



ECHO



Texas AgriLife's Community Horticultural Outreach

Inescapable Texas Heat



For gardeners, the Texas heat is inescapable this time of the year. However, the heat hasn't slowed our progress on the Earth-Kind™ Perennial Research Garden at Myers Park and Event Center.

A few brave and dedicated Master Gardeners and I have endured the heat and worked tirelessly to complete of the irrigation system and keep the plants watered. I am thoroughly impressed by what we have been able to accomplish. David Spadoni and John Worley have been instrumental in completing this work and deserve high praise from all of us for what they have done at the garden. Please take the time to read the article they have written on the garden for this newsletter. Don't assume you have missed any opportunities to help with our efforts at Myers Park. We have projects yet to come and more work we have to accomplish.

In recent meetings with the Horticulture Committee and CCMGA Executive Boards, we discussed how Extension Horticulture and Master Gardeners can provide the public with more relevant education and outreach programs. Extension is considered a grassroots program that incorporates input from the public to determine the future of our programs. Many of the comments reinforced what we are already doing for the residents of Collin County: evaluating plants for Collin County, providing education in the areas of Environmental Stewardship, Water Conservation, Drought Tolerance, Youth Education, and much more. The groups identified other areas in which we need to focus our efforts to address the needs of the community: provide education in the areas of (see next page)

September-October 2010

Educational programs of Texas AgriLife Extension serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.

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Inescapable Texas Heat *(Continued from page 1)*

trees, Herbs, Native Plants, Organic Production, and evaluating other types of plants for the Earth-Kind™ Research Program. I always welcome new ideas to help us provide better educational programs, service, and outreach.

The ever increasing challenge we face in a changing, technological advancing society is “getting our message out” to the public. There is a need to develop new, innovative, cost effective ways to reach our clientele with announcements about our programs and the information that we provide. What good is anything we do if no one knows about it? Our network of volunteers is one of the most effective ways to get our message to the people in our communities. We all have contacts within our communities and we need to be an active participant in the effort to spread the word about what we do and what we have to offer. Read your eMinders and other announcements and tell your friends about it. Post links to our information and program announcements on your face book page or website. Be an active member of this organization.

Dr. Greg Church, Ph.D.
County Extension Agent-Horticulture

**Location and Contact Information**

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Earth-Kind™ Perennial Research Garden

By David Spadoni and John Worley

There's something new and exciting happening at Myers Park in McKinney. What is it you ask? Well! It's the first of its kind Research Garden for Perennial Plants; and from the sky, it resembles one of those mysterious "Crop Circles" we've all heard about.

The garden, consisting of 16 planting beds totals 8,880 square feet of planting space. After considerable research, the Plant Selection Committee acquired 69 individual varieties of Perennial Plants for planting this past spring.

During the last week of May, Dr. Steven George joined Greg and several Master Gardeners from our association in planting the selected perennials. As a trial garden, each plant was replicated 4 times for a total of 276 plants.

Currently there is still room for another 105 new perennial varieties. Rob Weir of Shades of Green Nursery is working on acquiring as many new plants as possible for planting this fall. Depending on our needs at that time, he will then plan on securing the remaining plants next spring.



Beginning the week following the May planting, some volunteers from our association began the required daily watering schedule as defined by Dr. George and Greg. All watering has been done by hand since the planned irrigation system was not yet installed.



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Earth-Kind™ Perennial Research Garden

(Continued from page 3)

The approved Master Plan was first created early in 2008. This plan included the installation of a Rainwater Harvesting System designed to provide most of water needed to meet the Trial Garden's annual requirements. Thanks to the generosity of



Plastic-Mart Corporation, two 1,500 gallon polyethylene tanks were donated for this project.

On Friday, June 23rd, members of our association along with Dr. Dotty Woodson and other AgriLife Extension employees from The Urban Solution Center installed a complete rainwater harvesting system along the North side of the Farm Museum located at Myers Park. The system in-



stalled (based on projected annual rainfall for this area) can yield a total of 57,635 gallons of rain water.

With the plants and a rainwater collection system in place, the next



phase was the installation of an irrigation system. With the help of Irrigator's Supply Inc. in McKinney, Rain Bird Corporation became aware of our project and has since formed a valuable partnership. They have donated almost \$4,500 of materials including their top of the line drip irrigation tubing, control valves, a 16 station control box with rain/freeze sensors and much more.

Between mid-July and early-August, the main 1 1/4" PVC transfer line from the pump located at the rainwater storage tanks has been laid; and all thirteen control valves and their associated fittings have been installed. The headers, footers and drip irrigation tubing has been in-



stalled in the four largest beds and covered with tree mulch that has been donated by Arborological Services of Dallas.

(More on following page)

Earth-Kind™ Perennial Research Garden

As of this writing, the drip irrigation tubing needed for the 2nd and 3rd beds is currently being produced by Rain Bird.



Once it is available and installed, we will complete the drip tubing tie-in to the

main supply line. By this time we hope to have completed all the electrical connections (which fall under the jurisdiction of the Collin County Facilities Maintenance Department) and test the system for operations readiness. This should all be complete by late August.

If you haven't been to Myers Park in recent months or weeks, it would be worth your while to pay a visit and see what many of your fellow Master Gardeners have helped to create. The Trial Garden, Rainwater Harvesting and Drip Irrigation Systems are projects of which every Collin County Master Gardener can be proud.



Upcoming Master Gardener Meetings/Events



September 23rd

- Gigi/Becky - Presentation on Bulbs

October 28th

Research Garden Update/
Rainwater Harvesting

November 18th

[3rd Thurs.] Plant/Seed Exchange/Pot Luck Lunch

December 2nd

2010 Intern Graduation Dinner
@ Myers Park



Book Review

By Mary Means

Toxic Plants of Texas: Integrated Management Strategies to Prevent Livestock Losses

Authors: Charles Hart, Tam Garland, Catherine Barr, Bruce Carpenter, John Reagor

Boo! Looking to whip up a toxic brew for your Halloween party? Then this is the book for you. Knock ‘em dead at your party, or at least give people one heck of a stomachache.

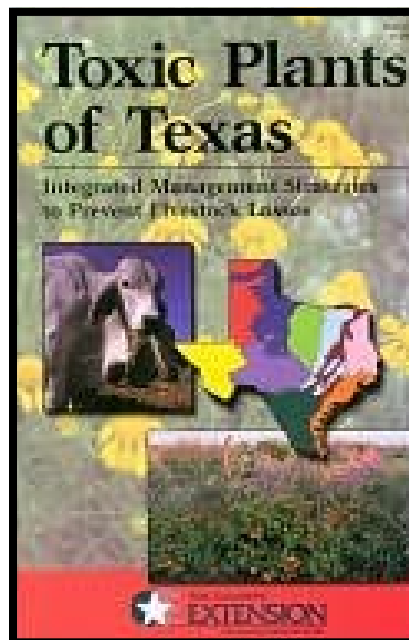
Seriously though, this book was written by professors and veterinarians at Texas A&M University. It is published by the Texas Extension Service with a 2003 copyright date. The book defines a poisonous plant and the possible effect of the toxicity on livestock.

As a Master Gardener, it is amazing to read what plants are considered to be damaging to cattle, horses, sheep and goats. Plants such as maple, oak, persimmon, lantana, and milkweed are considered toxic and may even cause death in animals. So why would a Master Gardener be interested in such a book? There are several reasons. The photography is excellent. There are a number of color photographs for each plant listed. Usually there are photographs of the whole plant, the leaf, the flower, and the fruit. Fine photography makes this book an asset as a plant identifier. In addition, each plant listing contains an overall description of the plant and a discussion of the plant's distribution and habitat. Is the plant native? If not, where did it come from and how did it get here?

Each plant listing also names the toxic agents in the plant. The book uses words such as “*tropane alkaloids*” or “*pyridine alkaloids*” or “*sclerotia*”. A well-researched, technical section explains the amount of toxicity from a particular plant an animal must ingest to the percentage of body weight. The next section describes the symptoms produced when an animal ingests a plant. The final section discusses management strategies.

One may ask, “If the plant is poisonous, wouldn't an animal just stay away from the plant?” The book discusses ways in which an animal might ingest a poisonous plant. If there is nothing else to eat, then the animal will eat the plant. In another instance, if the plant is harvested along with good grass, then the animal will eat the poisonous plant as part of a bale of hay. Also, some plants are poisonous only under certain conditions. For example, johnsongrass, *Sorghum halepense*, develops cyanide after a frost.

In addition to plant lists, the book contains a section on managing toxic plants and a section on animal symptoms. There is also a glossary and a field key for animal poisoning signs. Toxic Plants is a well-written, well-researched reference book. It deservedly won the Texas Library Association's “Outstanding Reference Book” award in 2003.



Knee High to a Grasshopper!

By Mary Nell Jackson

Literature has always made grasshoppers glamorous. Children's books depict grasshoppers as lovable insects that have multiple talents and wear clothes.



When I was a youngster my favorite book was called **Grasshopper Man**, my sister and I read it 'til it was torn and tattered. Our children loved it too. It was passed onto her grandchildren and somehow got lost when mine came along. No doubt it told a great teaching fable and hopefully, my children learned from Grasshopper Man. I miss that cherished book.

Several years ago I discovered a concrete grasshopper to display in my garden. I must have still been under the spell of how cute and darling grasshoppers were in my childhood, because I purchased it and for a long time admired the large replica of Grasshopper Man.

Today as I drove on the road of my hot, dry pasture I was once again reminded of Grasshopper Man, but this reminder was a bit more vivid. No sweet feeling of lessons learned from grasshoppers... just plain disgust. Grasshoppers were so big that they made a thumping noise on the

windshield. Texas tales say our grasshoppers are big enough to saddle! I became a believer today. How could I have forgotten the siege of the grasshoppers last season as the hottest part of the summer descends?

Last year I promised myself to make better plans to defend my garden against this plague. The hoppers that are in my garden are not dressed in little clothes and their only talent is to eat my plants and brush against my body hard enough to frighten me if I am in the garden at dusk.

My research started as soon as I could get to my computer. I remembered I



used Nolo Bait one year to no avail. I wondered if I had applied it at the wrong time. I

read that this bait kills some nymphs but virtually no adults. Application time is very important and some treatments only reduce the vigor of grasshoppers. This was not good news. Other baits are Semispore and Grasshopper Attack. Your treatment time is usually long before you see a hopper. Forget the tales of common

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Knee High to a Grasshopper (Continued from the previous page)



flour from your kitchen cabinet that promises to clog a grasshopper's digestion, it does not work. I have read that collecting grasshoppers and making a smoothie of the bodies, straining it, and using the liquid as a spray may serve to deter the hoppers. My question is: who would be crazy enough to try this? I would just wait until the first hard frost to say goodbye to my hoppers.

Information from Texas AgriLife advises that the species become numerous in mid-June/July with egg laying usually beginning in late July and continuing into fall. One generation of grasshoppers is produced per year.

Eggs are laid ½ to 2 inches beneath the soil surface in a pod-like structure. Each pod consists of 20 to 120 elongated eggs securely cemented together. The egg pods are very resistant to moisture and cold and are affected very little by winter conditions. These are sturdy little insects. Chickens can be used as an organic control as well as bird populations in your garden. Even raccoons and small wildlife lunch off of the hoppers. The more I read, the less cute and darling my old children's book sounded.

Cultures all over the world deal with grasshopper infestation, but some cultures use them as a source of protein.

Could I possibly have a virtual Protein Café in my garden?

Grasshoppers are eaten by our neighbors in Mexico for example. They are called chapulines and have

a high protein content. They are collected at dusk using lamps in sweep nets. Sometimes they are placed in water 24 hours, then boiled and eaten raw, or sun dried, & fried flavored with lime juice and spices. Eating grasshoppers raw is not suggested because if eaten this way you probably will result in having a tape worm. This news kills my appetite for adding a little protein to my diet.

Another more familiar way some cultures eat grasshoppers is to dip the whole body in chocolate. I do believe I would find other ways to satisfy my craving for chocolate. I was not very optimistic about my cute little friend the grasshopper when I started my research and am even less now that I know that some species have a 'Jekyll and



Hyde' existence and can congregate in huge swarms that can do severe damage to crops and urban gardens. This happens if food becomes scarce.

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Knee High to a Grasshopper!

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How can an insect that has no ears, five eyes and no nose do so much damage?

Grasshoppers have been known to eat holes in clothes hung on the line outdoors to dry. They can leap 20 times the length of their bodies. They can eat through binders twine; in swarms, they can pollute spring and well water. Trains have been delayed because they could not run at regular speed on tracks made slippery by crushed grasshoppers.

When a grasshopper is picked up, they 'spit' a brown liquid; this is known by most kids as tobacco juice. Some scientists believe this liquid may protect grasshoppers from attacks by insects such as ants.

One good attribute that the grasshopper

possesses is their ability to sing. It's the males that sing and they do it to attract female mates, or to warn off other mates.

I have come to the conclusion that the only grasshopper I want in my garden is concrete and can't carry a tune! ❁



About the Author: Mary Nell Jackson, class of 1997, is a herb lover and discovered her love for writing about the garden a few years ago when she penned an article about gardening in her p.j.'s



Remember to Treat for Fire Ants This Fall

The end of summer means treating for fire ants! Since the weather has been so hot this summer, we might not see the fire ant mounds in our yards. However, they are still in the area and are living deep in the soil. Since fire ants are a medically important insect pest, we need to treat this fall to decrease populations next spring.

Before treating for fire ants, one must first survey the area to determine the number of mounds. If less than 5 mounds are present in a quarter acre plot, then it is advised to treat the individual mounds with a bait, drench or dust.

If more than 5 mounds are present, then treatment should be broadcasted over the entire area. A fire ant **bait** or **contact** insecticide may be used. **Fire ant baits** are comprised of defatted corn grit covered with an insecticide and soybean oil. Before broadcasting the fire ant bait, foraging activity should be evaluated by placing a potato chip or hot dog next to a mound. If fire ants find the food within fifteen minutes, then it is an appropriate time to broadcast the fire ant bait. Fire ants will typically forage when the soil surface temperature is between 70 and 90° F. Fire ant baits should never be watered into the soil and they should not be used if they smell rancid. **Contact insecticides** can also be broadcasted over the entire area and these need to be watered into the soil. One contact insecticide, containing the active ingredient fipronil, can be used for fire ant control and will usually provide 9 to 12 months control.

Both fire ant baits and contact insecticides can be broadcast using a hand-held spreader for small areas or a Herd Seeder can be mounted onto a truck or ATV to treat larger areas. For more information, please visit the fire ant webpage at <http://fireant.tamu.edu>.

*-Kimberly Schofield
Program Specialist-Urban IPM
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Home Sweet Home

By John Worley



Sunset in Princeton, TX



The other night, I went to do a few chores. After picking some green beans, squash, zucchini, and pulling a few potatoes for supper, I check the peppers, tomatoes, cantaloupe, and blackberries. I harvest some oregano and rosemary, as Sherry instructs. It's getting late, so I tell the bees to fly home. But they don't listen.

I take some birdseed to where I feed the cardinals, doves and meadowlarks. Where have the blue jays gone? They haven't been around lately. The wild rabbits don't even hop away anymore. (Did I say wild?)

I go to the carport and feed the butterflies. (What do you feed butterflies? Purina Butterfly Chow? No, in addition to lots of bushes like hummingbird bush, lantana, and catnip, they seem to like banana peels.) I like my butterflies. They must like me; they swarm over me and about a half dozen land on my chest and arms. (Maybe it's the butterfly chow?)

I grow lots of extra stuff just for the caterpillars and move them over there if they become a problem elsewhere.

I decide to walk down the hill to the back of my property to check on the beaver pond. I wonder if the dam is still holding. A killdeer flutters along the ground to my left, trying to distract me. I must be near her young. "Over here, look at me", she cries. "My wing is broken! Over here, over here, take me", and off she flies.



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Home Sweet Home*(Continued from previous page)*

I smile as I remember when a killdeer family got stuck crossing the street near my office. The kids were too small to get over the median and mom and dad were trying to protect them from cars. Even if they could get around the median at the intersection, they still wouldn't be able to get up the curb on the far side

When I got out of my car, mom and dad alike flew to the far side of the street and rolled around on the grass as if they had a broken wings. One by one they rounded up their youngsters as I put them up on the curb. (They're so cute when they're that small!) They wandered off toward the creek.



It's getting dark. The great blue heron leaves the pond to fly home to roost; it's too late to be fishing anyway. All looks good at the beaver pond. But I don't see any more wildlife. Maybe they are asleep already. Thrash, thrash, rumble, rumble; an armadillo runs by on my right. Gosh, they are so noisy in the brush.

I walk back up to the house, a flock of starlings fly over on the way to roost about a mile north, in the old abandoned peach orchard. It is so quiet that you can hear the rush of air off their wings as they fly over. As I reach the patio, I look back west at the sunset - yet another work of art. Sherry tells me to start the grill. As I sit on the patio and watch the sunset, she hands me a platter of stuff to cook.

As I watch the last shades of pink change to purple and then fade to black, Sherry yells, "You're not letting that burn, are you?" I snap awake and finish grilling supper and go inside. The barn swallow family living on my patio is upset with me anyway. They want me to leave so they can go to sleep. To their disappointment,

I turn the patio light on for a while. I do this now and then for the spiders. Insects are attracted to the light and the giant orb weaver spiders have a feast.

The only part of tonight's supper that I didn't grow is the beef. And it's Angus, raised on my father-in-law's place. (Ol' #93. Boy, has he been a good one!) After supper I put on a Maynard Ferguson and a Clifford Brown CD while I finish reading **Rocket Boys** and Sherry works on another quilt.

Finally to bed. But first I must feed the cat (Murphy) and dog (Jolly). They raise a fuss if I forget. Good night all.

"Home, sweet home" says it all!



An article is often closed with a photo of the author. Ego leads me to use one from a younger day. In that spirit, I offer this photo.

P.S. Admittedly a nerd, I can't resist asking if you know why the sky under a rainbow is brighter than the sky above. Well, it is; I'll cover that in a future article.



Collinsworth Family Cemetery - Tragic Beginning, Now a Place of Peace & Beauty

Daniel Rosenfield Cemetery Ent.

By Charlotte Carpenter Johnson

Published: Monday, July 26, 2010 10:22 PM CDT

Near the intersection of Ohio Drive and West Parker facing Vermillion Drive in Plano, is a small Collinsworth family cemetery nestled between two large homes in the Preston Lakes Subdivision. The first burial was in May of 1895 when many of the Collinsworth family tragically died. A traveling salesman infected the family with smallpox while staying overnight in their home. The entire west portion of Plano, extending from the current Coit Road to Preston Road, and from Park Boulevard to Spring Creek Parkway was quarantined. Many individuals and organizations have worked together to protect and preserve the cemetery once hidden beneath the underbrush of time.

During 2005, Toll Brothers, the developer of Preston Lakes, anchored the cemetery's four corners with stone pillars, moved the original gate from a back alley to face Vermillion Drive, and enclosed it with iron fencing. The area in front of the cemetery was landscaped for a park like setting. In 2006, a large, historical sign was placed by the front gate, funded in part by the City of Plano and produced by the Plano Conservancy for Historical Preservation.

In recent years, Candace Fountoulakis, of the City of Plano and the Collin County Master Gardener Association, has contributed so much individually and facilitated the efforts of these organizations. The Preston Lakes HOA, its Cemetery club, and landscape committee have also continued to be involved and generous.



The latest project, completed the weekend of July 17th, was led by Daniel Rosenfield, age 15, soon to be in 10th grade at Plano's Jasper High School. Daniel's Scout Troop 261 is part of the Great Plains District, Circle Ten Council, and was first chartered by Christ United Methodist Church in 1975. His troop leader is Roger London, and Troop 261 has a long history of helping youth develop into the leaders of tomorrow.

The key to a successful Eagle Scout Service Project is Leadership, as the Scout expands his service to others in the community. Daniel's Eagle Project was to construct a walking path about 170 feet long at the cemetery made of decomposed granite, steel edging, and landscape fabric. Daniel and about 30 volunteer scouts and adults spent over 115 man hours constructing the pathway.

Daniel has completed all necessary merit badge and leadership position requirements, and will soon meet with troop and district officials for his final review. Daniel's family consists of proud parents, Andi and Stuart Rosenfield, and brothers,

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Collinsworth Family Cemetery

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Evan and Adam. Daniel's dad and both brothers are also Eagle Scouts.

According to several residents of Preston Lakes, the construction proceeded very quickly as the result of Daniel's excellent planning and leadership. The Preston Lakes neighborhood helped Daniel raise approximately \$800 for supplies to construct the pathway. Lowe's and A-1 Grass in Prosper were very generous by providing discounts.

Kathy Nelson of the Preston Lakes Landscape Committee says, "I can't wait to take a stroll! The walking path is fantastic and it really looks great! The walking path will welcome visitors to the cemetery, and allow visitors to view current and future beauty. The Collin County Master Gardeners and cemetery club will have so much fun this fall as we can officially begin planting wildflowers and ground covers in areas of the cemetery now defined by the walking path. We thank Daniel for selecting the walking path in Collinsworth Cemetery for his Eagle Scout project. I know the experience was valuable for him. We thank him for creating a lasting contribution to our community and helping to preserve the historical Collinsworth Cemetery."

"The preservation, respect, love, and care by so many for has been amazing, and have finally brought peace and beauty to this small family cemetery," said Charlotte Carpenter Johnson, great-great-granddaughter of Farwick and Lucy Rowlett Collinsworth, who are buried there.

*There's little risk
in becoming
overly proud of
one's garden
because gardening
by its very nature
is humbling. It
has a way of
keeping you on
your knees."*

*Joanne R. Barwick, in Readers Digest
(1993)*



Garden Checklist for September-October

By Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. The following information was compiled from the 2009 updates available at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/newsletters/hortupdate/>.

September:

- Continue to give established crinums plenty of water and organic fertilizer at this time to encourage repeat flowering.
- Rejuvenate heat-stressed geraniums and begonias for the fall season by lightly pruning, fertilizing, and watering.
- Don't allow plants with green fruit or berries to suffer from lack of moisture. Hollies will frequently drop their fruit under drought conditions.
- Prune out dead or diseased wood from trees and shrubs. Hold off on major pruning until midwinter. Pruning now may stimulate tender growth prior to frost.
- Divide spring-flowering perennials such as irises, Shasta daisies, gaillardias, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriope, and ajuga. Reset divisions into well prepared soil with generous amounts of organic material worked into the top 8 to 10 inches.
- Prepare the beds for spring-flowering bulbs as soon as possible. It is important to cultivate the soil and add generous amounts of organic matter to improve the water drainage. Bulbs will rot without proper drainage.
- Plantings at this time can provide landscape color for three seasons in central, east, and south Texas. Annuals set out early enough will bloom as soon as Thanksgiving and frequently last until Memorial Day. Annuals that should soon be available in nurseries and garden shops include petunias, calendulas, pansies, snapdragons, stock, sweet peas, and violas (from seed).
- Continue a disease-spray schedule on roses, as blackspot and mildew can be extremely damaging in September and October. Funginex, used every 7 to 14 days, will usually give excellent control.
- Christmas cactus can be made to flower by supplying 12 hours of uninterrupted darkness and cool nights (55 degrees F.) for a month, starting in mid-October. Keep plants on the dry side for a month prior to treatment.
- Replenish mulches around trees and shrubs, and water every 3 to 5 days.
- Start cool-season vegetables, such as mustard, lettuce, arugula, broccoli, carrots, and turnips, from seed in well prepared beds.
- Harvest okra, peppers, squash, and other vegetables often to encourage production.



October:

- Careful covering of tender plants on nights when light frost threatens, early in the season, is a way to stretch out the season for a few more days or weeks. Good candidates for protection include late

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season crinum blooms, brugmansia and datura shrubs, Lantana trifolia with its lavender, verbena-like flowers in clusters, "Halloween-blooming" *Gladiolus dalenii* and many others. Especially tender herbs such as basil should be cut for use as pesto sauce ingredients or pizza toppings as soon as possible at this time.

- Fall is often one of the best times to enjoy rose blooms in Texas. Lightly prune hybrid teas, floribundas and modern garden roses and fertilize them in early fall for an abundant display until hard frost.
- October is a good time to reduce the insect and disease potential in next year's garden. Clean up the garden, removing all annuals that have completed their life cycle. Remove the tops of all herbaceous perennials that have finished flowering or as soon as frost has killed the leaves.
- October through November is also an excellent time to purchase bulbs while you still have a good selection in the garden center.
- Chill tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the refrigerator until mid or late December before planting. The lower part of the refrigerator is best. Do not leave bulbs in airtight plastic bags during refrigerated storage.
- Plant bulbs in well prepared beds so the base of the bulb is at a depth that is three times the diameter of the bulb. In sandy soil, set slightly deeper and in clay soils less deeply.
- Holly plants with a heavy set of fruit often suffer a fertilizer deficiency. An application of complete fertilizer late this month can be helpful and provide a head start next spring.
- Start collecting leaves for the compost pile. Be sure to have extra soil available so that each 6 inch layer of leaves may be covered with several inches of soil. Always wet the layer of leaves thoroughly before adding the soil. Add about one pound of a complete lawn or garden fertilizer to each layer of leaves to provide the necessary nitrogen for decomposition.
- In addition to bulbs, check your nursery or garden center for started plants of snapdragons, pinks, sweet Williams, poppies, and calendulas. Planted now in south and east Texas, they will usually provide a riot of spring color; wait until late winter or early spring to plant in north Texas.
- Keep Christmas cactus in a sunny spot where night temperatures can be kept below 65 degrees F. Buds will drop if you allow night temperatures to go above 70 degrees F or if you allow the plant to become excessively dry. They should also be kept in total darkness from 5:00 pm until 8:00 am for about 30 days in October to initiate flower buds.
- If you have saved seeds of your favorite plants, allow them to become air dry, then place them in an airtight container and store in the refrigerator. Be sure to label each packet carefully. Remember, seed from hybrid plants will seldom resemble the parent plant. Prepare beds for planting pansies when they become available at the garden centers. They need a well-drained soil and exposure to at least a half-day of sun. It is best to use started plants, as seeds are difficult to handle.
- If you are planning to save caladium tubers for another year, dig them in late October, and allow to dry in a well ventilated but shady area. After 7 to 10 days remove leaves and dirt, then pack in dry peat moss, vermiculite or similar material for storage. Pack tubers so they do not touch each other. Dust with all-purpose fungicide as you pack. Place container in an area where temperature won't drop below 50 degrees F.



Thanks to ECHO Newsletter contributors:

Kathleen Brooks
Dr. Greg Church
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Mary Ann Hicken
Mary Nell Jackson
Mary Means
Katherine Ponder
Dr. William C. Welch
John Worley

The submission deadline for the November/December issue of the ECHO Newsletter is October 10, 2010. Send submissions, comments and suggestions to:

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