

# MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

FEBRUARY 2017

## PLANT QUESTIONS

**We had freezes kill back our lantanas, esperanza, and poinciana. Can we prune them back to the ground now?** If you are a “neatnik” do it now. I generally recommend that you wait until late February to provide cover for the wintering birds.

**I want to get a fast start on my lawn this spring. Is there an advantage to fertilizing now?** None at all. The weeds will benefit, but not your lawn. What you can do for your lawn now is to aerate and top dress with compost. It is very effective in increasing lawn health.

**We still have a hummingbird at our feeder. Why would it stay when the others have all gone south?** The bird at your feeder is a migrant from North and West of here. It is very common for individual rufous hummingbirds to stay for most or all of the winter in South Texas. No one is sure why they make the decision.

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.



## GARDENING EXPERTISE

### Choosing Roses for Your Landscape

By Horticulturalists Chris Starbuck and Mary Kroening

Roses are one of the world's most popular flowers. Their beauty and delicate fragrance have universal appeal. Roses are well adapted to many different environmental conditions including the unique growing conditions that you will find here in South Central Texas. Roses are useful for cut flowers and many landscape effects. Since they are the product of centuries of breeding and selection, many shapes, forms and colors provide endless types to select from and use. New varieties of roses are constantly being introduced and the many types of roses available offer selections for almost any situation. Hybrid tea, floribunda and grandiflora are the most commonly planted types. Shrub and species roses require little or no pest control. Once they are established they grow and flower for years with very little attention. Winter is the best time to plant and transplant roses in Central Texas.

(MORE ROSES 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.

## FEBRUARY GARDENING EVENTS

### Four Fridays in February

**Feb 3, 10, 17 and 24 – 9am 'til 4pm**

**Certified Arborist Prep Course.** ISA Certification. Non-professionals are invited. Tree biology, identification, soil science, water management, tree nutrition and fertilization, tree selection, installation, pruning and oak wilt, tree worker safety, and more. Fee: \$250, includes Arborist Certification Study Guide. San Antonio Botanical Garden, 555 Funston Place. 210-536-1400 [www.sabot.org](http://www.sabot.org)

**Sat., Feb 11, 10am 'til 1:30pm**

**Milberger's Blood Drive.** Take advantage of this opportunity to give the gift of life. South Texas Blood and Tissue Center. To support this drive Milberger's will offer a \$10 gift certificate to each person willing to donate. 210-497-3760

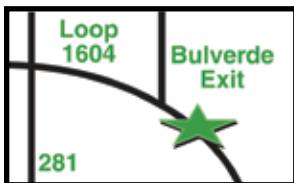
**Sat., Feb 18, all day**

**Join the Rodeo Fun at Milberger's Nursery** where *The 2017 Rodeo Tomato* will be announced and available for sale. Food, live music and more. See our website for details. FREE at the nursery. 210-497-3760

**Sat., Feb 25, 10:30 'til Noon**

**Adult Seminar: Spring Clean Up.** Learn the best practices for preparing your spring garden: proper pruning, mulching and fertilization with David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist for Texas A&M AgriLIFE Extension Service. Bring a notebook. FREE Earth-Kind Seminar at the nursery. 210-497-3760

**Find more Gardening Events – visit [www.MilbergerNursery.com](http://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](http://www.milbergernursery.com)  
[nursery@milbergersa.com](mailto:nursery@milbergersa.com)

## Milberger's Nursery February Features

# No Better Time TO PLANT TREES AND SHRUBS

and you can take advantage of the **CPS Green Shade rebates**



**\$50 PER TREE**  
UP TO FIVE TREES  
Just ask one of the South Texas Tree Experts at Milberger's

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



THE **2107 RODEO TOMATO**  
Will be announced and **ON SALE** at **Milberger's** on **SAT., FEB 18.**

Watch for our weekly sale specials in **The San Antonio Express-News** or at [www.MilbergerNursery.com](http://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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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](mailto:mhess@hctc.coop).

## GARDENING EXPERTISE

## Choosing Roses

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

There's no sense in carefully selecting and buying roses and then not planting them where they have the greatest chance of success. Roses are among the most widely adaptable and resilient of plants, yet to do their best, a well-chosen site will make a great deal of difference.

Grow roses where you will see them every day. Not only will you enjoy them to their fullest, but you'll also take the best care of them. You'll notice the first sign of pests and be able to treat them effectively. Pruning and feeding won't be forgotten or ignored easily, either. Having water handy is a big help, too, as you don't want to be dragging miles of hose.

“The first step to beautiful roses is deciding if your landscape can provide the right growing conditions. Roses need eight hours of full sunlight, lots of room, good air circulation and well-drained soil. If the landscape meets those criteria, growing roses can be easy.”

~ Deborah Bengé Frost, *Midland Reporter-Telegram*

Roses need eight to ten hours of direct sun each day. Morning sun is essential, but light afternoon shade is tolerated and even beneficial in hot climates. Good air movement helps the dew and rain to dry quickly, thus discouraging disease. Wet feet, especially in the winter, will be the death of roses.



Hands down, **Mrs. Dudley Cross** is the most romantic rose in the garden. A hybrid tea, it was developed in San Antonio, Texas, in 1907 by a gardener for his wife.



**Lady Banks Lutea**, a climber, blooms only in the spring, but this is the most beautiful climber, bar none. She is easy, so easy to root in the spring with the soft shoots after blooms fade. The green vines are lovely after the yellow fades.

New 2017 rose varieties will be appearing at the Nursery next month. Rosarians from the San Antonio Rose Society will be at the nursery on Sat., March 18 to "Talk Roses" and help you choose the rose varieties that are best suited for your landscape and your gardening style.

## PLANNING AHEAD

# Plant These Summer Bloomers Now

By Suzy Fischer, Plant Slelection by SAWS

July and August are the tough months for plants. The good news is that there are many perennials that thrive on the heat without much water. While turfgrass, roses and other plants are wilting this summer, you can enjoy these summer stars.

### **Turk's Cap:**

*Thrives in Partial Sun. Width: 2-5 ft. Height: 2-5 ft.*

Turk's Cap prospers in dappled sunlight under trees, but blooms lessen as sun exposure decreases. Its scarlet red blooms and nearly evergreen foliage make Turk's Cap a good rambling groundcover under oaks on poor soils. Hummingbirds love Turk's Cap but the deer are not very fond of it.



**Firebush:** *Thrives in Full Sun. Width: 2-4ft. Height: 2-5ft.* Firebush start growing and blooming once summer begins.



They thrive in sunny, hot, dry places and are covered with orange-red tubular flowers all summer long. Hummingbirds love these plants. Firebush get larger each summer, so plan their location carefully.

### **Plumbago:**

*Thrives almost anywhere but likes partial Sun. Width: 3 ft. Height: 3 ft.*

Plumbago is a root-hardy perennial that will produce quarter-size blooms (white and various shades of blue) all summer



long. The plant will reach three feet tall and likes to spread. The foliage is an attractive light-green color. The ideal conditions for plumbago seem to be morning sun or speckled shade, but it will grow in more or less light. The denser the shade the fewer the flowers.



### **"Gold Star"**

**Esperanza:** *Thrives in Full Sun. Width: 2-5 ft., Height: 5-8 ft.*

Esperanza or yellow bells begin to bloom in May. The plant loves the heat, and full sun is a necessity to produce blooms. The yellow, tubular flowers appear in several cycles if

spent flowers are removed. On most sites, the stems freeze back to the roots every winter and then grow to five to eight feet tall the next summer.

It's not too early to be thinking about what your gardens will look like this summer. A visit to Milberger's Nursery will help you get your spring garden going and provide you with the plants that have been selected to thrive throughout our South Central Texas summers. To see what is on sale each week visit our web site at [www.milbergernursery.com](http://www.milbergernursery.com) or look for our ads in the **San Antonio Express News**.

## TREES AND SHRUBS

# Prune Crape Myrtles

Adapted from "The Crape Myrtle Trails of McKinney"

It is easiest to prune crape myrtles during the winter while they are completely dormant. That's the best time to see their branching structure, so that's the best time to identify and remove limbs that are damaged or that are beginning to rub against one another. However, you can remove unwanted branches and basal sprouts any time of the year.

Crape myrtles flower on new growth. That is counter to most other flowering shrubs that produce their buds and blooms on the prior year's growth. You can often stimulate additional new growth and second, third and even fourth rounds

“February or March pruning encourages the plant to grow new, flower-producing branches. Your crape myrtle is dormant in the winter, and flowers will only appear on new growth. After the last frost is usually the time to do any major pruning of crape myrtles.”

of flowering by removing spent flower heads as soon as the last petals have fallen. Allowing them to go to seed will slow or halt further flowering for that growing season.

You can remove old, dried seed heads during the winter if you wish, but it is only cosmetic. Crape myrtle branches will always die back by six to eight inches each winter. Even if you do not remove the seedpods, the new growth will begin at the bases of the dead twigs. That new growth will quickly overtake the parts that have died back.



**Cape myrtles** are shrubs. If you remove lower branches they will look like small trees. However, they will continue to send up sprouts around their bases. So you need to remove those sprouts to keep your carpe myrtle growing from its main trunk to keep its tree form. If you don't remove those new sprouts your carpe myrtle will revert to growing in its natural shrub-form.

Do not prune the top branches of your crape myrtle. You cannot use pruning as a means of height control for crape myrtles. It may seem extreme, but, if you have a tall crape myrtle that has been topped, the quickest way to get a great-looking plant back again will be to cut the trunks completely back to the ground. You will be absolutely amazed at how quickly they can regrow into straight, new trunks. Usually you can have a fairly mature-looking plant within 12 to 24 months. That's far quicker than trying to coax new branches to conceal the effects of a prior topping.

Take advantage of CPS's Green Shade Rebate to save \$50 per shade tree for qualifying customers. Visit our web site [www.milbergernursery.com](http://www.milbergernursery.com) for a list of recommended Small Trees. (Under Gardening Expertise in the lower right hand corner of our home page.) You can also download information sheets on the varieties that are available and ready to plant.

## VERTICAL GARDENING

# Grow Up!

From **Shawna Coronado**, author of *Grow a Living Wall*

Your backyard or patio may be the perfect spot for enjoying the outdoors, whether that means playtime with your kids or quiet relaxation after a long day. While you may like your neighbors, you may not want to see and hear them every time you venture into your backyard. If more privacy interests you, a vertical garden may be your solution. Not just for those with limited growing space – the fences, patio walls, balcony rails, all give you the opportunity to grow your vegetables, herbs and flowers in an upward direction.

Besides their ability to add a more architectural look to your landscape, your flowering plants and vegetables will thrive with less care when kept off the ground. When vegetables are grown vertically, air circulation is increased, so fruit and foliage dry off faster after a rain or irrigation. Fruit does not lie on the soil surface, which eliminates fruit rot problems. Closely packed plants keep the weeds out. Growing vertically

allows you to situate plants closer together than in a standard garden planted in the ground.

Gardeners kneel and bend less when working on a vertical garden. Vertical gardens are easier on the back and can make gardening more accessible for gardeners with physical disabilities.



Vertical gardens provide not only fresh vegetables and herbs but some privacy, too. Plants can create a leafy view that doesn't include a busy street or a neighbor's grill. Besides being able to produce more vegetables in less space, vertical gardens can create a whole different dimension to your landscape, provide shade for other plants and they can hide unattractive parts of your garden.

vegetables or herbs beneath the trellis. Use them to hide unattractive parts of your garden like your air conditioner.

Basic trellis are the first thing that comes to mind when thinking about vertical gardens. If placed against a wall, make sure there is space between the wall and the trellis to allow air circulation. Rigid livestock panels do double duty as a fence and support for climbing plants and can be bent to create an arched entry.

Vertical gardens can create a whole different dimension to your landscape. They provide shade for other plants and you can grow other

## FEBRUARY GARDENING AND LAWCARE TIPS

# Preparing for 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 pruning started in January. 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 idea 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.

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.**"

### 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.**

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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.



**Texas Scarlet Flowering Quince** is a beautiful spreading shrub with fiery red, apple-blossom-like flowers that precede leaves each spring. Produces greenish-yellow fruit. Best used in shrub borders and as background plant. This deciduous shrub can grow to be about 5 feet tall at maturity, with a spread of five feet.