

Waxahachie Farmer's Market - 2021 Advance research for the month of October

If you are like me, you had a nice vegetable garden this year. Extended rains and cooler weather made my tomatoes, peppers, basil, beans, etc. just take right off. These were some of the biggest and best tomatoes on record for me. But now, while my peppers, okra, and beans are still going strong I am thinking about what to plant for the Fall garden.

Many herbs such as thyme, parsley, oregano, as well as vegetables such as kale, beets, cabbages, Brussel sprouts, turnips, radishes, and spinach still have time to produce but you will need to plant from plants as seeds will not have time to grow before the first freeze in November.

<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/guides/>
This is a downloadable pdf document on Fall Gardening

But there are other things that need attending this Fall other than vegetables. cool-season annuals can be planted such as ornamental cabbages and kales, snapdragons, and pansies can be planted when high temperatures stay below 85. Spring flowering bulbs need to be getting in the ground when soil temperature gets below 55F. Pre-chilling before planting will help get your bulbs off to a good start.

If you are considering planting spring annuals from seed such as wildflowers you should prepare a bed for them by gently scratching the surface of the soil and pressing the seed into the soil. Additionally you may have annuals which have done their thing and made seed pods by now. I have rudbeckia , milkweed, coreopsis, etc. which can either be left on the stems as food for bird or harvested and the seeds spread on the soil. If you are getting too many plants of a specific kind just snip the seed heads and share them.

Another thing to consider as you plan for planting in your yard is the use of Earth Kind plants. Earth Kind plants are chosen for their drought tolerance, soil tolerances, disease resistance, and minimal watering requirements. Learn about Earth Kind plants and landscaping at: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/>

When you are considering new plants the Earth Kind link scores each plant on its ability to tolerate Texas summers and provide food for pollinators and bees. A "10" means that it is a very good choice. Why Earth Kind? Planting Earth Kind plants saves you money and work while taking care of the environment.

Learn about Earth Kind Plants for zone 8 (that is us) at: http://ekps.tamu.edu/quicklist?region=zone_b

Pruning is another practice that homeowners consider doing in the Fall but you have to be careful and learn about your plants and learn when is the best time to do that pruning. An example are summer flowering shrubs and vines which flower on this years growth next Spring. (examples are climbing roses, wisteria, etc.) We saw what happened this year when the freeze killed a lot of the last summer growth and many of our plants had little or no blooms this year. If you think that they need trimming be sure to wait until they stop blooming next Spring.

Do not prune your trees until midwinter when the sap is still in the roots. It prevents disease on the open cuts and allows the trees to produce as much stores of food as they can for the

winter. Of course, if you had damage last winter and you never got around to removing the dead growth cool Fall days are a good time.

You can find information on pruning at:

<https://extension.unh.edu/resource/basics-pruning-trees-and-shrubs-fact-sheet>

In Fall, the trees will soon begin dropping their leaves. It doesn't hurt to leave the leaves where they fall. Leaves also make good mulch for your bedding plants and can help if we have another freeze like we did last winter. Oak leaves specifically are good for mulch because they are slightly acidic and as they decay they can help lower the pH of our Blackland Prairie clay. I have a leaf mulcher that reduces the oak leaves to small bits which not only decay quicker but tend to stay where I put them in my beds and garden. A thin layer of the mulched leaves will help your turf as well (1/2 inch). I do not have any large trees on my property so I am used to getting funny looks from my neighbors when I ask for some of their leaves.

One last helpful hint if you have had an issue with bagworms this summer. By now the worms have stopped feeding and the females with their eggs are safe within their bag. It is very hard to treat them now other than by hand picking. So here is what you do: go pick 5-6 bags and put them in a jar and put that jar in your garage or tool shed and wait. In the Spring, as the weather temperatures start going back up, check on your jar every couple of days. When you see small worms it means that the eggs have hatched and the worms are beginning to feed. NOW is the time to treat for them because they are exposed and actively feeding. You will need to spray your evergreens with a biological treatment of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (BT on the label). BT will kill actively feeding caterpillars such as bagworms, army worms, and tent caterpillars. You should respray two weeks later to get the new hatchlings. The nice thing about BT is it is a pathogen that is very specific and it will not harm birds or kill "good" insects such as pollinators. If you have this problem you should start watching for BT now as the shelves were picked clean during the latest army worm infestation.

Enjoy the cooler weather and don't forget that the Greenery will have an auction on Friday October 22 and Saturday October 23.

This month we recognize our sponsors:

Silverado Lawn & Landscaping 972-775- Lawn (5296)

Glenn's Warehouse Carpets 304 North College in Waxahachie

Pam Daniel, Realtor Ebby Halliday Realtors 972-467-6769 pamdaniel@ebby.com