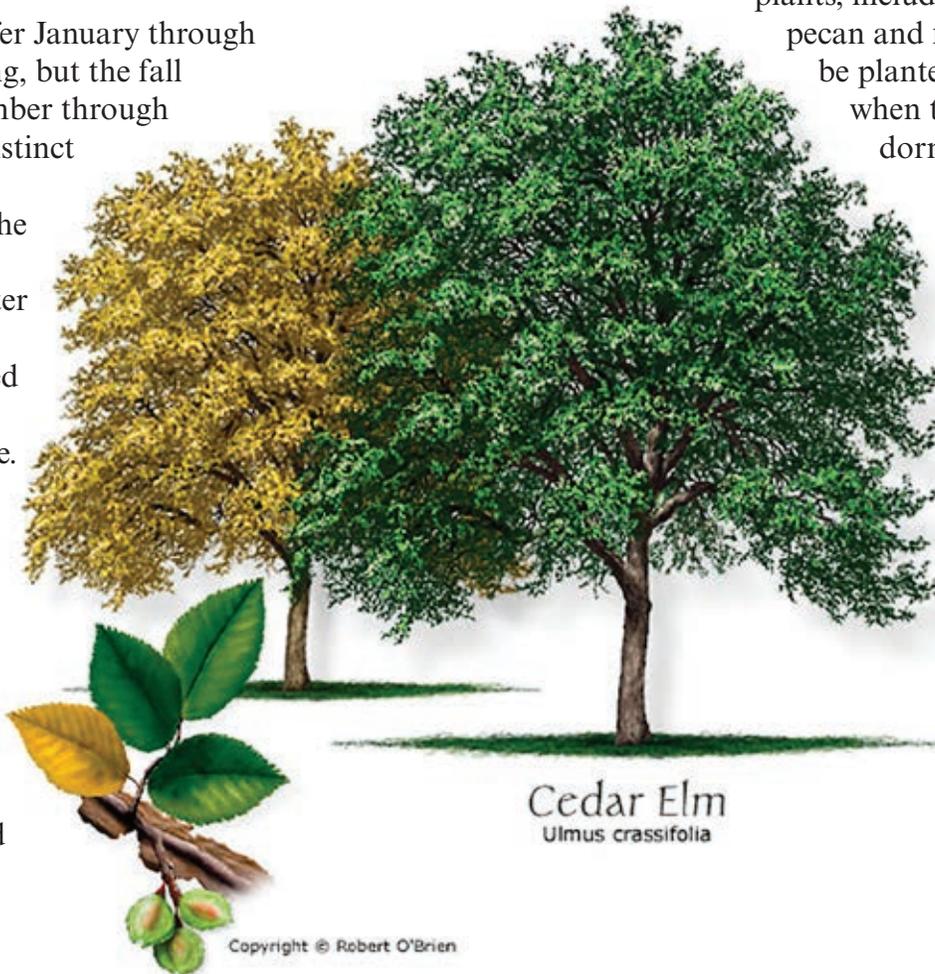
Finally, fall is here. The weather is becoming slightly cooler, and gardeners are slowly migrating back outdoors after record-breaking heat this summer. Now is a perfect time to add a new tree or a grouping of shrubs to the landscape. Or perhaps you have an area in the landscape that needs 'remodeling' or rejuvenating. The fall may be the best season to plant, surpassing even the spring.

Many people prefer January through March for planting, but the fall months of September through December have distinct advantages. Fall planting follows the heat of summer, before a cool winter season, and trees and shrubs planted in the fall use this to good advantage. Plant roots grow anytime the soil temperature is 40 degrees or higher, which may occur all winter in Texas. During the winter months, the root systems of the fall-planted specimens develop and become established. When spring arrives, this expanded root system can

support and take advantage of the full surge of spring growth.

Fall is the optimum time to plant balled and burlapped trees and shrubs. Balled and burlapped plants have ample time to recover from transplanting and proliferate roots before spring growth begins. Remember, however, all bare root plants, including roses and pecan and fruit trees, should be planted in late winter when they are completely dormant.

All plants have growing requirements. Think about the plant's needs before you invest. Is it adapted to your area's soil? Will it grow in sun or shade? Does it need a wet or dry location? Is it cold hardy? Some nurseries have this type of information on tags beside the plant. If not, ask your Extension agent or one of the South Texas landscape experts at Milberger's Nursery.



Cedar Elm is the most widespread native elm in Texas. It is a tough, adaptable shade tree with excellent drought tolerance and beautiful golden yellow fall color. Its leaves are small and rough, and glossy green in the spring. Cedar Elm can withstand heavy, poorly drained clay soils and soils that are moderately compacted.

SEPTEMBER GARDENING AND LAWCARE TIPS

It May Still Feel Like Summer But . . .

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

Fall Color: Add compost and fertilizer to your flowerbeds for a little extra kick that tired flowers need. Add instant color by planting annuals such as ornamental kale, calendula, dianthus, fall aster, and phlox. Continue to feed patio plants and hanging baskets with a water-soluble fertilizer. Rejuvenate heat stressed geraniums and begonias by lightly pruning, fertilizing and watering. Divide perennials like daylily and iris now.

Fall Vegetable Gardening should be in full swing. It's time to plant broccoli, spinach, cabbage, cauliflower and other cole crops and cool season vegetables. Protect young seedlings from hot sun. Old sheer-curtains do a great job. Mulching with oak leaves does a great job, too. 3-4 inches of leaves help keep the soil cool, stops weeds from germinating, and helps hold in the moisture.

Shade Trees and Shrubs: Plant trees and shrubs this month or later after the hot weather subsides. Check the requirements for trees and do your planning before planting any. Visit our on-line Tree Lot at www.milbergernursery.com to find out the mature height and width. If you prune your oak trees, be sure to paint as soon as you cut.

Prune: The fall pruning of roses is lighter than in the spring and consists of removing twiggy and unproductive growth along with any crossing or dead canes. All rose foliage is left on the bush at this time. Labor Day is a good time to do the fall "grooming."

Fertilize: With the advent of cooler weather and rain, your roses will begin their heavy fall blooming season. Vegetable crops benefit from a side dressing of fertilizer to enhance their growth and production potential. Lawns have been expensive to maintain during the prolonged heat and drought. Those with lawns still alive will have to beware of the brown patch fungus which occurs during cool, moist fall conditions.

On the Lookout: Insects will be in "full swing" and their populations "full blown" by now.

Odd Jobs: Select appropriate and recommended tree and shrub varieties that will complete or renovate your landscape.

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

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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?



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Petunias are one of the most popular bedding flowers because of the masses of flowers almost completely cover the plants. They bloom all fall and tolerate frost. With wide trumpet shaped flowers and branching foliage that is hairy and somewhat sticky they may require some deadheading to keep them going. Choose from red, white, purple, pink or blue.