

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

GARDENERS' CALENDAR FOR AUGUST

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO BY Loretta Osteen



August 7, 2013



Plumeria easily withstand the heat of Texas Gulf Coast summers and are in full bloom in many landscapes. They will bloom and grow vigorously if provided adequate soil moisture and fertility. Each flower can last for several days, whether on the plant or brought indoors and placed in water.

The Dog Days of August have arrived. Since daytime temperatures nearly reached the century mark over the past weekend, there is no need to remind you that August is the peak of the heat season in Galveston County. Working outside this month tends to be more tolerable during early morning or late evening hours. Plants in the landscape and garden will require at-

tention if they are to remain vigorous and provide us with many desirable benefits including color, shade, beauty, etc.

The gardeners' calendar of activities for August includes the following:

Fall Vegetables. Despite our warm summer temperatures, August is the time to plant many types of vegetables for a fall garden. Many gardeners miss

this opportunity to have a successful fall garden because they wait until temperatures have moderated to plant. Vegetables that perform well in fall gardens include lima beans, snap beans, cantaloupes, southern peas, summer squash, winter squash and a variety of other vegetables.

Inspect Trees Before Storm. The Gulf of Mexico has been rather

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quiet thus far. However, the peak season for tropical storm and hurricane formation occurs over August and September.

Inspect larger trees for broken, dead, damaged and weakly attached limbs as soon as possible before a tropical storm or hurricane threatens. Obtain the services of a qualified tree care professional as needed. Strong winds can tear such limbs from trees and turn them into dangerous projectiles.

Large limbs are capable of causing damage to homes, vehicles and other property and as well causing harm to people in the event of violent weather. It is wise to consider calling a professional for help with big jobs who have the know-how and equipment to avoid injury.

It is common practice to see folks removing all but a few of the upper fronds of palms in hopes of reducing wind damage from severe tropical storms.

This practice is very harmful to the tree as most palms produce only a few dozen leaves or less per year. The removal of even a few green fronds can significantly reduce a plant's capacity to produce energy or food needed for proper growth and overall health.

Excessive removal of green fronds over time will often result in a condition known as pencil-pointing. This condition is characterized by a marked reduction in the diameter of the upper trunk and the overall trunk takes

on the shape of a sharpened pencil.

Most palms are native to the tropics and have evolved modifications that enable them to successfully weather most storms. The open feather-like structure of their leaves allows wind to pass through them easily and their trunks are strong but flexible allowing them to bend but not break.

Staked Trees. If a landscape tree were staked after transplanting, be sure to inspect for girdling damage caused by prolonged staking. Staking systems must be periodically checked and adjusted to be certain that they are not causing tree damage. Staking will not damage trees if installed correctly and properly maintained.

Girdling or strangulation of a tree trunk can be caused when wire fencing, nylon or steel cable has been tied around the tree for anchorage. Whatever tie material is used, it will eventually press or cut into the bark as the tree trunk increases in diameter and restricts the movement of water and nutrients within the tree.

If a tree must be staked, all stakes and support wires should be removed between 12 and 18 months after planting, provided the tree has a well-established root system. The most important point to remember is that the staking system must be removed as soon as it is no longer necessary for the support of the tree.

Gladiolus: Gladiolus corms can be dug and cured as soon as the foliage turns brown. Store corms in dry peat moss or vermiculite within a paper bag or stocking.

Divide perennials. It is time to divide spring-flowering perennials, such as iris, shasta daisy, ox-eye, gaillardia, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriopse, and ajuga.

At a glance

WHAT: Gardening by the Square Foot

WHEN: Tuesday, August 20, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m.

WHO: Master Gardener John Jons will discuss basic designs, soil preparation, plant selection and establishment, insect pest and disease control, and general care

WHAT: Fall Vegetable Gardening

WHEN: Saturday, August 24, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.

WHO: Master Gardener Luke Stripling will present a workshop on growing fall season vegetables.

DETAILS: Programs conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbine Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Pre-register by email (GALV3@wt.net) or phone (281-534-3413, ext. 12).

