

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

MARCH 2018

PLANT QUESTIONS

Is it too late to plant gladiolas for cut flowers this spring? It is pretty late but if you already have the bulbs I recommend that you go ahead and plant them. Most should germinate and bloom. Next year plant the glads from mid-February to mid-March.

I got my tomatoes going good, now what do I need to look out for? Watch for stink bugs and leaf-footed bugs. They are tough to control. Use Sevin spray if they show up. For spider mites use a preventive spray under the leaves (2 Tbs seaweed extract/gallon of water under the leaves every week). For caterpillars use a Bt based spray when you detect them.

I would like to know if English ivy can be rooted in water? Yes, English Ivy can be rooted in water. If the water starts to look bad, you should change it for fresh water.

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.



Imagine lovely golden birds with long spurs atop lacy light green foliage. You can make that dream a reality when you plant the lovely and delicate **Texas Gold Columbine** in your garden. In addition to requiring shade or dappled sun this plant also prefers a moist but well drained site. It can withstand short periods of drought by going dormant. In winter it maintains a rosette of soft green foliage. This hardy perennial is a native that thrives in our south Texas landscapes which is why it has been selected as a Texas Superstar plant.

SOUTH TEXAS GARDENING EXPERTISE

Texas Gold Columbine

Like planting a flock of birds in your garden

The bright, butter-yellow flowers with large, graceful cups and long, dramatic spurs are held well above attractive, blue-green leaves. The blooming season is long for a perennial, beginning in mid-March and flowering through early May. This makes the plant a nice complement for azaleas, and the yellow flowers can be matched by yellow pansies or tulips in sunnier areas of the yard. Unlike some perennials which at times look rather weedy, the scalloped, bluish gray-green leaves and compact, rounded growth habit of 'Texas Gold' make it attractive year round. (MORE 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.

MARCH GARDENING EVENTS

Sat., Mar 10 – 10am 'til 1:30pm
Milberger's Spring Blood Drive. Take advantage of this opportunity to give the gift of life. South Texas Blood and Tissue Center will be conducting this drive at the nursery. To support this drive Milberger's will offer a \$10 gift certificate to each person willing to donate. 210-497-3760

Sat., Mar 10 starts at 10am
Your Family's Spring Vegetable Garden. Learn how to select the plants for your garden, how to plant and care for them and what to do when you spot problems. Free Adult Earth-Kind Educational Seminar at the nursery, presented by David Rodriguez, Extension Horticulturist. 210-497-3760

Sat., Mar 24 – 10am 'til 2pm
Your Rose Questions Answered by Rosarians from the San Antonio Rose Society. Whether you are planting your first roses or if you have had beautiful roses blooming in your garden for a longtime, you will enjoy discussing rose issues with these certified rosarians. At the nursery. 210-497-3760

Sat., Mar 31 – 10am 'til 11am
Backyard Birds for Kids. Learn about feeding and attracting birds to your backyard. Dr. Calvin Finch will host a hands-on, fun-in-nature event about feeding and attracting our local and migratory bird population. Milberger's Kids Gardening 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

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 March Features

Milberger's Landscape Nursery
**ANNIVERSARY
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March 21st thru April 2nd

Celebrated with weekly sales

Visit our website, and check our advertisements
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Get Paid to Plant a Tree
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**South Texas
Tree Experts**
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Milberger's regularly carries OVER FIFTY VARIETIES of Antique and Modern roses that are recommended by the San Antonio Rose Society.

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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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.

SOUTH TEXAS GARDENING EXPERTISE

Texas Gold Columbine

Unlike some perennials which at times look rather weedy, the scalloped, bluish gray-green leaves and compact, rounded growth habit of ‘Texas Gold’ make it attractive year round. Late in the summer some of the leaves may begin to yellow, and you can either remove individual leaves, or cut back the entire plant to let it sprout out all new growth in the fall.

Columbine will bloom best if it is planted in partial, rather than deep shade. An ideal site is under the canopy of a deciduous tree. This would give it sun-dappled shade in summer for heat protection and brighter sun in winter and early

“Yellow blooms that resemble shooting stars rise above light-green foliage to decorate the area under deciduous trees or live oaks with high crowns. The foliage is very attractive itself and makes an attractive groundcover in the shade. ‘Texas Gold’ columbine is a perennial that reseeds new plants each year.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons, Bexar County Horticulturalist

spring when it is actively growing. Columbine needs well-drained soil and does not tolerate wet feet.

‘Texas Gold’ columbine will provide you with a few new plants from seed each year, so you can develop a dramatic drift of yellow with the new plants, or replace older plants as they decline with age. But, it will never become invasive or weedy, and you will welcome the new additions to your landscape, since they blend in so well in almost every kind of design.



Grow your **Texas Gold columbines** in shade, especially from mid-morning on. Give them well-prepared garden soil to which you’ve added 4 or 5 inches of organic matter, and space them 12 inches apart. Because they’ll grow to be 18 to 24 inches tall and 15 inches wide, this spacing will allow a handsome mass of color in the bed. Positioning them so that they’re backed by dark green evergreen foliage will show off the flowers.

Ask the gardening experts at Milberger’s Nursery for more suggestions that will help get your spring garden into full bloom. You will find healthy plant stock, good advice and creative suggestions for your summer landscape and gardening needs from the experienced nursery staff. To see what is on sale each week visit our web site at www.milbergernursery.com or keep and eyes out for our ads in the **San Antonio Express News**.

IN YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN

Growing Award-Winning Tomatoes In San Antonio

Tomatoes are the most popular garden vegetable. The keys to successful tomato growing include timing, variety selection, site preparation and pest control.

We plant tomato transplants in the garden on or after March 15 if the temperature has been warm. If it has been cold, wait until after April 1.

You will enhance your success if you plant your tomatoes in raised beds in full sun. The site should be enriched with 2 inches of compost and 1 cup of slow release lawn fertilizer per 50 square feet of garden.

Plant tomatoes in the garden 3 feet apart. Tomatoes are not xeriscape plants so keep them well-watered. Drip irrigation is the best option. Surround the transplant with an aluminum or steel tomato cage to support the plant and fruit. Use live oak leaves for mulch over the root system.

Select a tomato variety that grows to its full size quickly and then concentrates on setting and maturing fruit before it becomes too hot in the summer. It

will ideally finish its production by mid-July when it can be pulled and retired to the compost pile.

A new crop is planted in early August. Tomato plants that stay in the garden beyond July are more likely to produce fungal diseases and insects than more fruit.

Sunbright has been selected **The 2018 San Antonio Rodeo Tomato.**

Sunbright is a semi-determinate plant which produces high yields of extra-large, firm, oblate fruit that are uniform ripening and have an excellent

smoothness. Sunbright transplants are available at Milberger's Nursery.

Other recommended varieties include BHN 968 (cherry), Valley Cat, Celebrity, 444 Red Deuce and Phoenix.



Successful tomato growing really can be simplified to a few key factors: good soil, adapted varieties, early planting, lots of sunlight, dependable moisture and wise fertilizing. With a little attention to these key factors, you can grow a bumper crop of delicious tomatoes this spring.

This year **Milberger's Top Tomato Contest** is June 9th. Bring your finest homegrown tomatoes and/or a bowl filled with your best garden vegetables to Milberger's Nursery before noon, and fruits of your garden may be selected a winner in one of five categories: Every entrant will receive a free \$10 gift certificate redeemable at Milbergers on the day of the contest only.

LAWNCARE

Secrets to a More Perfect Lawn

A soft, green lawn is a mark of pride for many homeowners. A beautiful, lush, and natural-looking lawn becomes a big part of how they come to define their home. Here are some basic points advice for establishing terrific turf.

“Gardeners enjoy having attractive turf, particularly as spring unfolds. Keeping grass healthy and vigorous is one of the best ways of eliminating weeds and help you get your lawn to where you want to be.”

~ Neil Sperry

Prevent Weeds Before They Come Up:

Stop weeds from gaining a foothold in your lawn before they even germinate by using a pre-emergent herbicide. This type of product controls the dreaded crabgrass, as well as other hard-to-eliminate weeds, by stopping their seeds from sprouting in your lawn. You should use a pre-emergent early in the spring.

Eliminate broadleaf weeds, like dandelions, once they've sprouted:

Broadleaf weeds are immediately obvious in your lawn: the bright-yellow faces of dandelions (and their scatter-in-the-wind seeds), white-flowering clover and big-leaf plantain are all pretty visible. To treat, apply granular weed control products.

If there are just a few offenders, you can remove them by hand.

Mow High and Frequently:

Mowing your lawn too short may seem like a time saver, but this can damage your grass as well as allow weeds to set root. Keeping your lawn a bit taller results in healthier grass. It's best to remove only the top third of the grass blade. And be sure to keep your mower blade sharp.



Spring is the ideal time to start new lawns. **Common bermuda** is extremely durable and drought-tolerant. **St. Augustine** grows best in full sun, but it tolerates shade. **Zoysias** are intermediate between the two, but growing in popularity. **Buffalograss** should be confined to areas where bermuda will not invade it. There is no product that can eliminate bermuda in buffalograss without damaging the buffalograss at the same time. You can sod bermuda and zoysia almost anytime in the spring, but seeding and hydromulching should wait until after mid-April. St. Augustine sod will re-establish more quickly once the soils warm, probably after early to mid-April. Keep the new grass moist until it establishes deep roots.

Milberger's Nursery offers the largest selection of turf grass sod available in South Central Texas. We have sample lawn areas that you can walk on and examine for compatibility with your landscape. Visit our website www.milbergernursery.com or ask the experts at Milberger's.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Best Texas Shade Trees

Texas is hot. Planting large shade trees not only adds value to your home, but it can also offer respite from the heat, shade your home to reduce energy costs, provide a home for habitat, and add beauty to your landscape. When you live in an urban environment, it's even more important to provide shade to homes and surrounding areas – all that extra concrete from roadways, sidewalks and buildings significantly increase temperatures in the city. Shade trees are a great way to cool things off. These are a few of our Texas-tough shade trees to consider for your landscape.

CEDAR ELM is highly drought tolerant once established. This large, native tree sports small, deep green leaves in spring that turn to a golden hue in autumn. Grows large, up to 90', to offer a wonderful amount of shade.



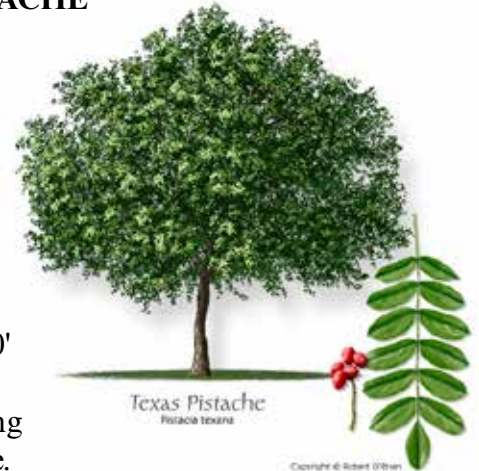
SHUMARD RED OAK

has rich green leaves that turn fiery red in fall. It has a beautiful, open canopy and thick branches. Leave lots of room as it can grow upwards of 120 feet. Enjoy acorns through summer.



CHINESE PISTACHE

are easy-to-maintain trees that are beautiful, as well as pest and heat tolerant. In fall, leaves turn bright orange to red. Grows 40'-50' tall and 30' wide. Perfect for shading a one story house.



MONTERREY OAK has wonderfully textural, dark to light gray bark and oblong, deep green leaves, except in spring when new leaves are a lovely peach color. Grows to 40'. Great for urban landscapes.



LIVE OAK has a dense, wide canopy, offering wonderful shade in summer; is very long-lived; has adapted to our clay soil; and has unique branches that over time drape the ground beneath.



Take advantage of CPS's Green Shade Rebate to save \$50 per shade tree for qualifying customers. Visit our web site 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.

MARCH GARDENING TIPS

Spring Planting Time

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

March is a major gardening month in our area. The weather stabilizes and by the end of the month it is warm enough to consider the warm weather plants. The average last freeze date occurs during mid-month. This is the time to prepare beds for planting flowers and vegetables. You may want to go in with a neighbor and rent a tiller for this laborious task—of course a shovel or spading fork will do the same job, it's just harder.

COLOR: March is great geranium month. Use them in morning sun. You can cut tulip foliage down as soon as it is unattractive because they probably won't come back. On daffodils, Dutch iris and other low-chill bulbs, however, leave the foliage until it turns brown. The green leaves are replenishing the bulbs for next year's blooms. Fall-planted pansies, snapdragons, dianthus, stocks, alyssum and larkspur are spectacular this month. It is not too late to plant daylilies and irises if they are well rooted in containers. And March is a month to plant the gardener's favorite vegetables such as tomatoes, sweet corn and snap beans and pepper as well as cucumbers, lima or butter beans, cantaloupe, okra, southern peas, pumpkin, squash, peanuts and watermelon.

PRUNE: If you didn't get around to pruning your spring flowering and evergreen shrubs during February, do it in early March.

LAWN CARE: March is a good month for aeration and adding a half-inch of compost as a soil dressing. It's still too early to fertilize the lawn. It may begin to green up, but the root systems are not fully active until warmer weather arrives. Tune up the lawnmower and be sure the blade is very sharp. Dull blades tear the grass, sharp ones cut it.

FERTILIZE: Use a pre-plant application of a slow-release fertilizer analysis such as 19-5-9 at the rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet of garden planting area. Early March is the ideal time to fertilize landscape plants because you give them food just before the spring growing season starts.

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR a spectacular spring wildflower display. The spring months in South central Texas are perhaps best known for their many, many wildflowers.

For more detailed and complete Gardening Tips for this month visit www.MilbergerNursery.com.

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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Planning for a Water Garden?



Milberger's has Water Garden
Kits, Koi, Water Plants
and expert advice.



You might think early spring is actually too soon for plants to be blooming, but there are some beauties that surprise us and start blossoming early in the season. Famous for providing cheer through the winter months, **paperwhites** will be the first to welcome early spring to your garden. These plants look best when massed in clusters of slender stems so plant them in clusters of three to five bulbs. Anytime between September and December is the right time for planting paperwhites and they will be among the first to welcome spring to your landscape.