

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO CREDIT: Billy Jenke

September is a prime month to spot butterflies in landscapes. Butterflies such as the giant swallowtail (pictured above) are attracted to landscapes containing a variety of flowering plants.

September will soon arrive and I'm already looking forward to the arrival of cooler days in a few weeks when the fall season gets underway.

In the meantime, everyone is dealing with Hurricane Harvey. While our area was spared a direct hit, we will be dealing with the aftermath of flooding

waters for a while.

Although it may not seem like it, September marks the beginning of a new season in our area. The change is subtle to be sure but warm summer days are coming to an end and the fall growing season is here.

The gardening checklist

for September includes the following.

Annual Fall Plant Fall Vegetables Sale: The 2017 Master Gardener Annual Plant Sale is an "absolute must" for area gardeners. This is an early notification so gardeners can pencil in this popular event on their gardening calendar



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News column printed in the Galveston Daily News, The Post, and other Galveston County Newspapers.



for Saturday, October 14. A diverse variety of ornamentals, perennials and citrus trees will be available at this fall's sale in addition to vegetables for the fall garden. All activities will be conducted at Galveston County Fairgrounds near Hwy. 6 in Hitchcock. More information will be provided in upcoming columns.

Pruning Shrubs and Bushes: September is also a good time to lightly trim unruly shrubs and bushes. Pruning too late in the season may encourage tender new growth which could be susceptible to cold weather. Be careful not to prune plants like bougainvillea, gardenias, camellias and azaleas at this time as these plants have already formed next spring's floral buds. Pruning these plants now will result in fewer flowers next year.

Divide Perennials: Late September is time to divide spring-flowering perennials such as irises, Shasta daisies, gaillardias, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriopse, and ajuga. Reset divisions into well-prepared soil with generous amounts of organic material worked into the top 8 to 10 inches.

Fall Vegetables: Vegetables to plant at the beginning of September include corn, cucumber, green beans, lima beans, pepper, squash and tomato. Toward the end of the month this list can be expanded to include broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, collard, endive, lettuce, mustard, onion, radish, and turnips.

Butterflies: September is a prime month to spot butterflies in landscapes. Some commonly observed butterflies include the buckeye, cloudless sulphur, giant swallowtail, great southern white, white peacock and zebra among others. It is quite easy to attract these delightful creatures to your garden by planting a variety of annual and perennial flowers.

Splitting Citrus: Soon after our area received plentiful rainfall from Hurricane Harvey, I started receiving inquiries about the cause of citrus fruit splitting. This type of damage typically occurs when citrus trees rapidly take up water after heavy rainfall. The fruit expands and bursts the peel in a crack across the bottom or blossom end of the fruit.

The buildup of excess fluids produces sufficient internal pressure to cause the skin to burst. Young trees have the highest incidence of splitting. Fruit splitting occurs commonly on oranges, mandarins and tangelos. In contrast, grapefruits are rarely affected by this problem. Maintaining adequate and even soil moisture levels by regular irrigation during extended periods of dry weather is the best defense against fruit splitting.

Fertilization of Shrubs: Avoid the use of high nitrogen fertilizers on shrubs from late September on through early spring. Too much nitrogen applied this late can in-

duce late succulent growth and possible winter injury.

At a Glance

WHAT: Easy-to-Grow Succulents
WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 9, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

WHAT: Growing, Preserving and Cooking with Herbs
WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 9, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

WHAT: A Passion for Plumeria
WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 16, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

WHAT: Bulbs for Gulf Coast Gardens
WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 23, 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.

WHAT: Home Composting
WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 23, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

WHAT: Favorite Vegetables for the Fall Garden
WHEN: Saturday, Sept. 30, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

LOCATION: All programs conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St. in La Marque). Pre-register by email (galvcountymgs@gmail.com) or phone ([281-309-5065](tel:281-309-5065)).