

# MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

AUGUST 2015

## PLANT QUESTIONS

**Are pentas annuals or perennials? We planted pentas next to lantana under a live oak last year. The lantana are now blooming, but the pentas have not come back.** Pentas are usually annuals; if we have a mild winter, they can be root-hardy perennials.

**Is it too late to plant caladiums now? I can't remember how long into the fall they'll thrive.** You could plant them now and they would grow rapidly, but I doubt if you can find bulbs this late in the season.

**What can I do about fire ants in my compost pile?** Make a solution of spinosad and drench the pile; this will get rid the ants but not damage the usefulness of the compost. You could also apply a fire ant bait such as Amdro around the base of the pile and let the ants come-and-get-it.

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.

**Zinnias** like these Marylandica "Zahara Starlight Rose" can be a colorful and long lasting addition to your flower garden. Add this popular annual to sunny areas of your landscape that can benefit from their perky blooms.



## GARDENING EXPERTISE

### Fall Zinnias Mounds of Color

By Robert Burns, Texas A&M AgriLife Research

What really got the Texas Superstar board members excited about fall zinnias were some new series, including the marylandica types that form disease-resistant "mounds of color," lasting until frost when planted in late summer, said a Texas A&M AgriLife Research horticulturist.

"These are very colorful plants that we're promoting for fall use," said Dr. Brent Pemberton, AgriLife Research ornamental horticulturist and head of the Texas Superstar board, Overton. "They have all the fall colors you like to see: oranges, apricots and yellows."

(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](http://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 1 – 10am 'til 1:30pm

**Milberger's Quarterly Blood Drive.** 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) 497-3760

### All Month

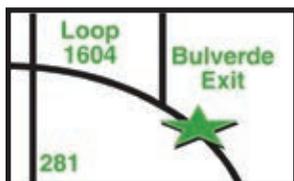
#### **Fall Gardening Class Sign-up**

Applications are being accepted for the Guadalupe County Master Gardener Class. The class will meet on Wednesdays, Aug. 12 – Dec. 9, 10:00 am – 2:30pm, at the AgriLife Building on 210 E. Live Oak, Seguin. Cost – \$190 with \$10 late fee after July 31. The cost of the textbook and handouts are included. Application can be found at [www.guadalupecountymastergardeners.org/](http://www.guadalupecountymastergardeners.org/) Contact Kay McElveen (kay.mcelveen@yahoo.com or 830-401-4420) or Mike Murley (murleym1@yahoo.com or 830-491-8502)

### Sat., Aug 29 – 10am '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. FREE but space is limited. Call to reserve your kid's spot. 210-497-3760

**Find more Gardening Events – visit  
[www.MilbergerNursery.com](http://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.

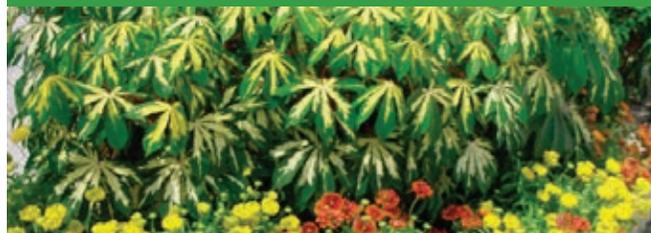
## **Milberger's Landscape Nursery**

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](http://www.milbergernursery.com)  
[nursery@milbergersa.com](mailto:nursery@milbergersa.com)

## Milberger's Nursery August Features



It isn't easy to become a

**Texas Superstar™**

Plants that are HIGHLY RECOMMENDED by **Texas A&M AgriLife** for south Texas and will add **dramatic color** to your late summer landscape.

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

And keep an eye on our **weekly on-sale items** where you can get Texas SuperStars at super-star prices.



## **Fall Garden Mums and Asters**

are about to make their debut.  
**GET YOUR GARDEN READY FOR FALL!**

**Watch for our weekly sale specials in  
The San Antonio Express-News  
or at  
[www.MilbergerNursery.com](http://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 known 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](mailto:mhess@htcc.coop).

## GARDENING EXPERTISE

### Fall Zinnias

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Fall zinnias and chrysanthemums have similar attributes and can be used in much the same ways, Pemberton said. But whereas chrysanthemums may only flower for several weeks, and then only if the weather is cool, fall zinnias tolerate Texas heat well and will display color until the first frost, if properly watered and fertilized.

Gardeners can pinch off or prune young plants of the standard types to encourage bushy-ness, but this is not required for the newer types. Placing the plants so they get good air circulation or flow will further help prevent fungal leaf diseases.

You can also get them in large containers that can be used as patio plants. They're fun to use in mixed containers with other things for fall, such as ornamental grasses or

“Zinnias are one of the best annual flowers for use in San Antonio. They are colorful, attract butterflies and are not eaten by the deer. Some of the selections make good xeriscape plants and some are wonderful cut flowers.”

~ Calvin Finch, Urban Water Program Director

ornamental peppers such as NuMex Twilight, which was named a Texas Superstar several years ago.

Another nice feature to all the zinnia types is they are big attractions for pollinators, such as butterflies.

They actually bloom more proficiently in full sun, he said. They need full sunlight for a half day or more, and will thrive as long as they have moderate water and are planted in a well-drained site or container.



All **zinnias** require full sun and all are rejected by deer as a food source. Use the zinnias for spring, summer, and fall color in neighborhoods with the pesky animals.

Texas Superstars are plants that undergo extensive tests by AgriLife Extension horticulturists and are selected by a board for their ability to perform well for consumers and growers. Texas Superstars are readily available at Milbergers Nursery where you will frequently find them among our weekly on sale items. Find our weekly sale items on our web site [milbergernursery.com](http://milbergernursery.com).

## SUMMER WATERING

# Irrigation Check-Up

By Dr Calvin Finch, Urban Water Program Director, Texas A&M



You can lower your water bill with proper summer irrigation. At least once each month, your irrigation system needs a check-up. Follow these steps:

- 🌿 Turn on each zone for a few minutes and watch the sprinkler heads. Are they spraying in the right direction? Are there any “gushers” indicating a broken head or missing nozzle?
- 🌿 Turn on any soaker or drip lines and watch them run for a few minutes. A damaged soaker hose must be replaced because it will not work properly and does not repair well.
- 🌿 Check your rain sensor. Is it working? Internal disks must be replaced every two years.

Many South Texas homeowners have realized that their Zoysia, Bermuda or buffalo grass lawns can go

dormant for the hottest, driest part of the summer and then green up within days when the rains begin again. Even St. Augustine grass in the shade can survive a San Antonio summer without watering. Choosing the dormancy option is the best way to keep your water bill low, but even if you choose to have a green lawn, the bill can be relatively low.

The average 8,000 square foot lawn uses nearly 3,500 gallons every time it is irrigated in mid-summer. Eliminating even two irrigation cycles in a month saves a tremendous amount of water and lowers your water bill. Grass appearance will be slightly less lush, but grass health will be fine.

Another option to save money is to follow our weekly irrigation advice in the WaterSaver e-newsletter. SAWS will send a personalized e-mail with your advice on the day of your choice.

## IN YOUR ROSE GARDEN

# Fall Rose Pruning

Central Texas' long hot summer's heat takes its toll on many plants. If you put a little effort into pruning, fertilizing, watering, and mulching it will pay off with big rewards throughout the fall.

Roses are among the victims that do their best to survive during the summer. The rapid, lush growth and

“Fall rose pruning in Central Texas generally is recommended just after Labor Day. This cut back also is not as severe as the early spring pruning. It also is an opportunity to shape rose bushes that have become leggy with few leaves due to lack of nitrogen or the aftermath of black spot fungus on leaves.”



By fall, many roses have grown tall and leggy. Colder evenings produce ill-formed, mottled blossoms and yellowing foliage that often starts to fall off. Rose hips, which can interrupt the next blooming cycle, may result if spent blossoms are not removed. Pruning removes diseased and dead stems and canes and reduces the overall size of the plant. The first spring bloom demonstrates how pruning results in an annual process of renewal.

bouquets of blossoms seems like a distant memory.

However, you can get those roses back into shape with just a little help. A fall pruning will stimulate new growth and promote a fall burst of rose buds.

With the exception of some of the shrub roses, most roses flower very little in the heat of summer without a little pampering. As temperatures begin to drop in the fall, rose bushes will begin blooming and will continue until a hard winter freeze or spring pruning eliminates flowers.

Couple fall pruning with a good fertilizer and irrigation program and you will be blessed with an abundance of fall flowers. When watering, try to keep leaves dry to prevent black spot from reappearing on your new leaves. A preventive fungicide will also help to keep the leaves clean and healthy.

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You can find excellent quality mulches at Milberger's Nursery for all of your landscape and flower beds. When you apply at least 2" of mulch to all your landscape and around trees it will help protect your plant investment during our hot and dry South Texas summers.

## TREES AND SHRUBS

# The Versatility of the Oleander

By Jackie Carroll

Oleander plants are among the most versatile of shrubs, with dozens of uses in southern and coastal landscapes. They tolerate a wide range of conditions, including difficult soil, salt spray, high pH, severe pruning, reflected heat from pavements and walls, and drought. But the one thing they can't withstand is winter temperatures below 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

Oleanders bloom from summer to fall, with fragrant flowers in shades of apricot, copper, pink, lilac, red, purple, salmon, yellow, and white, depending on variety. The plants are best adapted to the west coast, southern states, Florida, and Texas and will withstand dry conditions and wind, as well as salty, marshy soils, making them popular in coastal regions. Oleanders grow 6 to 12 feet tall and wide, and some varieties can be trained to grow into small trees up to 20 feet tall. The flowers are very fragrant. All parts of plant are poisonous to humans and animals if ingested;



**Oleander** care is easy and this makes the shrub popular with highway departments. You'll often see masses of oleander shrubs planted in highway beautification projects where they provide an outstanding display of long-lasting flowers with very little maintenance.

the plant's sap can cause skin irritation in some individuals.

Even in the garden, oleander shrubs require minimal care. Although the shrubs are drought-tolerant, they look their best when they are watered during dry spells. However, take care not to over water them. Yellowing leaves indicate that the plant is getting too much water.

When planting an oleander select a site with full sun to light shade and well-drained soil. However, oleanders are adaptable and will withstand dry conditions as well as marshy soils. Plant in the spring or fall. Space plants 6 to

12 feet apart, depending on variety. Water plants during the summer if rainfall is less than 1 inch per week. Prune oleander after the main bloom period to encourage bushier growth and more flowers, and to reduce the size of the shrub.

## AUGUST GARDENING AND LAWNCARE 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 labors.

**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 'Tomato444' 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. A complete listing of what to plant for fall and when to plant it can be found on our website, milbergernursery.com

**Lawncare:** 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.

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**.

**We respect your privacy. Your name will not be shared with anyone not associated with Milberger Nursery.**

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## Planning for a Water Garden?



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



**Sunflowers** have done well all summer. They make good cut flowers and the birds love the seeds. Lesser goldfinches, cardinals, and blue jays are especially noticeable pulling the seeds from the heads. What is commonly called the flower on a sunflower is actually between 1,000 and 2,000 tiny individual flowers. They can grow up to 8 feet tall with some cultivars reaching heights of 15 feet. These striking annuals are edible, ornamental and they attract birds to the garden in late summer and fall when the seed heads are ripe and heavy.