

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

FEBRUARY 2018

PLANT QUESTIONS

I want to get a jump on lawncare this year. Is this a good month to fertilize my lawn?

No. It is too early to fertilize your lawn. The only things that benefit from fertilizing your lawn early are the weeds. Wait until after you have mowed real grass twice before you fertilize the lawn.

My Mexican lime looks completely dead from the freeze. Should I go ahead and replace it?

Don't be too quick to discard the lime. In many cases the plants are growing on their own roots and will send up stems from the roots. They will completely replace the top in one growing season and will produce fruit again 1 year from now.

Can we use fallen oak leaves in the compost pile? Dry leaves are low in moisture and nitrogen but fresh live oak leaves are good raw material for the compost pile.

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.



SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING

Your Best Vegetable Garden, Ever!

By D. Hairlloyde, The Accidental Gardener

We gardeners are eternal optimists by nature. Every spring we go out to turn our soil and start our new vegetable garden certain that this year will produce our best garden ever. Our gardens are continually changing and there are no guarantees. What worked one year may not work so well the next. One of the most affirming and enjoyable things about gardening is the fact that we keep getting another chance to get it right. If a planting fails just pull it up and replant. Each season is a new chance to learn, to experiment and to gain expertise. February is a good month to begin vegetable gardening in the San Antonio area. We have an opportunity to make a planting of cool weather vegetables that can be harvested through June.

(MORE VEGETABLE GARDENING 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.

FEBRUARY GARDENING EVENTS

Mon., Feb 12 – 7:00pm

San Antonio Rose Society membership meeting. Public is invited. San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N New Braunfels Ave. (210)313-3371

Sat., Feb 17 – All Day

Milberger's Rodeo Weekend. Join the Rodeo Fun at the Nursery with Texas Music, Texas Food and Texas Fun. The 2018 Rodeo Tomato will be announced and available for sale. (Proceeds from sales of the 2018 Rodeo will be donated to Bexar County Master Gardener Programs.) 210-497-3760

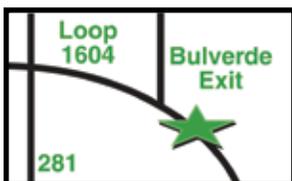
Sat., Feb 24 – 10am - 11am

Spring Vegetable Gardening for Kids. Your children will have fun learning the basics of vegetable gardening. This class will include "little" hands-on planting and seeding tips as well as craft activities. Hands-on, fun-in-the-garden workshop for children 5 to 10. Classes are free and we provide all the materials but be sure to call to reserve your spot because class size is limited. 210-497-3760.

Sat., Mar 10 – 10am - 1:30pm

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.

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 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**

Selected each year at the
San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo



THE **2108
RODEO
TOMATO**
Will be announced
and **ON SALE**
at **Milberger's**
on **SAT., FEB 17.**

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

Follow us  call 210-308-8867 or 1-866-308-8867

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SPRING VEGETABLE GARDENING

Your Best Vegetable Garden Ever!

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Whether you have an established vegetable garden or are starting a new one, here are some vegetables to consider growing this year.

Traditionally we plant broccoli, cabbage, spinach, and chard transplants now. Plant carrot, beet, radish, English pea, rutabaga, lettuce, and turnip seeds. Green bean seeds can be planted about March 15. Tomato transplants can be planted in early March. Go ahead and try something new. Growing your own vegetables can be quite rewarding.



You can safely plant broccoli and cauliflower in February in our part of Texas. It is best to cover these crops when you suspect that a cold snap is on its way.

“One of the most affirming and enjoyable things about gardening is the fact that you always get another chance to get it right. If a planting fails just pull it up and replant. There are few things in life where you can fail so miserably and just start over with a clean slate.”

~ Skip Richter, *Texas Gardener*

Don't limit yourself to just the **yellow squashes**. There are many delightful flavors and shapes to explore. Peruse the pages of several seed catalogs and pick out some interesting squash varieties to try this year. Squash plants need fertilizer and water at appropriate intervals. If your squash suddenly wilts and dies, it probably has been invaded by the dreaded squash borer.

If you are planting **potatoes** be sure to have them planted no later than Valentine's Day. Harvest around the time the kids get out of school for the summer.

Although **asparagus** is traditionally planted from late January to early February, you must be patient, for you will not be picking any for two years. The asparagus roots need time to get established.

Cantaloupes and **watermelons** make a great addition to the garden, as they provide vitamin C in larger amounts than most vegetables.

A visit to Milberger's Nursery will help you get your spring garden going. You will find healthy plant stock that is selected to thrive throughout our South Central Texas summers. You will also find the good advice and creative suggestions for your specific landscape and gardening needs. To see what is on sale each week visit our website at www.MilbergerNursery.com or look for our ads in the **San Antonio Express News**.

LAWN CARE

Time to Top Dress and Aerate Your Lawn

By Dr. Calvin Finch, former Conservation Director, SAWS, and Horticulturist

Top dressing and aeration are really a magical elixir for a tired lawn. You will notice the benefits within weeks and all through the summer. Aeration is accomplished by running a machine across the grass that penetrates to cut out plugs of turf and soil about 3 inches deep. There are also spike-type aerators, but they are not quite as effective. Aeration is the best way to treat compacted soil.

Top dressing increases the benefit of the aeration and is good exercise. The top dressing compost penetrates the aeration holes to bring organic material down into the root zone. Compost still allows the air and water to penetrate plus stimulates microbial activity that improves soil structure.

Your soil supply store may try to sell you top dressing made up of sand and compost. For the same price, compost is more effective. The sand is filler. The only time I would recommend a sand-laced top dressing is if you wanted to fill rough areas in the lawn.

February is also a good time to **apply a pre-emergent herbicide** to prevent summer weeds. Crabgrass and

sand burs are two of the worst pests. Pre-emergent herbicides prevent seeds from germinating for 2-4 months if the granules are spread evenly and the soil is not disturbed once the chemical forms a barrier in the soil.

Organic gardeners are excited about corn gluten as a herbicide. Apply it as evenly as possible in a weed-infested area just as the first summer weeds germinate (March or April). The herbicide action

only lasts for 2 weeks or less but the material will kill the weeds that are already germinated when they are young. Do not waste your money on Weed and Feed. The timing is not right in the South to apply fertilizer and herbicide at the same time.



It takes about 40 minutes to aerate the typical lawn but the benefits last the whole year and beyond. Air and water penetrate the channels to reach the roots.

The best way to control the winter weeds in your lawn is to keep them mowed. Mowing keeps the lawn neat and prevents the weeds from going to seed. You can apply a contact herbicide as long as the weeds are actively growing, but read the label carefully to match weed and herbicide.

IN YOUR ROSE GARDEN

Choose Texas Tough Roses

Roses, an iconic symbol of Valentine's Day, are America's favorite flower. Well recognized in the landscape for its fragrance and beauty but starting a rose garden in our part of Texas can seem daunting for beginners. Newly planted roses seem to detest everything that this area is famous for: heat, drought, alkaline soils, insects and disease. With proper planting and care, nearly anyone can become a successful rose gardener.

“Growing your roses in pots, tubs, barrels, planters or other containers pots extend the scope and possibilities of gardening. Portable roses give you a decorative addition to any part of the outdoor living area and an easy way to change the look of the landscape from month to month or year to year.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons

Certain roses are tough, with genes hardy enough to take on insect pests, diseases, drought restrictions and Texas heat — and still bloom. Many of these tough roses, both modern hybrids and old garden roses, have been designated as Earth-Kind roses.

Roses need to be grown in full sun. They like to be in soil that is well-amended with organic matter and has good soil drainage. A raised flower bed with additional compost is a great place for a rose; starting with healthy soil will prevent you from needing to fertilize much later on.

Newly-planted roses will appreciate watering around twice a week throughout the first growing season, and a 2 to 3-inch layer of mulch helps quite a bit.

Right now is a great time to plant roses. Milberger's Nursery is receiving fresh stock of roses on a weekly basis from the end of February to the end of March.



Among the tough roses that produces good buds and florist type blooms for cutting, but also is a good xeriscape plant, consider **Belinda's Dream**. This tough rose reaches five – six feet tall and four feet wide. It has pale pink blooms that are available for cutting or admiring approximately eight months out of the year. Belinda's Dream makes a good specimen shrub or can be planted in the shrub border if there is full sun.

Rosarians from the **San Antonio Rose Society** will be at Milberger's to talk to you about the roses in your landscape on Saturday, March 24 from 10am until 2pm. Milberger's regularly carries over fifty varieties of Antique and Modern roses that are recommended by Texas A&M and the San Antonio Rose Society.

TREES AND SHRUBS

No Better Time to Plant Fruit Trees

February is a great time to get your fruit trees planted. Milberger's tree lot is freshly stocked with a wide selection of healthy fruit trees and if you get them planted in your landscape this month



Avocados are widely consumed in our part of Texas, in part because of the popularity of Tex-Mex cuisine. In addition to their unique flavor, avocados have more potassium than do bananas and are a good source of key vitamins. Avocado trees grow well in containers and certain varieties grow well in South Texas landscapes when sheltered from the cold.

they can get their roots established before the heat of summer arrives. When you select the proper varieties, plant and care for them properly, these fruiting trees will thrive in south central Texas. Besides the basic apples, peaches, plums and pears our tree lot includes citrus trees, avocados trees, pomegranates, olive trees, blueberries, raspberries, Japanese persimmons, blackberries and more.

When you plant the tree make sure you remove the mulch, soil and burlap from the top of the root ball so that the trunk flare is well-exposed. Set the tree in a generous hole with the root flare above the ground's surface. Even bare-rooted trees are usually planted too low, so avoid that common mistake.

Most people choose to grow fruit trees in containers for easy mobility. For this purpose, the ideal container size is about 10-15 gallons — substantial enough to support a tree, but small enough to move easily. This size is perfect if you're growing in a window, balcony or patio, so you can bring the tree indoors for protection when the weather starts getting too cold. It also comes in handy if you need to relocate your tree to an unheated garage, shed, or basement during winter.



If you are just beginning to add fruit to your landscape, start with **citrus**. It's easy to grow, fun to eat and beautiful in the landscape. Not only can homegrown citrus reward you with a sweeter taste and juicier texture than store-bought, but the citrus gardener gets to enjoy the fragrance of blossoms and the beauty of the developing fruit dangling from their branches on your patio.

Fruit trees do not qualify for the CPS Green Shade Rebate program. That program, which runs through April 30, 2018 reimburses CPS customer \$50 per newly planted shade tree. The program specifies which shade trees qualify for the discount and you will find shade trees that qualify for the CPS Rate along with the fruit trees in Milberger's tree lot.

FEBRUARY GARDENING AND LAWCARE TIPS

Get Ready for Spring Planting

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

February is the month that kicks off the Children's Vegetable garden Program at the San Antonio Botanical Garden. The 16-week program runs from February through June. Each child is allotted a 3.5' x 28' garden plot and will have fun growing different types of seeds, vegetables, and ornamental annual flowers with the guidance of Master Gardner volunteers. Children can also earn their Junior Master Gardener certification by participating in fun, hands-on activities each week after they have tended their garden.

In order to gain the most from the learning experience and to help ensure successful growing, participants are required to attend all sessions (two absences are allowed). Families are welcome to share the gardening experience with their child.

In Your Home Garden

Plant: February is the month to begin spring gardens and is the ideal month to prepare your rose beds; be sure to check all the antique and modern roses as they are freshly stocked at Milberger's from now through April.

Prune: Finish pruning started in January in February. 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.

Lawn care: Mid-February to Mid March is the time to apply pre-emergent herbicides.

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 specific details and complete Gardening Tips for this month visit **www.MilbergerNursery.com**.

To sign up for the Children's Vegetable Garden Program contact the San Antonio Botanical Garden, www.sabot.org.

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.

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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.



The annual harbinger of spring, **Texas Bluebonnets** are hardy plants that rarely suffer from insect or disease problems. Bluebonnets are the most commonly seen wildflower variety along roadsides and in uncultivated pastures throughout the state. In warmer areas, like South Texas, bluebonnets act as perennials, coming back year after year. Plant these in the sunny part of your landscape and you can become part of a Texas tradition.