

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

NOVEMBER 2015

PLANT QUESTIONS

Does it make any difference if you water your plants just before the freeze arrives?

In most cases, no. The idea of watering just before the freeze is based on some legitimate relationships between freeze damage and water but is not effective in itself.

The flower buds on my mature crape myrtle never did open this past season. Should they be snipped off or just leave them alone?

Sometime between now and when they start new growth next spring you will probably want to clip off any of the old seed pods and dead, unopened flower buds (which they will be after the first freeze). When you do this procedure is up to you.

When should we move our bougainvilleas into the greenhouse?

Now is a good time. They do not prosper when temperatures fall below 50° F.

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.



Cyclamen will bloom in your shady areas all winter long. They are a tuberous plant with lovely showy flowers which flare upward from the stem with tender foliage with heart shaped green leaves mottled with silver. While dependable in your outside garden throughout the winter cyclamen do well as a container plant as well as a houseplant.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Color Throughout the Winter

By Dr. Calvin Finch

November is the month that we plant several of the annual flowers that provide color throughout the winter months and until April. In shade, cyclamen is the flower of choice. Pansies are the most reliable plant for winter color, if you have at least six hours of sun. Primula is another winter bloomer for the shade in South Texas. Its growth habit resembles pansies but the colors are more striking and include several shades of red. In the sun, use snapdragons, stocks, ornamental kale or cabbage, calendula, allysum, dianthus, and nasturtium.

(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.

HOLIDAY GARDENING EVENTS

Thurs., Nov 12 – 6:30pm

Cooking with Herbs at the San Antonio Herb Society November meeting featuring Chef Ken Edmonds from the Cured Restaurant at the Pearl. San Antonio Garden Center, 3310 N New Braunfels Ave. Free and open to the public. www.sanantonioherbs.org or 210-826-6860.

Sat., Nov. 14 – 10am

SAWS Coupon/Rebate Program. Bexar County Master Gardeners and Ann Vogler will promote and educate the public about the SAWS coupon/rebate program. These programs promote efficient water conservation practices while maintaining an attractive urban environment. At the nursery. 210-497-3760.

Sat., Dec. 5 – 10am 'til 1:30pm

Milberger's Blood Drive is an opportunity for you to give the gift of life. South Texas Blood & Tissue will be conducting this drive and Milberger's will offer a \$10 gift certificate to each person willing to donate. At the nursery. 210-497-3760.

Sat. & Sun., Dec 5 & 6 – all day

Milberger's Annual Christmas Open House. Get into the holiday spirit. Let the kids enjoy some fun activities while you pick the perfect Christmas tree, poinsettia, decorations or gift for the holiday. Fresh cut Christmas trees. Garlands, wreaths, Poinsettias, decorations and unique gifts for the gardeners on your list. (210) 497-3760.

Holiday Break: There is no **Kids Gardening Class** in November or December. Classes will resume in January and continue on the last Saturday of each month throughout the year.

**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 November Features

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You are invited
**Annual Christmas
Open House
Weekend**

Saturday Dec. 5 & Sunday Dec. 6

Come and get into the holiday season. Let the kids enjoy some fun activities while you pick the perfect Christmas tree, poinsettia, decorations or gift for the holiday.

**HOT CHOCOLATE ~ WASSAIL ~ CANDY CANES
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GARLANDS WREATHS ~ POINSETTIAS**

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**Watch for our weekly sale specials in
The San Antonio Express-News
or at
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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 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.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Winter Color for Your Landscape

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

Pansies give you a large selection of colors and several flower patterns. The 'Majestic Giants' produce flowers up to 3 inches across. They have a monkey face (black inner color) and are available in blue, violet, yellow, white, and red-brown. The smaller monkey-faced selections like 'Antique' offer light blue in addition to the colors listed for the large-flowered pansies. 'Crystal Bowl', 'Crown', and 'Universal' are three of the clear-faced pansies. They are available in the same colors as 'Antique' plus orange. Some of the pansy



“Some of the most pleasant outdoor days in Central Texas occur during the winter months making it the best time to garden. The lower temperatures enable us to work outside for longer hours planting trees, shrubs and winter vegetables that will continue to grow and get a head start on spring with less watering.”

family have fragrant flowers. In my experience, yellow is the most fragrant bloom.

Plant pansies about one foot apart in well prepared soil enriched with compost. Fertilize before planting with one cup of slow-release lawn fertilizer for every 50 sq. ft. of bed. Fertilize every few weeks with soluble fertilizer after planting. Live oak leaves or pulverized autumn leaves make a great mulch for both cyclamen and pansies. Drip irrigation is the best watering method for all annual flowers. Pansies are not as drainage-sensitive as cyclamen but will rot quickly in poorly drained soil. Deer, slugs, snails, and pill bugs love pansies. The deer must be fenced away from pansies.

Cyclamen transplants are available at nurseries now in deep red, white, pink, and a lavender-pink. Cyclamen is not an inexpensive plant but when you see the blooms you will realize that it is worth the cost.

The plant will bloom all winter as long as it does not get too much sun and is kept watered but not soggy. Even the foliage is spectacular. The leaves are a patterned lush green. They rise from the base of the plant on stems 5 or 6 inches tall and are 3 to 4 inches across. I use cyclamen in containers near our front door and in a long, narrow bed in front of the house

Visit our nursery to find the winter blooming plants that will thrive in your landscape. Take a look at our web site www.milbergernursery.com or look for our ads in the **San Antonio Express-News** to find which plants are on sale. For expert advice on plants and trees and take advantage of South Texas' warm winters to improve your landscape

FALL GARDENING IN SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

Time To Assess Your Garden

By Joyce Friels, Bell County Master Gardener

Let your plants be happy during the cold winter months in Central Texas. They will be content to lie in wait for the warm spring rains and warming temperatures while storing energy to grow healthy root systems if you will do some pre-planning. The month of November is the best time to take a walk through your garden to see how everything looks.

Be sure to take a note pad and pencil with you to make notes on what you see. You can decide at this time what plants are overgrown and need to be thinned out or divided; which plants are looking scraggly and should be trimmed up; or which plants

should be pulled out if they look like they have bloomed their last blooms this past summer.

This is the time of year to divide and relocate spring blooming perennials and bulbs if you think they could make a prettier show in another place in your garden. After you have walked through your garden and taken notes of what needs to be transplanted, decide where in the yard these plants would put on the best show and be happiest.

Fall planted roses are more likely to be more vigorous during their first summer. However, do not fertilize roses that you plant now but a root stimulator may be applied after watering in the rose bush. Refrain from fertilizing all roses. Feeding them during now and February will interfere with dormancy and any new growth will be damaged by cold weather. Continue to water your roses, however, through fall and winter. If you need to move a rose bush to another place, wait until December or January. Deadhead any roses that are already established in your garden and remove discolored blooms from new plantings to keep insect pests from spending the winter in them. Don't prune them heavily as this will stimulate new growth.



If you would like some **roses** in your garden, now is the time to plant them so they can get a good root system established during this cool season.

Looking for turf grass? Visit Milberger's sample lawn areas. You are invited to examine and walk on these sample lawn areas to help you determine the look and feel of the turf you prefer. We also have information and specification sheets on the different sods. Visit www.milbergernursery.com.

Start preparing the beds for their winter nap. Trim out any dead foliage on plants that are happy and clear out all dead debris around each plant and place new mulch around each one. Put new mulch around those plants that are still putting out blooms. Cover any plants that have died down to the ground and put a name marker of what they are so you won't mistakenly dig them up while putting in new plants in the spring. Also cut back any summer blooming plant foliage that has browned and mark these locations.

Remember, the weather in Central Texas can be mildly pleasant in November or a "blue norther" could blow in, your tender perennials and still-blooming flowers need to be covered. This can be done easily by just placing a bed sheet or light blanket over them, holding the edges down with rocks or soil. Be sure to remove the covering when the sun comes out and the temperature rises. Also, tender plants that are in containers should be brought inside at this time. Place them into sheltered areas where they will be out of the wind.

After making these assessments and preparing your garden for the winter, start planning for next year.

“November and early December are the best times to plant trees in Texas so if you would like to add trees or shrubs to your landscape now is the time. The soil is still warm and this encourages new root growth and the cool weather enables them to go dormant which reduces stress.”

~ Joyce Friels, Bell County Master Gardener

Remember, there is always room in a garden for one more plant. Come spring you will be glad you made all the plants comfortable for the winter and they will show their appreciation by blooming brightly and abundantly for you. Enjoy your efforts as they will provide a happy garden for you and your friends.



In this part of Texas, cool season nursery plants such as **chrysanthemums, pansies, snapdragons, dianthus, annual phlox, calendula,** and **nicotiana** (to name a few) can still be planted. Now is the time to plant irises and amaryllis.

Milberger's has the largest selection of fresh, well-rooted trees in the area. Our South Texas landscape and tree experts can give you advice on which A&M recommended trees would be most suitable for your landscape. Visit our web site at www.MilbergerNursery.com and click through to our on-line tree lot for section and planting guidelines.

FREEZE CONTROL

Protecting Plants in Cold Weather

By Kathleen Philips, Media Relations Manager, Texas A&M AgriLife

“Plants can get used to freezing weather if they are exposed to it consistently and gradually,” according to Monte Nesbitt co-author of *Protecting Landscapes and Horticultural Crops from Frosts and Freezes*. “But in Texas, intermittent warm periods can make it hard for plants to adjust and therefore be more vulnerable to frost or freeze damage.”

“Wait to cut down root-hardy perennials such as *lantana*, *esperanza*, and *poinciana*. Often a freeze will defoliate the plant but not kill the stems giving you a stronger plant in the spring.”

~ Dr. Calvin Finch, Director of Water Conservation



After outdoor plants have been gathered together, cover with a tarp or other opaque material and secure at the bottom to protect from freeze.

A sudden, steep plunge in temperatures which we can get as early as November can bring about a freeze that includes winds, cold air masses, clouds and precipitation over a period of days as it moves across the state. “For plants, that means damage from the low temperatures as well as from the wind from the stalk to the top,” says coauthor Robert “Skip” Richter said. “When the water inside plant cells freezes, ice crystals form that can pierce and damage the cell walls, killing the cells. As temperatures rise, fluids leak out of those cells, and they begin to decay.”

A frost, by contrast, happens when the sky is clear and there isn’t much wind. The amount of radiation given to the plant by the sun is lost gradually during the night to the freezing point just before sunrise. Frosts can be severely damaging as well, but normally only at the top or most exposed part of the plant.

Plants that are permanently set in the landscape can receive some protection from semi-permanent structures such as polyethylene film-covered structures (hoop houses, for example), windbreaks, and mounds of soil or mulch heaped around the lower trunk.

NOVEMBER GARDENING AND LAWCARE GUIDELINES

Planting, Pruning and Time to Fertilize

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

PLANT: November and December are the ideal months to plant trees and shrubs. It is the ideal time to move trees and shrubs as well. Planting now gives the plant time to establish its root system before the shoot growth develops in the spring. Also, usually little supplemental watering is required through the winter. Look around at the fall color and see which plants you would like to add to your landscape. Make certain your final choices are from the list of recommended trees and shrubs for this area found at www.milbergernursery.com.

Many of South Central Texas' finest wildflowers can be seeded now and bluebonnets can be transplanted. Direct-seed the Wildseed seed mixes directly into the soil.

PRUNE: This is the ideal pruning time for many trees and shrubs. If you have oak trees in need of pruning, begin now. It is especially critical in areas where the oak wilt fungus is a problem. Apply horticultural tree wound dressing on all oak cuts. Prune out dead, damaged or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Avoid topping or dehorning.

FERTILIZE: If you have procrastinated the application of the most important lawn fertilization of the year – the application of a “Winterizer” fertilizer to condition the grass for winter survival – do it before December. The fertilizers to use are the ones which have “Winterizer” on the bags and are complete (contains all three elements – nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium) analysis with 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratios.

ON THE LOOKOUT: Watch for pillbugs (sowbugs or rollie-pollies) eating seedlings and young transplants of flowering annuals such as bluebonnets, pansies, etc. Control with a barrier of an insecticide or by using baits until the plants are older and tougher. Scale and other hard-to-kill insect pests may be overwintering on your trees or shrubs.

ODD JOBS: Do not allow heavy accumulations of leaves to pile up on the lawn area. If they get wet and pack together, the grass can be damaged. It is best to rake leaves or pick them up with a mower and bagger and place them in a compost pile or spread them over the garden area and work them into the soil. Add additional fertilizer to assist in decomposition.

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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Milberger's Tree Lot

has the largest selection of healthy, well rooted, ready-to-plant-trees In the area. Fresh new shipment of fruit trees have just arrived and are ready to plant.

Now that summer is over, and so are summer flowers, it's time to replace them with winter-hardy flowers for color. **Pansies** are the number one choice for blooming bedding plants. They're hardy, will bloom over a long season, and come in a wide array of colors. The old-fashioned face varieties have been steadily improved for better garden performance, and many new varieties with solid or bi-colors without a face are now available. You can get anything from bold orange, yellow and red, to pale pastels.

