

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

APRIL 2016

PLANT QUESTIONS

There are red blotches on our snapdragons, and the leaves are yellow. Is there something I can treat them with? The problem sounds like rust, a fungal disease. It is difficult to treat once the warm days begin. The best strategy is to pull the infected plants and replace them with zinnias, vinca and penta or some other summer annual.

Our milkweed is doing well but is loaded with aphids. Should we try to control them? Just leave them be. The milkweed should survive fine despite the feeding aphids. Hopefully, lady bugs and other predatory insects will reduce the population.

Which is the best lawn grass for a high-traffic? 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.

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.



Pentas lead off the list of high impact blooming plants because they provide summer-long blooms in the sun or shade. There is no cycle of bloom and rest with pentas; they are in full bloom every day.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Getting Ready for Summer

Donna Fossum, SAWS conservation planner

Summer is quickly approaching. Now is the time to exchange cold weather annuals for warm season annuals such as marigold, pentas, periwinkle, portulaca, and purslane. Perennial plants should really be showy right now, but to keep them that way, dead-head any spent flowers to keep them blooming. Consider planting a new bed in your garden with hardy, drought-tolerant plants that can survive the summer with little or no water.

With anything you plant now for the summer be sure to add at least a two-inch layer of mulch to help conserve water and prevent weeds. Insect populations are at their peak now, but remember not all bugs are bad bugs so be careful what pesticides you use. You will want to keep the good bugs in your garden. The lawn probably needs to be mowed at least once a week now so keep those lawn mower blades sharpened to avoid damaging the grass with a dull blade.

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 9 – 10am 'til 1:30pm

Milberger's Blood Drive. Take advantage of this opportunity to give the gift of life. South Texas Blood and Tissue Center will be conducting our next scheduled Blood Drive this Saturday. Milberger offers a \$10 gift certificate to each person willing to donate.

Thurs., Apr. 14 – 6:30pm 'til 8:30pm

Herbal Teas, San Antonio Herb Society will present a demonstration of herbal teas by Herb Society member, Diane Lewis. Free. San Antonio Garden Center, on 3310 N. New Braunfels. mbelisle@satx.rr.com

Sat. Apr 23 – 10:30am 'til Noon

Turf Grass 101: Do's and Don'ts for your lawn. David Rodriguez, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will discuss the basics of lawn maintenance through proper nutrition, mowing, weed control and irrigation. This seminar is very popular so arrive early for best parking and seating. Seminar is free. 1.5 CEU's for Master Gardeners who attend. FREE Earth-Kind Seminar at Milberger's Nursery. 210-497-376

Sat., Apr 30 – 10am 'til 11am

Milberger's Kids Class on *The Wonderful World of Insects*, presented by volunteers from the Bexar County Texas AgriLife Extension Service Entomology Department. This program will show your child the benefits insects play in our environment and conclude with a live lady bug release. Designed for children 5 to 10. Milberger's Nursery provides the materials and classes are free but call to reserve a 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 a Tree
with CPS Green Shade rebates**

\$50 per Tree 

**REBATES PROGRAM
EXPIRES APRIL 30**

**UP TO FIVE TREES
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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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.

SUMMER GARDENING EXPERTISE

Summer Color

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

When you take a look at your garden beds you will see that cool weather flowers decline quickly once temperatures go to 80 degrees during the day. While summer heat is upon us your yard and landscape can be full of color if you select the plants that are well adapted to south central Texas and you get them well established before the sultry summer season. While there are many summer blooming plans to choose from consider these:

“Young plants should be watered thoroughly at transplanting and regularly throughout the summer. Check for soil moisture before watering because far more plants are ruined by too much watering than by too little.”

~ Dr. Jerry Parsons, Bexar County horticulturalist.



For landscaping inspiration, this summer, visit the Schultz House where this lovely flagstone walkway carries you to the back patio and garden beds maintained by the Bexar County Master Gardeners. The Schultz House is located in HemisFair Park in downtown San Antonio.

Homestead Verbena will give you vivid purple, two-inch flower clusters on trailing, dark-green foliage which can make this verbena a beautiful carpet within your landscape bed. It grows six to ten inches tall and spreads to about three feet.

New Gold Lantana: There are oodles of pretty lantana color choices, but New Gold Lantana is the most reliable performer in this area. Its clusters of brilliant golden-yellow flowers will just keep going and going from spring to fall.

With **Dwarf Mexican Petunia** you will find large lavender petunia like flowers grow on clumps of dark-green foliage. Mexican petunia likes full sun, but will grow in part sun, especially with a little afternoon shade. However, the more shade the plant has, the fewer flowers it typically produces.

A visit to Milberger's Nursery will help you get your spring garden going. You will find healthy plant stock that is selected to thrive throughout our South Central Texas summers. You will also find the good advice and creative suggestions for your specific landscape and gardening needs. To see what is on sale each week visit our web sit at www.milbergernursery.com or look for our ads in the **San Antonio Express News**.

LANDSCAPE COLOR FOR SUMMER

Whopper Begonias

The New Texas Superstar™ Plant

Wax begonias have long been a staple of Texas Landscapes. But, this recently introduced series distinguishes itself with large leaves on large plants that have enormous flowers held well above the foliage for a showy display. They are outstanding in shade and partial shade and will tolerate full sun except in extreme heat. Both green and bronze foliage types are available with red or rose flowers.

Exposure:

Does best in partial to full shade; also does well in morning sun and will tolerate full sun except in extreme heat, especially with low relative humidity

Size: Height — in shade can reach 24 to 30 inches tall with a 12 to 16 inch spread; will be shorter and more compact with more sun

Planting time: Best in spring just after frost, but can be planted later; will be more heat and sun tolerant if allowed to establish well prior to summer heat; if planting in mid-summer, a shady location is advised.



Whopper Begonias are large bronze-leaved begonias that make a super showy splash in pots, hanging baskets and massed in flower beds. The Whopper Begonia was recently named a Texas Superstar™ plant.

Soil type: A well prepared bed with organic matter and good drainage is best, but tolerant of soil types; should be kept moist, but not too wet; moderately drought tolerant

Suggested uses:

Excellent for mass bedding, in mixed borders, and in containers

Watering correctly is important in the care of begonias. Soil should remain moist, but not too wet. A well-draining soil or potting mix simplifies this task. Water wax begonias at the base to avoid leaf spot and the possibility of fungal diseases. Be careful not to overwater, especially if growing in containers

The most compact and healthy wax begonias result from deadheading and pinching back regularly. Annual begonia plants may be cut back before frost and used inside as a houseplant in winter. Once inside, keep the soil moist, provide humidity with a pebble tray and place in bright filtered light.

Cuttings may be propagated for additional plants. Divide in spring for more outdoor begonia plants. This easy to grow bloomers will flourish in the right place in your garden.

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 Milberger's Nursery where you will frequently find them among our weekly on sale items. Find our weekly sale items on our web site milbergernursery.com.

LAWNCARE

Mow High, Mow Often

By Mark Peterson

Often, we're asked about lawn mowing and its relation to maintaining a healthy, drought-tolerant lawn. Although we discourage expansive areas of grass, there are ways to reduce how much water your turf needs.



April is the time to apply lawn fertilizer. After you have mowed two times, it is time to fertilize the lawn. Use a slow-release lawn fertilizer. The first number is the percentage of nitrogen. Apply one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. If the fertilizer has a 19-5-9 formula, that means about 5 pounds of fertilizer per 1,000 square feet. The bag will tell you what rate to set the spreader to achieve the pounds of nitrogen.

“It is best not to bag grass clippings. Grass clippings decompose quickly and return significant amounts of nutrients to the soil. If you do bag the clippings, consider composting them for use in the landscape.”

~ Gene R. Taylor II, Texas A&M Turfgrass Specialist

Of all the suggestions and recommendations you may hear, there are two key factors that will help make your lawn more drought-tolerant: mowing height and mowing frequency. Although a variety of mowing heights are recommended for each turf species, our rule is always to mow at the high end of the range. In general, the higher the mowing height, the deeper the roots; and the deeper the root system, the more drought-tolerant the turf becomes.

The best adapted turf grass species for our area include:

Bermuda: Unless you're mowing a putting green or sports field, we suggest mowing it at 2 inches.

Buffalo and all native grasses: Mowing twice a year is sufficient for native grasses; set the mower at the highest setting.

St. Augustine: Maintain the mower level at 3 inches.

Zoysia: A mowing height of 2 1/2 inches is ideal.

Just as important as how high you mow is how often. Turf responds favorably to frequent mowing. The general rule is to never cut more than 1/3 of the total blade. This roughly translates to a once-a-week mowing schedule.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Shrubs for Foundation Plantings

By D. Hairlloyde

Choosing foundation plants is an important aspect of landscape design. The right shrubs can add to the value of your home and help preserve the structure of your house.

Foundation shrubs are those that are typically selected and planted near or against the foundation of your home. Typically, foundation shrubs are those which are known to be very hardy and long-

home. Avoid over-clutter by spacing properly. Keep foliage texture in mind. When planting two or more types of shrubs in a foundation planting, select shrubs with contrasting foliage textures.

Not only do foundation shrubs add to the attractiveness of your home, shrubs and garden beds are important for the structural foundation of your home. Summer temperatures in South Central

Texas can exceed 100 degrees which can put stress on the foundation of your house. The soaker hoses or sprinkler systems that you install to water your shrubs and garden beds keep the soil around your house moist and can help minimize cracks in the foundation of your house.

It's as important to landscape the sides and back of your property as it is to landscape the front. If only one part of the yard is landscaped, soil on that side will

generally expand because it's likely to be watered more often. Soil expansion can lead to foundation cracks so it's best to water your property uniformly. Because the expansive clay soil affects landscaping you'll want to protect your foundation from issues such as large increases in moisture on one side and or too little on the other.



With its glossy, evergreen leaves and pointed tips, **Burford holly** is one of the most popular Holly varieties in Texas. Lovely as both as accent or low hedge, this vibrant shrub is sure to provide year-round interest in your yard. The tiny blooms that appear in the spring may not be very noticeable to humans, but the bees love them.

lived. When selecting shrubs for a foundation planting, keep in mind mature heights and widths. You wouldn't want to plant a shrub that grows six feet tall under a window that's base two feet above the ground. A tall shrub that might be used to frame and soften the corner of a home should not grow taller than the eave, or gutter line of the

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, fire ants and aphids.

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

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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Lantana, with their verbena-like flowers are admired for their extended bloom time and they are available in a multitude of colors. Lantana thrive in warm weather. You can grow them in garden beds as well as containers. Trailing varieties can even be grown in hanging baskets. Lantanas also make a great choice for those wishing to attract butterflies and hummingbirds to the garden.