

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



May 29, 2019



Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

PHOTO CREDIT: William M. Johnson

**Vegetables should be picked at the proper time to ensure the best quality produce including optimum nutritional value. Frequent picking will also encourage continuous production.**

June will arrive in a few days and the summer growing season will be in full swing. Even though our summers tend to be on the warm side, productive home gardeners still can gather colorful bouquets from the landscape and fresh vegetables from the garden. The produc-

tive landscape and garden will call for early summer care, and important and timely gardening chores.

June's gardening calendar includes the following:

**DISCOVERY GARDEN TOUR:** The Master Gardeners will conduct a "Garden

with the Masters" program on Thursday, June 6, at the Master Gardeners' Discovery Garden located in Carbide Park (4102 Main St.) in La Marque. A guided tour of vegetable beds, fruit orchard and Asian garden will start at 9:00 a.m.; gardeners are also

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



welcome to causally tour the garden and orchard thereafter until 11:00 a.m.

**HOW TO PROPAGATE PLUMERIA . . . a hands-on workshop.** 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 1, at the Master Gardeners' Discovery Garden located in Carbide Park (4102 Main St.) in La Marque. Galveston County Master Gardener Loretta Osteen will provide a hands-on workshop demonstrating the propagation of plumeria from cuttings and seeds. Seminar participants will also learn how to make a Hawaiian Lei with plumeria blooms. Class size is limited to 20 participants, and per-registration is required by e-mail ([galvcountymgs@gmail.com](mailto:galvcountymgs@gmail.com)) or phone 281-309-5065.

**MULCH PLANTS:** Soil moisture, essential for plant growth and health, may be conserved by applying an organic mulch. Choose a clean mulch—one that is free of weeds and that will remain loose and well-aerated. Shredded pine bark, compost, pine needle and oak leaf mulches are excellent for conserving moisture. These mulches also serve to keep the soil cool and limit weed seed germination and/or weed growth.

If you have a newly planted landscape tree, it will be well worth the time and effort to mulch the area from the base of the tree trunk out to at least 3 feet. Weeds and lawn grass are aggressive competitors for soil nutrients and moisture. As a result, newly planted trees often

struggle along the first year or two. Your landscape tree will grow up to 50% faster when mulched. Apply a 4-to-6 inch layer (after settling) to landscape trees. Applying an overly deep layer of mulch next to the trunk of a tree or shrub should be avoided as doing so can increase the incidence of insect pest and disease problems.

**CONTAINER PLANTS:** While we are not in a drought, landscapes and gardens could certainly benefit from some rainfall. Plants growing in containers are far more dependent on you for adequate water than plants growing in the ground. A practical approach to determining whether a plant needs water is to stick your finger in the soil. If the soil is dry down to the first knuckle on your index finger, then add water. Conversely, if the soil is still damp to the touch, don't water.

Watering frequency will vary depending on the type of plant, time of year, temperature and size of the plant in relation to the size of the container among other factors. It has been a very windy spring and soil in container-grown plants dries out faster under windy conditions.

You'll note that the procedure is called watering as opposed to sprinkling. When you water, water generously until water runs out of the drainage holes to ensure adequate soil moisture throughout the potting soil medium. Generous watering also helps to flush or leach out excessive salts (commonly seen as a flaky, off-white crust

along the inside rim of pots).

To facilitate watering, the soil (or soilless potting medium) should not be level with the rim of the pot. Having the top of the soil slightly lower than the pot rim provides space to hold water while it penetrates into the medium.

**VEGETABLE HARVEST:** Harvest vegetables frequently to insure continual production. When not harvested on a frequent enough basis, many vegetables will reduce production of flowers and channel their energy into seed production in the maturing fruit already on plants.

**BLACKBERRIES:** Once blackberry plants have completed their current crop, they should be fertilized. The "stalks" (called fruticanes) that produced this year's crop will soon die back and should be removed to reduced disease problems. A new set of green "stalks" (called primicanes) should be present and these will produce next year's crop of blackberries.

**ONIONS:** Onions will be ready to harvest after their necks soften and the leaves fall over. Stop watering when that happens. Pull the bulbs, and let them dry in a shady, airy location. Once the tops have dried, clip the roots and tops, leaving about 1 inch above the bulb. Onions which put up a flower stalk will have a hollow center and will not keep very long, so eat them first.

