

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

AUGUST 2016

PLANT QUESTIONS

Our tomatoes have been unbelievable: Red Deuce, Tycoon, and Solar Fire. Is everyone having the same success? Your success is partly because you used proven selections but it has been generally a great year for tomato production because of the moderate temperatures and rain.

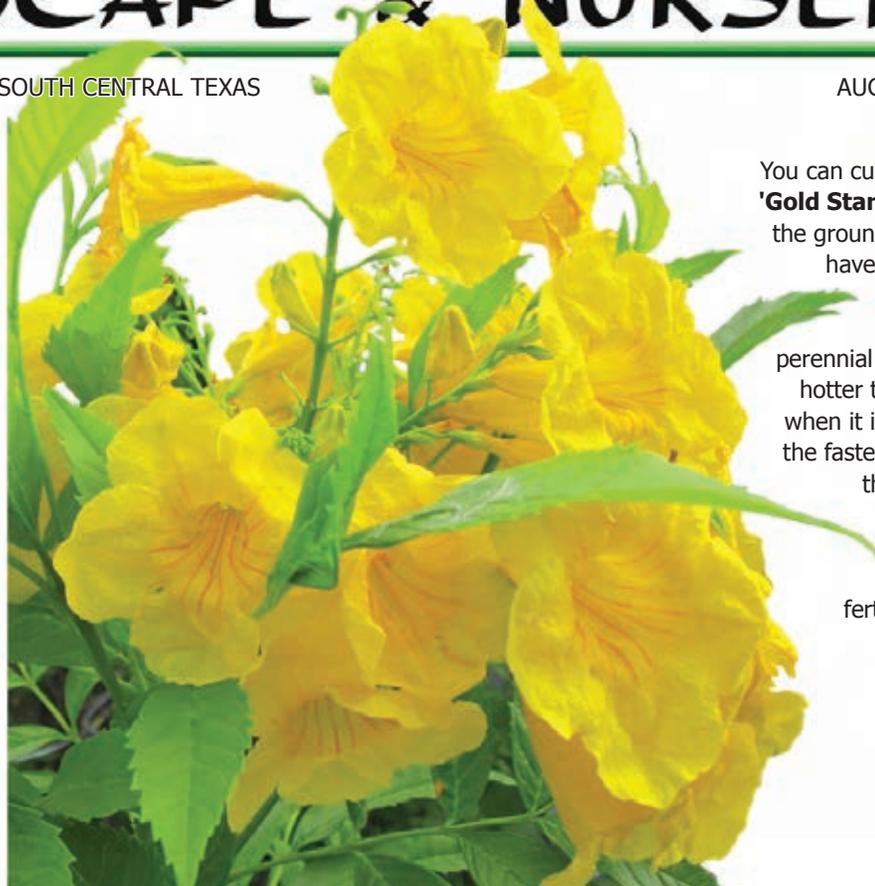
Which shrubs and small trees are deer proof and can grow in the shade?

There is a group of evergreen viburnums that prosper in the shade and are not eaten by deer: Mexican plum tolerates shady conditions to produce a 15ft tree that deer do not eat and standard pittosporum is another large shrub to consider.

We have a weed that grows upright with alyssum like flowers and sticky seeds the size of aphids. My dogs get in them all the time.

I believe you are describing beggar's lice, a winter annual weed. Apply a pre-emergent herbicide such as Dimension, Amaze, XL, or Trimec in September to prevent its germination in the lawn or shrub border.

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.



You can cut large plants of 'Gold Star' esperanza to the ground in August and have them blooming profusely as a multi-trunked perennial in October. The hotter the temperature when it is growing back, the faster it grows. After the cutback seed pod removal remember to water and fertilize your plant.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Cutback Now To Ensure Fall Blooms Later

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

Blooms may last longer in cooler climates but cooler climates do not have the potential for two spectacular bloom periods each year as South Texas does. Most of us expect our flowering perennials to bloom well in the spring but overlook the best possible season for bloom – fall. Plants are not flowering to make us happy; they are flowering to produce seed and complete the reproductive stage of their life cycle. If the old flower stalks are cut off and not allowed to mature seeds, the plant will attempt to make more seed. Then we get to enjoy another bloom cycle. Flower petals burn in the summer sun. August is the time to act. Remember, shrubs that bloom after June usually do so from buds that are formed on shoots that grow the same year. These shrubs should be pruned in late winter to promote vigorous shoot-growth in spring.

(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.

AUGUST GARDENING EVENTS

Thurs., Aug. 11 – 6:30pm 'til 8:30pm

First Aid for Gardeners. San Antonio Herb Society program by Grace Emery on Garden First Aid and Citizen CPR: bleeding, heat stress, poisoning, bug, spider and snake bites, back strain, and sunburn. FREE. San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N. New Braunfels. www.sanantonioherbs.org sahs@mail.com

Sat., Aug. 20 – 10am 'til 11am

Milberger's Summer Blood Drive. Give the gift of life. South Texas Blood and Tissue Center. Milberger's will offer a \$10 gift certificate to each person willing to donate. 210-497-3760.

Sat., Aug. 27 – 10 am 'til 11am

Fall Vegetable Gardening for Kids. Your children will have fun learning the basics of vegetable gardening. This popular class will include "little" hands-on planting and seeding tips as well as craft activities. Designed for children 5 to 10. Milberger's Nursery provides the materials and classes are free but call to reserve a spot because class size is limited. 210-497-3760.

Sat., Aug 27 – 10:30am 'til Noon

Start Growing Your Fall Tomatoes Now. South Texas offers vegetable gardeners two great growing seasons every year. Fall's milder temperatures bring out the best flavors in home vegetable gardens and we can grow warm- and cool-season crops. Presented by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist David will answer your specific questions about your gardening issues. Bring a notebook. Free and at the 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.

Milberger's Landscape Nursery

Open 9:00 to 6:00 Monday to Saturday
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(210) 497-3760

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**Milberger's Nursery
August Features**



**It isn't easy to become a
Texas Superstar™**

Plants that are HIGHLY RECOMMENDED by **Texas A&M AgriLife** for south Texas and will add **dramatic color** to your late summer landscape.

THIS MONTH look for our fresh shipments of your favorite varieties including **GOLD STAR ESPERANZA, NEW GOLD LANTANA, FIREBUSH, BLUE PLUMBAGO, DWARF MEXICAN PETUNIA** and more. 🌿

And keep an eye on our **weekly on-sale items** where you can get Texas SuperStars at super-star prices.

Fresh **Hanging Baskets**
for sun and shade
are arriving almost every day.
These are the prettiest baskets of the season on sale all month.

Fall Garden Mums and Asters

are about to make their debut.
GET YOUR GARDEN READY FOR FALL!

**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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GARDENING EXPERTISE

Cut Back for Fall

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Hot weather greatly shortens the life and beauty of blooms. During the spring bloom season, Texas weather is making the transition from winter to summer. Unfortunately the transition period may only be for several days, i.e., Texas temperatures rapidly change from frosty to scorchy. The fall weather conditions, in comparison, are ideal for blooms. Usually extremely hot weather ends in September and the cooler temperatures, especially at night, signal that the South Central Texas second “spring” has begun. These cooler temperatures stimulate plant growth and intensify the color and duration of the blooms. Many people do not prepare their plants for this second spring so they miss really the most spectacular bloom period.



Perennial hibiscus such as 'Moy Grande', 'Flare', 'Red River' can be cut to the ground every winter. You can induce fall bloom by simply cutting plants back and removing the seed pods. This stimulates new shoots from the remaining stems and an abundant bloom in October when the blooms stay radiant all day rather than being burnt by the hot summer's afternoon sun.

“Once plants have flowered and produced seed the plants puts all of its energy into maturing the seed and does not bloom again.”

Roses should be pruned or groomed during the first two weeks in September, no later than September 20. Fall pruning is lighter than in the spring. Cut about one-fourth to one-third of the bush. When pruning miniatures, other than cleaning them out, simply cut off all the blooms. When pruning standard size roses remove all the blooms and bloom pods. The general shape of a rose bush should be open-centered or vase-like with canes evenly distributed around the outside.



Remove as many seed pods as possible from your **'Texas Lilac' vitex** by cutting off the entire stalks on which the pods are borne. This gets dozens of seed pods at a time rather than trying to remove them pod-by-pod. Flower buds can be distinguished from seed balls since seed balls are hard and flower buds are soft.

WATER GARDENS IN RESTRICTED SPACES

Small Water Gardens

By Angelo Eliades Deep Green Permaculture (www.deepgreenpermaculture.com)

Your pond or water feature is a serene, reflective pool, something that relaxes us, that makes us feel peaceful and calm. It is also literally brimming with life. If you live in an urban environment or if you have restricted space in your landscape it doesn't mean you can't enjoy the benefits of a small water garden. Water gardens in containers are easy to build, and "half-barrel" water gardens are becoming quite popular for that very reason. Using a real wine barrel cut in half, or a similar sized plastic container, a water garden can be completed in an afternoon.



Keep deep water plants like **Waterlilies** and **Lotus** away from fountain sprays: strong water movement or splashing water inhibits water lily growth. The leaves and flowers are constantly replaced and should be removed when they die or they will create more organic matter that can algae feed off.

In aquatic ecosystems, we have four layers that work together to create a balanced ecosystem: This is a "stacked" arrangement in terms of utilization of vertical space, and when these plants are brought together with the right proportions, all the plants in that system benefit.

- 1) **Marginal Plants** grow in the shallow margins around the edge of a pond. They can be decorative and provide protection to fish and frogs from predators.
- 2) **Floating Plants** do not need soil. They control algae by shading the surface of the water and act as natural filters to limit the nutrients available to algae.
- 3) **Rooted Floating Plants** or **Deep Water Plants** root in the soil at the bottom of the pond (or in a container on the bottom of the pond). They are sun-loving plants best known examples include Waterlilies and Lotus.
- 4) **Submerged Plants** or **Oxygenators**, grow with their roots anchored in soil, but the leaves stay underwater. Oxygenators are essential for keeping the pond healthy and the water clear.

For one square metre of pond surface area you need: one Water Lily (or other Rooted Floating Plant), three Oxygenating Plants and one to two Marginal Plants.

One third to one-half of the water's surface should be covered with free floating and rooted floating plants. Or, conversely, no more than half of the water's surface should ever be covered with floating plants. Now, with this theory in mind you can look into building a small half-barrel water garden.

Milberger's carries a complete line of aquatic plants, fish, pond kits and accessories. Milberger's can provide you with all the tools you need to install your water feature or we can arrange to have your pond professionally installed and maintained by a professional service. Visit our web site a www.milbergernursery.com for information on adding a water feature to your landscape.

LANDSCAPING

Made for the Shade

By Erin Conant, SAWS Conservation Consultant

If you have a tendency to complain about having immense amounts of shade in your yard, you won't get any sympathy from me – not this native Texan.

Shade is a priceless commodity here in South Texas, but it's understandable to have a little bit of frustration toward it. Let me walk you through some simple guidelines that just might empower you to better manage your shade.

Choose your plants wisely. Many plants simply won't bloom, grow or thrive at all in shade. Consider some Texas natives like **American beautyberry**, **redbud** and **columbine**, all of which perform beautifully in shade and are drought-tolerant.

Have a good mix of textures and colors, as this can help a dimly lit landscape appear alive and exciting. Frothy, light-green ferns and groundcovers against the large, bold leaves of a philodendron tend to draw the eye into what would otherwise be a dull void.

Variegated gingers, **variegated Dianella** and gorgeous shade bloomers like **Texas betony** and some salvias are like rich bursts of light in a shady spot.

Pass on using an automatic sprinkler system in areas of ample shade and stick to occasional hand-watering as needed. Moisture loss is much slower here, especially if you've mulched the area well.

“Shade is desirable for relief from the sun, but it does limit our choice of understory plants. The palette of well-adapted plants for the shade is less than the list available for the sun, but there is a surprisingly good selection.”

~ Calvin Finch

If you have buckets of shade, try to look on the bright side (no pun intended). Those spots often make a wonderful setting for some outdoor living and often require less summer maintenance.



Firespike is a serious shade plant. It will have red blooms on long stalks in deep shade. It is a hummingbird favorite whether grown in a container or in the landscape. The foliage is so lush and shiny that some people use it for an indoor foliage plant. Hummingbirds love the red blooms but deer also like the foliage, so it will have to be protected from the deer.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Large Shrubs for Area Landscapes

By Dr. Calvin Finch

Landscapes are better balanced and make better habitats for the birds if they not only include tall shade trees and groundcovers, but everything in between, including perennials, small and large shrubs and small trees.

A tough old-fashioned rose, such as the **butterfly rose**, is a great choice to be a transition plant in a landscape. Butterfly rose qualifies as a xeriscape plant because it will survive without any supplemental irrigation. Despite blooming eight to nine months of the year, butterfly rose is not bothered by diseases or insects. It will grow to fill a space 10 feet tall at 15 feet in diameter if planted in full sun. The thorns make it more desirable as a wildlife plant, but do make it hard to prune or shape. Select butterfly rose if you have

enough space to let it grow to full size and glory.

Primrose jasmine is an evergreen shrub with a weeping shape. The foliage is very dark green. It shows off the glossy yellow flowers that appear in later winter. Primrose jasmine does not seem to have any insect or disease pests. Even the deer

do not eat it. It grows to eight feet around and 8ft high. It can be planted in full sun or in partial shade, such as under deciduous trees.

Pyracantha is one of my favorite plants to fill the role of large shrub in the landscape. Related to apples, they produce a crop of red or orange berries every winter that are very showy until the birds eat them in late winter. Pyracantha makes an airy shrub 10 feet wide and 20 feet tall if left on its own, but it can also be pruned to any shape to suite

the landscape. Birds love to build nests in its thorny branches.

In addition to the thorns that turn off some gardeners, pyracantha is a non-native plant that some folks have labeled as invasive.

Standard yaupon holly has many of the same characteristics of pyracantha. It has berries for the birds, grows

to the same dimensions, can be pruned to any size or shape, and is drought-tolerant. However, standard yaupon does not have thorns, is not eaten by deer, has more shade tolerance than pyracantha and is native to Texas.



Newly planted shrubs should be watered frequently until they are well rooted, which may take two growing seasons. Once established, plants should be watered less frequently so they will develop deep roots and be better able to withstand drought.

AUGUST GARDENING AND LAWCARE GUIDELINES

Clear Out Your Garden & Prepare for Fall

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

What you do in your garden and landscape in August will make a big difference in how things come up in the fall. When you are out there working be sure to drink plenty of water, use sunscreen, and work in the gardens early in the morning or late in the evening. Take plenty of breaks and don't get overheated. Just relax and enjoy the fruits of your labors.

Plant: For summer color and fall beauty, plant Texas' tough annuals and heat-loving tropicals in beds and containers. To brighten a landscape in the heat of the summer, plant lantana, bougainvillea, mandevilla vine, allamanda, hibiscus, salvia, periwinkle, marigold, zinnia, portulaca, purslane, copper plant, and Bush Morning Glory. Start over in the vegetable garden. The new 'Valley Cat' tomato can be used but is not technically a heat-setting variety so some late cold protection may be required to produce vine-ripened fruit if unusual weather conditions occur. Other popular vegetable crops to plant in August for fall production are beans, sweet corn, cucumber, eggplant, lima beans, black-eye peas, peppers, and squash. A complete listing of what to plant for fall and when to plant it can be found on the website: www.milbergernursery.com

Lawncare: Remember when laying new sod, roll the turf to insure good soil-root contact and water thoroughly on a daily basis until the grass is established – in a week or 10 days.

Trees: Windmill palm, Mexican fan palm and Sabal palm are especially well-adapted to this area, and now is a good time to plant them. Palms require warm soil to establish their root systems.

On the Lookout: Insects to watch for include white flies, spider mites, webworms, tent caterpillars, aphids and grasshoppers. Symptoms of chinch bug damage can appear anytime in healthy St. Augustine lawns. Trees and shrubs may experience some leaf drop this time of year, caused by summer's heat and dry weather stress. There is nothing which can be done except mulch and hope for cooler weather.

Odd Jobs: Mulch throughout your landscape and gardens to reduce water needs and eliminate weeding. Water (soak) thoroughly rather than applying frequent light sprinklings.

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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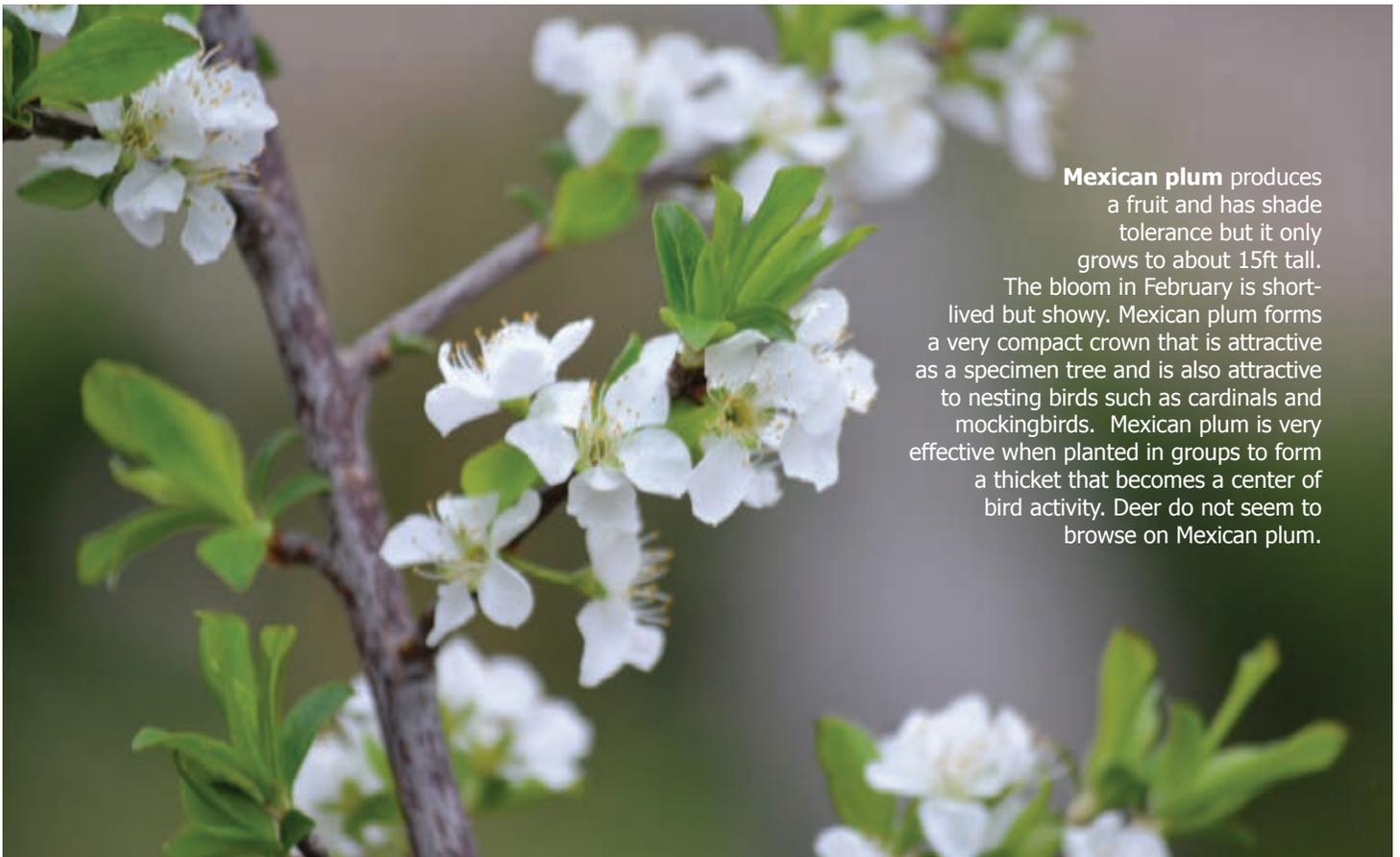
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Mexican plum produces a fruit and has shade tolerance but it only grows to about 15ft tall. The bloom in February is short-lived but showy. Mexican plum forms a very compact crown that is attractive as a specimen tree and is also attractive to nesting birds such as cardinals and mockingbirds. Mexican plum is very effective when planted in groups to form a thicket that becomes a center of bird activity. Deer do not seem to browse on Mexican plum.