

MILBERGER LANDSCAPE & NURSERY

THE GARDENING NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH CENTRAL TEXAS

MARCH 2017

PLANT QUESTIONS

Remind me what we should be doing on the lawn now. Is it time to fertilize? It is too early to fertilize. Wait until you have mowed real grass twice, usually in late April. It is still a good time to aerate and top dress.

Can we still prune the live oak trees now?

The best time to prune oak trees is the coldest part of winter or the hottest part of summer but they can be pruned anytime as long as the wounds are painted immediately after they are cut. The paint protects the oak from infection by oak wilt.

Can we plant tomatoes now?

Tomato and pepper transplants can be planted late in the month, but be prepared to replant if the weather gets cool. Cold soil causes tomatoes and peppers to stop growing. The setback will reduce the crop significantly.

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.



Damianita daisy is a species of flowering plants in the sunflower family that works well as a boarder planting, in rock gardens, and as a groundcover in reflected heat locations.

GARDENING EXPERTISE

Durable Damianita

By Mark Peterson, SAWS Conservation Project Coordinator

Durable, drought-tolerant and deer-resistant — damianita deserves a permanent place in your landscape. And that's why SAWS added it to their list of approved plants for the WaterSaver Landscape. Damianita grows on limestone and caliche cliffs, hills and plateaus in some of the worst soils there are in this area. It should be right at home then with the soil left behind by builders at new home properties. It requires full sun and well-drained soil, but not much else. It's also evergreen, attractive to birds and butterflies, and disliked by deer. Damianita is restrained in growth and will not exceed three feet. It's perfect for sunny, hot front yard beds, backyard slopes or along brick or decomposed granite pathways. Because of these wonderful xeric characteristics — and a native besides — SAWS staff has chosen damianita to be the newest full-fledged member of the WaterSaver Landscape Coupon family.

(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.

MARCH GARDENING EVENTS

Sat., Mar 11 starting at 10:30am

The Best Spring Vegetable Garden Ever. Free Adult Seminar at Milbergers will focus on your vegetable garden. Choosing the best varieties, soil preparation, fertilizing, insect and disease control. All you need for a bountiful harvest. 210-497-3760

Sat., Mar 18 – 10am 'til 2pm

Rosarians "Talk Roses" at the Nursery and share their expertise on Growing Roses in San Antonio. They will be able to help you with your specific questions about selecting, planning and caring for the roses in your landscape. 210-497-3760

Sat., Mar 25 – 10am 'til 11am

Kids Class: Spring Vegetable Gardening. This class will get your kids excited about vegetable gardening. They will learn the basics about seeds, transplants and working in the soil. And boy do they love that. Kids classes are free but call to reserve your place because space and supplies are limited. 210-497-3760.

Sat., Apr 1 – starts at 10:30

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. 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.

**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

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San Antonio, TX 78247
(210) 497-3760

Or on the World Wide Web at
www.milbergernursery.com
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Milberger's Nursery March Features

Milberger's Landscape Nursery

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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

Damianita

(CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE)

When planted in full sun damianita can prove itself to be a very strong and resilient producer. It grows into small compact mounds with needle-like green leaves and a profusion of yellow daisy-like flowers. It grows on rocky limestone soils. It's toughness plus its long blooming period, compact shape and evergreen foliage make it a valuable landscape plant, especially showy in mass plantings and very useful for erosion control on slopes. Its rounded form makes a soft contrast to yuccas and agaves in a desert or rock garden.

“A low growing shrub with dark green, needle-like foliage, damianita's tiny yellow flowers and foliage are fragrant. They primarily bloom in spring and autumn, but will flower through the summer with a little extra water.”

Damianita thrives in full sun and poor soils with excellent drainage and not amended with organic matter. It tends to grow leggy and less compact in shade. Although it is somewhat temperamental about pruning and can die if pruned back severely,

pruning lightly in early spring will promote denser new growth. Like most desert plants, damianita does not like wet feet (roots), especially in winter. It is cold hardy to about 10 degrees F. In late spring you can shear off flower stems to encourage new growth and remove any non-leafing woody areas.



From April to September **damianita** is covered with a profusion of bright, golden-yellow flowers. You will see it thriving on limestone and caliche cliffs, hills and plateaus in some of the worst soils there are in this area. It should be right at home then with the soil left behind by builders at new home properties. It requires full sun and well-drained soil, but not much else.

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 and gardening needs from the experienced nursery staff. 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**.

LAWN CARE

Timing Preemergent Herbicide

The old adage “A good offense is the best defense” couldn’t be more true when trying to keep your lawn weed free. Weeds are the inevitable enemy of your lawn and will take over if nothing is done to stop them. A single weed may be capable of dropping thousands of seeds, and then you hit that weed with the lawn mower and those seeds are spread literally everywhere. If you have convinced yourself you don’t have a single weed in your lawn, odds are your neighbor does, and a nice breeze will carry those weed seeds hundreds of yards where they can last upwards of 50 years just waiting for the right conditions to take root in your finely manicured lawn.

Fortunately for all of us, technology has lent us a hand at battling weeds. A quick application of a preemergent herbicide product and all those pesky weeds will lay dormant another year. A preemergent weed control product isn’t a pre emergent weed killer. It keeps the weeds from growing which is why it’s necessary for you to put down a pre emergent herbicide product every year.



Wait until after April 1 to fertilize the lawn or until you have mowed real grass two times. St. Augustine, Bermuda, zoysia, and buffalo grass are warm weather grasses. They do not grow well or pick up nutrients efficiently until the soil and air temperatures are warm.

When to apply pre emergent herbicides —

Simple: March 15th & September 15th. Basically you want to control summer weeds and winter weeds. As soil temperature rise above 50°F the summer weeds begin to take root and begin growing. The major offenders, crabgrass and clover, will not emerge until the soil is consistently over 50°F. If you do live in a warmer area you may need

to apply your pre emergent herbicide before March 15th, so it’s not quite as simple as I first made it sound.

Late in the growing season the weeds begin to set new seed. This is where you want to catch any late growth with the application in September. Remember keeping on top of the weeds will save you much time and aggravation next spring when the lawn mowing season begins again.

Application of a preemergent herbicide too early may cause the elements to dilute or wash away the herbicide and allow the weeds to grow uninhibited. Application of the herbicide after the weeds start to grow will not stop the growth since it’s already rooted.

IN THE ROSE GARDEN

Growing Roses In Containers

With the exception of large climbers, most roses can be grown successfully in containers. It is important that the container be large enough to provide ample space for the roots; also to have good drainage, good soil and a location with adequate light and air circulation.



Roses that grow from pots must be watered daily during the hot, summer months. It's relatively easy to move them to a sheltered position in extreme weather.

“Roses in pots extend the scope and possibilities of gardening. Wide walkways can be highlighted with tubs of roses, entryways can be graced with the beauty and fragrance of roses. Miniature roses can dress up window boxes in the summer, and then be brought indoors in winter to perk up the house.”

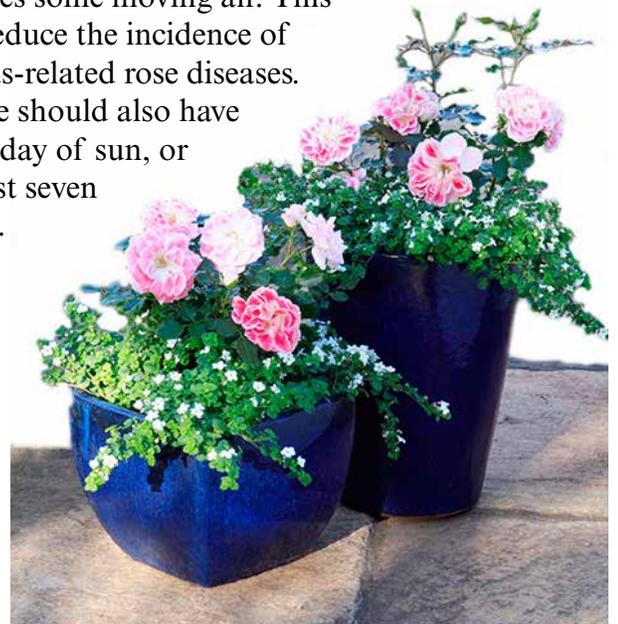
~ Dr. Jerry Parsons, Bexar County Horticulturalist

The container may be plastic or clay. Plastic fares better in cold climates where freezing may actually crack clay containers. Clay containers do provide a cooler condition for the roots during hot weather.

If choosing plastic, it is better to obtain the lighter terra-cotta colour rather than the darker plastics, as they heat up faster. When met with these requirements one can grow miniatures right through roses that can attain a height and spread of up to five feet.

It is important that bush roses and small shrub roses be placed in containers no less than 15 inches in diameter. They will do well there for about two years and then will need transplanting. Roses in containers tend to deplete the soil of its nutrients more rapidly than if they were in the ground. Often they will also outgrow their containers and need a larger home. In this case one can provide the rose with a container one or two sizes up from the previous one.

Place your potted roses in a location where it receives some moving air. This will reduce the incidence of fungus-related rose diseases. A rose should also have a full day of sun, or at least seven hours.



Where there are roses there are Rosarians. Certified Rosarians from the San Antonio Rose Society will be at the nursery on Sat., March 18 to "Talk Roses" and help you choose the rose varieties that are best suited for your landscape and your gardening style. Milberger's is freshly stocked with has thousands of rose bushes that area ready to plant in your landscape.

TREES AND SHRUBS

Liven Up Your Landscape with Ornamentals

By Sarah Galvan, SAWS
Conservation Consultant

Ornamental trees and shrubs are some of the first to flower so you can capture the beauty of an early Texas spring. Ornamental trees and shrubs are early nectar sources for pollinating insects and hummingbirds.

One of the keys to successful gardening is seasonal interest. It's important to utilize plants that keep your garden visually appealing all year. To capture the beauty of an early Texas spring, you may want to include some of these plants in your yard.

Ornamental plants are a primary tool in developing functional and beautiful home grounds. To achieve full use of a plant in the landscape, the user must know the



Texas redbud has small pink flowers which can be pale or vibrant with heart-shaped leaves that turn pale yellow in fall. Redbud makes a great understory tree and is deer-resistant.



Mexican buckeye will give you pretty pink flowers that appear very early in spring. Decorative seed pods are retained throughout the cooler months on a multi-trunked structure. This is a very easy and fast-growing tree and it is deer-resistant.

plant he or she chooses – its growth requirements and its abilities to satisfy the need for which it is intended.

It's a good idea to intersperse evergreen accent specimens such as Big Bend yucca, sotol, Spanish dagger, Texas mountain laurel, Arizona cypress, agave, cactus and cenizo to maintain interest throughout the changing season.

Take advantage of CPS's Green Shade Rebate to save \$50 per shade tree for qualifying customers. Visit our web site www.milbergernursery.com for a list of recommended Small Trees. (Under Gardening Expertise in the lower right hand corner of our home page.) You can also download information sheets on the varieties that are available and ready to plant.

MARCH GARDENING AND LAWCARE TIPS

The Gardeners Favorite Time for Planting

By Dr. Jerry Parsons

South Texas gardeners are ready to get those transplants into their places in the garden. The last frost of spring may have occurred but even if it doesn't freeze the wind will blow. Protect tender transplants and seedlings with a plant guard or windshield. Windshields help repel insects and unexpected cold (4 degree cold protection).

PLANT: Plant hibiscus, bougainvillea, mandevilla and allamanda vines in containers for tropical landscape color. Impatiens, fibrous begonias and coleus are summertime favorites for shade. Perennials which can be planted now include perennial phlox such as 'John Fanick' and 'Victoria,' iris and daylilies. Roses can still be planted. March is a month to plant the gardener's favorite vegetables such as tomatoes. Put the containerized tomatoes in the ground towards the end of the month. Save some for April planting and a few for May in case of weather problems. In areas where space is limited you can plant your favorite flowers and vegetables in containers or hanging baskets.

LAWN CARE: Establish or renovate the lawn as needed. Re-sod or replant with turfgrasses

adapted to this part of Texas and suited to the planting location (shade or sun). In areas which receive shade where grass is difficult to grow, consider planting a dependable groundcover such as English ivy, Asian jasmine, vinca, or one of the prostrate junipers.

FERTILIZE: Use a pre-plant application of a slow-release fertilizer analysis such as 19-5-9 at the rate of 3 pounds per 100 square feet of garden planting area. Early March is the ideal time to fertilize landscape plants because you give them food just before the spring growing season starts.

ON THE LOOKOUT: Be on the lookout for a spectacular spring wildflower display. The spring months in South central Texas are perhaps best known for their Indian paintbrush, mountain laurel, winecup, pink evening primrose, prairie verbena, horsemint and, of course, the bluebonnets. Bluebonnets are actually "winter weeds," so to rid the lawn area of unwanted wildflowers, use a broad-leafed weed-killer spray or simply mow them. If a weed-killer is used, follow label directions carefully to avoid damage to desirable plants.

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.

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Dianthus, the quintessential cottage flower. Pinks are treasured for their grasslike blue-green foliage and abundant starry flowers, which are often spicily fragrant. Although some species can get up to 18" tall, most dianthus are usually only about 6" tall and about half as wide, so plant along the edges of borders and beds for best effect. Like petunias and dianthus have more heat tolerance and may bloom into the summer. To extend the bloom period of dianthus into the summer, deadhead the blooms in late April. The easiest way to do it is to skim them with a string-mower.

