

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

JUNE 2015

PLANT QUESTIONS

Which is the best lawn grass for a high-traffic situation? If your lawn is in the sun, Bermuda grass has the most traffic tolerance. Zoysia grass is also traffic tolerant and has some shade tolerance.

Should we try to remove the mistletoe from our mesquite trees? Is it killing them? Mistletoe is a parasite that adds some stress to the trees, but it is not a major problem. It can be cut off the branches but will return. There are no effective spray programs.

We have planted milkweed for the monarch butterflies but is loaded with aphids. Should we try to control them? Just leave them be. The milkweed should survive fine despite the feeding aphids. Lady bugs and other predatory insects will reduce the population. Insecticide will interfere with monarch egg laying and feeding.

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.



Peppers are perhaps the most diverse of all our garden vegetables. There are several species which each offer a range of sizes, shapes and colors. Some are sweet and mild while others will burn the taste buds right off of your tongue.

IN YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN

Growing Peppers in South Texas

Peppers may be sweet and mellow or fiery hot, depending on variety. By growing an assortment of varieties, you can have mild, meaty peppers for salads or stir-fries, slightly spicy peppers for fresh salsas, and hot peppers for bold jolts of flavor. When growing peppers, choose a range of varieties, for a wonderful mix of both flavors and fruit sizes. Under hot summer conditions, varieties that bear huge fruits may shed their blossoms, but small, thin-walled peppers often keep going strong. Small-fruited peppers also ripen faster.

(CONTINUED 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.

JUNE GARDENING EVENTS

Starts Mon. Jun 8, Jun 15 and June 22

Mitchell Lake weekly Adventure Camps, your child will be outside enjoying hands-on learning and exploration: Outdoor Art Adventures , Crazy Critter Crew, Zombie Survival Skills. At Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, 10750 Pleasanton Road, San Antonio. \$225 per week. 210-628-1639

Thurs, Jun 11 – 6:30pm 'til 9:00pm

San Antonio Herb Society introduces their Special Interest Groups. Come by and learn what we do. San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N New Braunfels. Free and open to the public. 210-826-6860

Sat., Jun 13 – Noon 'til 2pm

Milberger's Top Tomato Contest. Bring your finest homegrown tomatoes and/or a bowl filled with your best garden vegetables to Milberger's Nursery before noon. Every entrant receives a \$10 gift certificate. At Milberger's Nursery. See our web site for flier or call 210-497-3760

Sat., Jun 20 – 10:30 'til Noon

Summer Color for your Landscape. Keep your garden beds blooming throughout the heat of the summer. David Rodriguez, will answer your specific questions about your gardening issues. Free Earth-Kind seminar at Milberger's Nursery. 210-497-3760

Sat., Jun 27 – 10am 'til 11am

Bonsai for Kids. Each child will be provided the materials and help to create their very own bonsai . Free. Held at Milberger's Nursery. Class size is limited to 20 children, so call and reserve your space early. 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

June Features

SUMMER IS HERE.
SCHOOL IS OUT.
DAYS ARE LONGER. **ENJOY!**

So it's time to pour yourself a long glass of ice tea and enjoy your garden and landscape. You can still plant vincas in full sun or shade plants. 

Milberger's Popular TOP TOMATO CONTEST

Your Homegrown tomatoes could be a winner. Bring the best from your garden to the nursery

June 13  **before noon** **5 CATEGORIES!!!**



CHERRY & SMALLER TOMATOES
Regular Tomatoes
Biggest Tomato BASED ON WEIGHT
Best of Show GRAND CHAMPION
Best Salad Bowl

Every one who enters receives a **\$10.00 Milberger Gift Certificate**
Contest Rules at the nursery or on our web site

SHADE TREES • PALM TREES ORNAMENTAL TREES & SHRUBS

Milberger's has the largest selection of **fresh fresh well-rooted trees** in the San Antonio area. Visit our tree lot and select a species that is well adapted for our growing area.



**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



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308-8867 or
1-866-308-8867

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Facebook.com.milberger's nursery

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 Urban Water Program Director for the Texas A&M Institute of Renewable Natural Resources. The Gardening Newsletter for South Central Texas is edited by Marc Hess mhess@htcc.coop.

IN YOUR VEGETABLE GARDEN

Growing Peppers

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

From sweet, crisp peppers in rainbow shades to habaneros hot enough to bring tears to your eyes, all peppers share a preference for a long, warm growing season. As peppers change from green to yellow, orange, or red, both their vitamin content and flavor improve dramatically. People who think they don't like peppers often change their minds once they have tasted fully ripened, garden-grown peppers. For many hot peppers, the ripest fruits (the ones that have turned red) pack the most heat.

Growing peppers is easy in any sunny, well-drained spot, and they are good candidates for roomy containers, too. Peppers have a naturally upright growth habit, so they often benefit from staking, which keeps brittle branches from breaking when they become heavy with fruit.



Habanero peppers are among the hottest chili peppers in the world. Unripe habaneros are green, but the color at maturity varies. Common colors are orange and red, but white, brown, and pink are also seen.

“Peppers are still the trendy veggies you must have for your vegetable garden to be... well, to be cool. But they are not just for the vegetable patch, as numerous new ornamental types are available for setting annual beds ablaze with color.”

– Skip Richter, Contributing Editor, Texas Gardener

Handling Hot Peppers: Capsaicin, the oily compound that produces the heat in a hot pepper, is primarily concentrated in the veins, ribs, and seeds. Sensitivity to it varies. Use caution until you know how you'll react. If pepper juice gets in your eyes or nose, flush immediately with cold water. When the fire is in your mouth, drink milk or eat yogurt to counteract the burn. Burning hands means that capsaicin has penetrated skin or lodged under fingernails. Dipping hands into a 5-to-1 solution of water and bleach turns capsaicin into a salt that you can rinse away.

PEPPER HEAT INDEX*	
HEAT LEVEL	PEPPER TYPES
Very Mild	Sweet Bells, Pimento, Sweet Banana & Cherry
Mild	Ancho (Poblano), Anaheim, Paprika
Medium Hot	Jalapeño, Hot Banana, Rocotillo, Cascabel
Hot	Serrano, Chili de Arbol, Hot Yellow Wax
Very Hot	Cayenne, Tobasco, Chiltpin (Piquin)
Infernally Hot	Thai Hot
Thermonuclear Meltdown	Habanero

*From Texas Gardener

To spice up your summer landscape with dramatic summer color visit our nursery where you will find Texas SuperStars® plants that will thrive in your summer landscape. Take a look at our web site www.milbergernursery.com or look for our ads in the **SanAntonio Express-News** to find which plants are on sale.

WILDCAPES

Attracting Butterflies to Your Garden

By Keith Hansen, Horticulture Extension Agent

Luring more butterflies to the garden is simple. Texas has more species and subspecies than any other state, and thanks to our long growing season and the huge assortment of native and adaptable plants that thrive in South Texas, gardeners can easily provide food and shelter for these desirable creatures. You don't need a fancy facility to attract butterflies to your own yard. Large masses of color will draw in both native and migrating species, and if the right foods are present, they'll probably hang around and visit for many days.

Provide Food and They Will Come. It is important to provide food plants not only for the adult butterfly, but also for the less-attractive larval stage. By supplying larval food plants, butterflies will be attracted to your yard to lay their eggs for future generations. Caterpillars usually need different foods than the adults, so a variety of plants will increase the diversity of butterflies that are attracted to your yard since adult

butterflies will be drawn to larval food plants on which to lay their eggs.



Some butterflies, like this monarch on a lantana, are drawn to very specific plants, while others will visit nearly any attractive flower that provides nectar. Many species need very particular plants on which to lay their eggs.

Butterflies also like damp areas where they can sip water and dissolved salts from the mud. This is called "puddling". You can make your own puddle by fixing a spot in the sun near your flower garden where the soil will stay damp and

visiting butterflies can easily spot it. Sink a shallow tray, fill it with garden soil, and perhaps enrich it with a bit of manure. Keep the soil constantly moist. You may not attract any butterflies, but when you do see them resting elsewhere on a muddy patch of ground, you'll know what they are doing.

Overripe fruit will also draw many butterflies. A shallow pan on the edge of the garden filled with slices of melon or banana will attract a lot of attention. Try using cantaloupe rinds clipped to a coat hanger and hung in a sunny spot for drawing butterflies. Nearly any kind of overripe fruit, especially if it is fermenting, will host a crowd of butterflies.

PERENNIALS

Perennials for South Texas Landscapes

From The Extension Education in Bexar County

Perennial plants may be defined as those which endure or persist from the same root part year to year. Once a prominent part of nearly every Texas landscape, perennials are often overlooked by today's gardeners and nurserymen. Although many species still can be found in private gardens, their availability is often restricted to sharing among friends and neighbors.

Most perennials are easily propagated by division, seed or cuttings. Division is particularly successful since it not only provides new plants but is often necessary for the continued vigor of plants. Perennials can be highly useful and attractive in the home landscape. They often persist for many years and usually require less maintenance than annuals. They can provide long seasons of color and cut flowers while enhancing overall landscape development. If a perennial border

“Perennials can be highly useful and attractive in your landscape. They not only persist for many years but usually require less maintenance than annuals. Most times you get more bloom for your money with perennials than annuals.”

– Dr. Jerry Parsons, Bexar County celebrity horticulturalist and Plant Answers man.

is more than you care to attempt as your initial experience with perennials try adding a few to existing plantings.

Many perennials have attractive foliage and are an asset even when not in flower. Division is an important cultural requirement of many perennials. Without an occasional thinning, most of these plants will slowly lose their vigor. Most perennials will tolerate relatively poor growing conditions but respond very favorably to well-prepared planting areas containing high percentages of organic materials and moderately high fertility rates.



Trailing Lantana is a popular perennial groundcover prized for its masses of beautiful lavender flowers that appear almost year-round. Works well in containers and hanging baskets as well.



Blue plumbago is a perennial shrub that is prized as a shrub, climber, potted plant and groundcover. Relatively easy to grow blue plumbago is considered moderately drought-tolerant, and excessive moisture can lead to root rot.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Some Small Trees Perform Well in Heat

By Dr. Calvin Finch

Summer is upon us and we'll be seeing daily temperatures reach over 90 degrees F. There are several selections of small trees that perform well in the heat in full sun. They grow fast and even bloom to provide important summer color when other plants want to hide from the heat.

Vitex or chaste tree reaches 25 feet on good soils, but most specimens in the San Antonio area are about 12 to 15 feet tall. It is a tree that is inclined to be about twice as wide as it is tall. Vitex is virtually insect and disease free. It is also a premiere xeriscape plant that does not seem to interest deer as a food source. The highway department uses vitex as a median tree; that's how tough it is. The hummingbirds and butterflies use them as a nectar source all summer long.

Desert willow is not a willow at all but was named "willow" because of its strap-like (willow-like) leaves and flexible-looking growth habit. It prospers in dry soils and is most noticeable in deep droughts like the ones in 1996 and 2000. I am not sure if it

is noticeable because the orchid-like blooms are so spectacular or if it is because nothing else is blooming in the drought. Desert willow is not a disciplined grower. It is described as rangy by some critical observers, but when it is 100 degrees F. a 15-foot tall tree full of blooms on a dry lawn is a treasure. Hummingbirds like desert willow and deer do not seem very interested in it.

Be assured that crepe myrtles will provide a colorful show this summer and fall. Crepe myrtle is a xeriscape plant but not in the league of desert willow or vitex. To keep crepe myrtles blooming at peak levels during a droughty summer



requires a deep watering every month. They will survive without irrigation but bloom better with limited watering. Crepe myrtles are in the same category as hollies and nandinas in being important parts of most xeriscape landscapes. You can select a crepe myrtle to fit every size requirement in the landscape, from groundcover to low shrub, to large shrub to small tree.

JUNE GARDENING AND LAWCARE TIPS

Planting for Summer Color

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

Plant: For color get the begonias and impatiens in quickly if you expect them to fare well when the heat arrives. Wait to mid-month to plant periwinkles. Hot weather plants include firebush, lantana, poinciana, esperanza, firespike, caladium, coleus, begonia, moss rose, hibiscus, bougainvillea, purslane, cannas and blue princess verbena

Plant sun-loving, heat tolerant annual flowers such as portulaca, purslane, copper plants, lantanas, and ornamental peppers. Let your wildflowers go to seed before mowing.

Prune pillar or climbing roses as soon as they have finished their major bloom to allow time for the development of new canes for next spring's blooms. Prune storm-damaged tree branches immediately after damage occurs.

Fertilize: If you have not applied fertilizer to the lawn, May is a good month to fertilize lawn grasses after the lawn grass has been mowed twice. Slow release fertilizers are best because they feed

throughout the growing season and do not leach (wash) into the ground

Odd Jobs: After spring bulbs have finished flowering, wait until the foliage turns brown before cutting it off. Food is being manufactured and stored for next year's blooms. Mulch plants to reduce watering requirements, suppress weed growth and minimize soil temperature changes. Peach fruit should be thinned to six to eight inches apart along the fruiting branches which generally leaves about 600 fruit per mature tree; apples and pears should be thinned to one fruit per spur or cluster.

On the Lookout: To encourage more rapid re-blooming, pinch off old flowers on bedding plants after their first flower cycle is completed. Roses may encounter insect problems. Watch for aphids on tender new growth, thrips on flowers and cucumber beetles on foliage. Beetles are especially a problem if a vegetable garden is nearby. Fear not, this is the normal season of leaf shed for photinias, gardenias, ligustrums, pittosporums and magnolias.

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**.

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When you need turfgrass and sod
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The **Mexican Bird of Paradise** (also Pride of Barbados) is a tropical looking tree with electric-orange blooms. Especially striking in the warmer months when its dark green the fern-like foliage provides a backdrop for the bright yellow flower spikes erupting from the tips of its woody branches. It attracts butterflies, bees and hummingbirds. Extremely heat and drought tolerant once established which is why it has been designated a Texas SuperStar® plant.

