

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

APRIL 2018

PLANT QUESTIONS

We still have flowers and seed pods on our sweet peas. Can we collect these seeds and use them for next year's planting?

Yes. Allow the pods to fill out and begin to turn brown. Collect the pods and store them in a paper sack where the pods will release the seed. Plant them in October and/or November.

Is it too late to fertilize the lawn? If not, what fertilizer should we use?

If you have already cut your lawn a couple times then April is a good time to fertilize the lawn. Use a slow release fertilizer such as 19-5-9 where 50% of the nitrogen is released over 3 to 4 months.

We just planted a new live oak and a Texas red oak.

Should we mulch

them? Yes. If you use leaves, mulch over the root system, five or six inches is not too deep. The leaves will settle down to three or four inches.

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.



Tropical milkweed is widely popular in butterfly gardens due to its vibrant color. Monarchs will lay eggs on the milkweeds in April on their annual migration from Mexico to Canada. In addition to Monarchs, Tropical milkweed provides critical nectar for a wide variety of butterflies, pollinators, and hummingbirds.

SOUTH TEXAS GARDENING EXPERTISE

Milkweed & Monarchs

By D. Hairlloyde, The Accidental Gardener

Each spring millions of Monarch butterflies head north from Mexico to Texas where they produce the first of up to three generations. The offspring spend the summer feeding and breeding on milkweed as they work their way through the northern United States and southern Canada. In fall, the final generation of the annual migration makes the trek back to Mexico stopping, once again in Texas. Tropical milkweeds along with several varieties of native milkweeds provide critical nectar and egg-laying sites for monarchs. Milkweeds are critical to the butterflies because they are the only genus of plants that monarchs will use for egg laying. While the native milkweeds are bland in color Tropical milkweed is popular in landscapes because of its rich orange and yellow color.

(MORE MILKWEED 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.

APRIL GARDENING EVENTS

Sat., Apr 7 starts at 10:30am

Turf Grass 101: Do's and Don'ts for Your Lawn. David Rodriguez from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will discuss the basics of lawn maintenance through proper nutrition, mowing, weed control and irrigation. Seminar is free. At the nursery. 1.5 CEU's for Master Gardeners who attend. 210-497-3760

Sat., Apr 21 – All Day

Milberger's Fiesta Texas Celebration. Join us at the nursery for Fiesta food and while you pick out the colorful plants that will liven up your landscape. 2018 Milberger Fiesta Medal will be available with proceeds going to Salvation Army and the San Antonio Food Bank. 210-497-3760



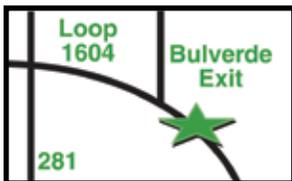
Sat., Apr 21

Spring Rose Show presented by the San Antonio Rose Society at the San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N New Braunfels Ave., San Antonio. Contact Murray Warner 210-313-3371

Sat., Apr 28 – 10 'til 11am

Honey Bees for Kids. Your kids will see how a bee hive works and why they are important to our plants and flowers. No one will get stung. 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 April Features

APRIL is one of our most colorful months.

Trucks arrive almost every day with

BLOOMING ANNUALS and **PERENNIALS** in every imaginable color. Milberger's puts different plants **on sale** every week.

APRIL IS THE LAST MONTH to Get Paid to PLANT with CPS Green Shade rebates

\$50 PER TREE

UP TO FIVE TREES REBATES PROGRAM EXPIRES APRIL 30 Just ask one of the **South Texas Tree Experts at Milberger's**



Keeping a green lawn in San Antonio is a lot easier with turf grass from Milberger's.

St Augustine, Bermuda Grass, Zoysia and Buffalograss.

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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SOUTH TEXAS GARDENING EXPERTISE

Milkweed

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Technically not native to the United States, Tropical milkweed is widely popular in butterfly gardens. Growing as a naturalized perennial plant in the southern U.S. it can also be easily started from seeds in the northern U.S. and treated as an annual. For an even longer blooming period

“Gardens designed to attract and nurture butterflies contribute to the health and well-being of one of our very important pollinators. Butterfly gardens also give us an opportunity to provide a fun and educational family activity.”

~ Dr. Calvin Finch

in colder regions, Tropical milkweed plants are easily potted up in the fall and grown indoors over the winter.



A Monarch caterpillar finds the nectar it needs for chrysalis on a Tropical milkweed plant. Milkweeds are the only genus of plants that monarchs will use for egg laying.

Blooming over a wide range of months, many sources claim that Tropical milkweed is the preferred milkweed for Monarch caterpillars due to its tender leaves. Whether or not this is true, it is certain that Tropical Milkweed is popular as both, caterpillar food plant and butterfly nectar plant.

Native to Central America and Mexico, Tropical milkweed grows well and sometimes year round in Texas. Some scientists worry that the year round availability of milkweed in Texas may be confusing Monarchs, encouraging them to stay in Texas rather than migrating back to Mexico where they reproduce. One way to avoid that it to cut back your Tropical milkweed in the fall forcing Monarchs to continue on their way.

Learn how to build a butterfly garden at your house at Milberger's free adult seminar May 19 starts at 10:30 am. While at Milberger's you can visit our butterfly garden, certified by the North American Butterfly Association, and ask for our complete list of butterfly attracting plants. www.milbergenursery.com.

LAWNCARE

How to Grow Grass Under Your Trees

Grass needs strong sunlight to grow so getting it to grow underneath trees can be challenging. Trees provide shade that blocks the grass underneath from getting enough sun exposure. Trees also drain the soil of nutrients and moisture. There are some grasses, however, that, when properly maintained, can actually thrive underneath trees.

To help grass thrive under your trees prune the tree's lower branches. This will allow more light to filter through to the grass underneath. Water the grass once a week during dry periods, and fertilize it three times a year. This can help replace the nutrients that are being absorbed by the tree. Let it grow taller. Don't mow the grass under the tree as enthusiastically as you mow the rest of your lawn. Grass growing under trees should be allowed to grow about an inch longer than grass that's not in a shaded area. This way, the grass will reach more sunlight, and will also develop deeper roots.

Zoysia and St. Augustine grow in shade and acclimate perfectly in the Texas heat. It's important to not only choose shade-tolerant varieties but also to pay attention to the types of grasses that grow best in our climate. For some regions, the best grass for shade might be a mix of several types of grass seeds rather than one specific kind.

That's why it's a good idea to talk to the lawn experts at Milberger's to help you decide which lawn grass is right for your specific landscape.

Rye and fine, red and tall fescues only need four hours of sun a day but these grasses tend to fare better in cooler climates that South Texas has to offer.

When planting grass under trees, be careful not to add too much soil. Some trees can't tolerate even a few inches of soil spread over their roots, so check with a gardening expert before planting. By choosing the right grass and following a few maintenance tips, you should be able to

keep your entire lawn looking green – including the areas under the leafiest trees.



Floratam St. Augustine Grass sod under tree is greener because it can uptake iron better than any other St. Augustine Grass.
(Photo by Billie McKensie for PlantAnswers.com)

YOUR GARDEN BEDS

Daylilies for South Central Texas

By Mark Carpenter, San Antonio Daylily Society

Daylilies are prolific and colorful bloomers. Few pests show any interest in them. They will grow in sun or shade, dry or wet soil, can tolerate both flooding and drought, and produce beautiful flowers throughout Texas. The single most important factor in growing daylilies well here in south

Texas is location. Daylilies need full morning sun and full mid-to-late afternoon shade. Next best choice is full morning sun and partial afternoon sun. Full morning and full afternoon sun is the worst choice for them, and can sometimes kill them, as they bake in our brutal summer temps. Daylilies need full sunlight in the morning hours to open properly.

“Daylilies are a diverse group of perennial flowers unsurpassed for versatility in the home landscape. Blossoms now come in pink, purple, red, peach, apricot and all shades in between, including dramatic color combinations. Petals may be ruffled, twirled or flecked with eye-catching glitter”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons, Bexar County Horticulture Specialist

During bloom season you may remove by clipping off the next day any bloom from the previous day. When all blooms are done, you should never cut the scape – the scape holds all flowers on it. Wait until it can be removed from the plant with a gentle pull only. It will be brown in color at this point.

Daylilies should not be planted too deep. Whenever doing any mass planting—say with 25 or more daylilies per bed, space the roots 12 to 15 inches apart. But if you want a colorful garden accent, plant in groups of 3 or 5, leaving just 6 inches between individuals. Keep your lilies soil moist, but not wet.

Lilies have only a few enemies but aphids may attack the scapes on lilies in early spring, and can cause them to not bloom. You can spray systemic insecticide all over the flower and new buds without damaging them. If you prefer the organic approach, you can spray with an insecticidal soap or use a neem oil spray.



The earliest flowering daylilies bloom in April with the iris. A careful selection of varieties will provide continuous blooming through August and early September. Some varieties will produce flowers in the spring and a second crop later in the summer. Be sure to remove spent flowers to prevent seed formation. This will prolong the flowering season and will prevent seedlings.

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

TREES AND SHRUBS

Shrubs To Match Your House

By Jim Gober and David Beaulieu

There is something unsettlingly stark about the intersection where house meets land – it begs to be softened with greenery. Foundation planting is done by installing plants around the foundation of a home to disguise open areas or bare cement, depending on how the foundation is built.

Having shrubbery right up against your house isn't good for the house, the shrubbery, or for you. Locate good-sized shrubs (6 feet tall or higher at maturity) in such a way that their mature foliage will remain at least 5 feet away from the house.

You can get away with planting shrubs that stay shorter a bit closer to the house. In hot, humid climates, you'll want more air circulating between the house and the foundation shrubs, to discourage rot. Adequate spacing between the plants themselves, too, is important, to reduce disease and maintenance.

Shrubbery at the entryway to your house should inject a sense of welcome into such a critical area of the property – that transitional area from outdoors to indoors. For that reason, special importance should be attached to the shrubbery in an entryway design during plant selection. Foundation shrubs in the entryway design should be your biggest attention-grabbers.

Smart plant usage at the corners of a house is important, too, since these plants can frame the house visually. Plant these foundation shrubs (or small trees) far enough away from the corners so that, even at maturity, they won't obscure the corners of the house.

The remaining foundation shrubbery in your landscape bridges the gaps in the foundation planting, between the entryway design and the corners.



Dense, evergreen and low-maintenance with delicate foliage, **green pittosporum** makes an attractive hedge plant or foundation plant. It grows up to 15 feet tall in a naturally mounded shape but responds well to pruning. With a regular trim, this shrub can be kept the desired size and shape. Pick a sunny spot for your new shrub, as this plant thrives on full sun, at least six hours per day.

The best plants for foundation planting in South Texas are shade- and drought-tolerant plants that are evergreen, easily maintained and have interesting foliage, flowers or growth habits.

APRIL GARDENING TIPS

April Gardens Are Blooming

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

April is usually the best month of the year for snapdragons. Keep them well watered. Resist the urge to cutback the wildflowers, larkspurs, columbine, and other naturalized flowers too early. The seeds must mature if you want a regrowth next year. Roses should be blooming now. Old-fashioned roses benefit by sprays and irrigation, but it is less necessary.

Plant: In the vegetable garden, plant tomatoes, and peppers by transplants; and okra, southern peas, and melons by seed. The spinach, Brussel's sprouts, carrots, and beets are still producing. If you planted potatoes, you can begin harvesting them when the flowers appear. There is nothing better than a mess of new potatoes boiled and buttered. The onions will be ready to harvest when the leaves fall over. It will probably occur in May.

April is a good month to plant esperanza, lantana, the blue salvias, and Pride of Barbados for hot weather blooms. They require full sun. Crepe myrtles are available in every form from miniatures to 40' trees.

Plant caladium tubers after mid-month.

Lawncare: If you have been anxious for action on the lawn, this is your month. Our grasses respond to the warm weather, and begin serious growth in April. Fertilize with slow release lawn fertilizer late in the month. Keep the grass mowed to help the lawn grass compete with the winter weeds that want to form seed heads. It is not too late to aerate and top dress the lawn.

Prune: Prune pillar or climbing roses, wisteria, and Carolina jessamine as soon as they have finished flowering. Vigorous landscape shrubs will need frequent pruning.

Fertilize: April is the ideal time to fertilize lawn grasses after the lawn grass has been mowed twice.

Be on the lookout for: Weeds, snails, fireants and aphids.

Odd Jobs: Thinning vegetables is one of the most important follow-up activities in gardening

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



Drift roses are a low growing, ground cover, disease-resistant rose with abundant blooms in coral, apricot, peach, red and pink blooms. Look at them as a cross between a ground cover rose and a miniature rose bush. They are very compact to the ground and will only get about 2 feet tall and about 3 feet wide. They are perfect for sunny borders.