

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

AUGUST 2017

PLANT QUESTIONS

Our "new Gold" lantana has quit blooming and the leaves look dusty. What should we do? Sounds like lacebugs. Cut it back and treat with acephate or another systemic insecticide. Add some slow release fertilizer and you should have regrowth for a bloom period this fall.

We have a leaky hose to provide irrigation to some Burford hollies we just planted. What type of mulch do you recommend?

My favorite mulches are live oak leaves, pecan shells, and double cut cedar. All of them will work well in the situation you describe. Apply it 3 inches thick.

Is zoysia really difficult to care for? I like zoysia grass. It has some shade tolerance but less than St. Augustine grass. It takes just as much water as St. Augustine to keep green but it can go dormant if water is not available.

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.



A Queen butterfly visits the native **blue mistflowers** at Mitchell Lake Audubon Center. Numerous small, fluffy, tubular, blue-purple flower heads bloom up from July to October in dense flat-topped clusters. The blue mistflower is perennial and spreads by rhizomes. It displays well in wildflower gardens, naturalized areas and can serve as borders (as long as the its aggressively spreading roots will not interfere with other plants).

NATIVE PLANTS

The Wisdom of Natives

Gardening with plants native to Texas offers many advantages. Native plants tolerate our summer heat better than most, require less water, they need less maintenance, provide habitat for birds, butterflies and other wildlife, protect the soil and save money on fertilizer and pesticides. Our climate can vary from baking hot heat and drought one year, to frequent rain and flooding in the next. Some years we may get a hard freeze and some not. Plants from other parts of the country are often poorly suited to our conditions and that may result in disappointment in your garden.

Also, as Lady Bird Johnson said, native plants "give us a sense of where we are in this great land of ours."

(MORE NATIVES 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

Sat., Aug 12 – 10:00 am 'til 1:30 pm

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. 210-313-3371

Sat., Aug 26 – 10 '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. Kids Gardening Class at Milberger's are hands-on, fun-in-the-garden workshops on gardening 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 26 – starts at 10am

Free Adult Earth-Kind Seminar on Fall Vegetable Gardening. (The first of a two-part seminar) presented by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist. Fall's milder temperatures bring out the best flavors in home vegetable gardens. Insects and disease are less bothersome. David will answer your specific questions about your gardening issues. Bring a notebook. 210-497-3760.

Sat, Sept 9 – Starts at 10am

Continuation of our free Adult Earth-Kind Seminar on Fall Vegetable Gardening. Preparing your fall vegetable garden presented by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist. You do not have to attend the first session to participate in this seminar. 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 August Features



It isn't easy to become a

Texas Superstar™

Every plant earning the **Texas Superstar** designation undergoes years of extensive field trials. They must prove to be **SUPERIOR PERFORMING PLANTS** under **Texas** growing conditions. You can find selected varieties **on sale** at **Milberger's**.

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



Fall Garden Mums and Asters

ARE ABOUT TO MAKE THEIR DEBUT.
GET YOUR GARDEN READY FOR FALL!

**When you need
turfgrass and sod visit
the experts at
Milberger's Nursery**

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.

NATIVE PLANTS

The Wisdom of Natives

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

By keeping native foliage in your landscaping, you help to support the local ecosystem which co-existed with the plants way before the city of San Antonio first sprouted. As urban development encroaches on native habitats, not only is the foliage lost, but the birds and insects that depend on them suffer. Bring back the birds and the bees and save water by planting a native plant that is right for you and your home. Here are some to consider.

The deciduous *Esperanza* is a popular native perennial that blooms spring through fall with large, yellow flowers. They do best if you plant them in early spring or fall and need full sun. You must cut them back to the ground each year.



A favorite for many, **Black-Eyed Susans** (deciduous) are good for landscapes in Central Texas. The perennial blooms with large, yellow flowers throughout the summer. You should plant them in early spring or fall, and they must be cut back in the winter. Black-Eyed Susans can grow 1 to 2 feet high with a 1 to 2 foot spread.

“Native plants often fare better than non-natives – especially when enduring our hot, dry summers.”

~ Calvin Finch



Penstemon blooms in the summer with vibrant red flowers that attract hummingbirds like this one at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.

You can also enjoy colorful blooms with Texas Lantana (also deciduous). It blooms summer through fall with orange and yellow flowers. It needs full sun and must be cut back each year. You should plant it in early spring or fall. It reaches 3 to 5 feet high with a 4 to 6 foot spread.

Not only does planting native habitats make water sense, it also makes sustainability sense. Native plants are those which occur naturally in a particular region – with roots that run deep in the area’s history.

The **Native Plant Society of Texas** is a membership organization that carries out its mission through volunteers to protect our state’s native plant heritage and preserve it for future generations. Professional and amateur photographers are invited to enter our photo contest featuring native plants of Texas to be held during the Fall Symposium. <http://npsot.org/wp/story/2017/10000>

FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING

South Texas' Best Season for Growing

Fall's milder temperatures bring out the best flavors in home vegetable gardens. Insects and disease are less bothersome. You usually have more pleasant days to work in your garden. We can grow warm- and cool-season crops at this time of year and the combination of these factors give your vegetables their best opportunity for success.

Proper timing is one of the most important factors in successful fall gardening. Regardless of variety selected or cultural practices used, if a gardener does not do the right thing at the right time, any chances of success can be diminished. Fall vegetable crops are categorized as long-term and short-term crops. Duration of these crops is dependent upon when the first killing frost occurs and the cold tolerance of the vegetables.

You should plant long-term, frost-tolerant vegetables together. **Frost-tolerant vegetables include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, collards, garlic, kale, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, spinach and turnips.**

Plant short-term, frost-susceptible vegetables together so that they can be removed after being killed by frost. Frost protection and the planting of a cereal

rye cover crop are facilitated if such a grouping system is used. **Frost-susceptible vegetables include beans, cantaloupes, corn, cucumbers, eggplants, okra, peas, peppers, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, tomatoes and watermelons.**

Success in the garden begins with a plan. Be sure to select the garden location and decide how large it will be. Next, make sure you have convenient fresh water and six to eight hours a day of sunlight. Involve your family in deciding what to plant. If no one likes asparagus, don't devote a lot of space to it.



Fall produces top quality **spinach** and allows you to harvest during cool weather. In south Texas and with some protection you can carry the fall plants on through winter and into spring. Spinach is quite cold hardy and established plants can take temperatures below freezing.

When growing tomatoes and peppers, it is easier to use transplants. However, the use of transplants alone does not insure bountiful, precocious fall production. What must be accomplished is rapid establishment of fall

“As hot and dry as the weather has been, some people think that transplanting is risky. Transplants will survive hot temperatures and full sun if adequate moisture is available to the plant.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons, Bexar County Horticulturist



For success with fall tomatoes you will find that Celebrity, Tycoon, HM1823 and Valley Girl are the best, highest quality varieties available. but they also require proper watering, periodic fertilization, and pest control. The **Dwarf Cherry Surprise** tomato (shown above) is the most naturally disease-resistant cherry tomato ever sold in Texas.

transplants. As hot and dry as the weather has been, some people think that transplanting is risky. Transplants will survive hot temperatures and full sun if adequate moisture is available to the plant. “To the plant!” is the key phrase. Transplants in peat pots or cell packs with restricted root zones require at least two weeks to sufficiently enlarge their root systems so that active growth can begin. Until that time, gardeners must provide adequate, daily moisture or the transplants will either die or stunt to the point that fruit maturity will be delayed. Delayed maturity is what we need to avoid.

Daily moisture should be provided on an individual basis to transplants. Depressions or basins around each transplant can be filled daily – or as needed depending on the soil type – with water to provide the necessary wetting or a drip irrigation system can be installed. Too much water, i.e., keeping roots soaking wet instead of moist, will cause root rotting and subsequent transplant stunting or death.

Although the temperature is sweltering, now is the time to start planting your fall vegetable garden. Delay in planting some vegetables could result in less produce on the table later. Nothing tastes better than vegetables from your own garden.

For the ideal planting dates for your fall vegetables visit our web site: www.milbergernursery.com. You will find transplants ready to give you a bumper crop of fall vegetables as well as the varieties that thrive in our area as well as the tools and advice you may need at Milberger’s Nursery.

LAWNCARE

The Long and Short of It

By Brad Wier, SAWS Conservation Consultant

It's not often you hear that mowing your grass can save water. So here's the long and short of mowing, blade height and watering.

Frequency: With warm soil temperatures and recent rains, grass grows quickly in early summer – much more quickly than in winter. As a rule of thumb during the South Texas growing season, keep Bermuda grass one inch high, zoysia a bit longer at two inches and St. Augustine grass at three inches. St. Augustine, always a little thirstier than the others, uses that extra height to support deeper roots. Mowing height doesn't make that much difference to Bermuda grass beyond appearance, but recent studies suggest that, unlike Bermuda grass and fine-blade zoysia, 'Emerald' zoysia's water requirements actually increased with blade height.

“How often you mow and how short you cut the grass can determine how much water you save – or waste. Raising the lawn mower blades means the grass needs less water!”

Blade height: When the grass is growing quickly – especially after May and June rains – raising the blades is a mechanism to keep it dense without having to increase the mowing frequency. Here's why: it's important when mowing not to cut off more than 30 percent of the leaf surface at any one time. Otherwise the turf, having lost so much of its photosynthesizing surface area, will spend more time and effort trying to rebuild its leaves. If your St. Augustine has grown to 5 inches and you cut it down to 2 inches (60 percent), prepare for weeds to begin to penetrate and spread in the newly exposed areas around the soil surface. Remember, though, if you raise the blades too high, the grass can start growing really, really long, reaching for light – alarming your neighbors, and resulting in even more damage and weed penetration the next time it's cut. Don't overdo it when raising the blades; one or two notches should be sufficient. Depending on the mower, there's often no better way to tell than just measuring the grass blade after cutting.



As a rule of thumb, it's best to wait until the surface of the soil is dry to the touch before applying more water.

SAWS, the San Antonio Water Authority, 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.

AUGUST GARDENING AND LAWN CARE TIPS

Time To Prepare for Your Fall Garden

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 labor.

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 "Tomato 444" 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.

Lawn care: 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, Mediterranean 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.**"

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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Planning for a Water Garden?



Milberger's has the Koi,
the water plants, the materials
and the expert advice.



Perhaps the showiest of the milkweeds, the **Butterfly Milkweed**, is an exceedingly low maintenance plant and easy-to-grow, long-lived perennial. Its brilliant orange flowers attract butterflies—especially our migrating Monarchs. Mature plants may freely self-seed in the landscape if seed pods are not removed prior to splitting open and because of its deep taproot it is best left undisturbed once established.