

Fall into Gardening

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



September 4, 2019



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



PHOTO CREDIT: Loretta Osteen

Plumerias are well known for their striking clusters of intensely fragrant and spiral-shaped flowers. Master Gardener Loretta Osteen will provide a program entitled "A Passion for Plumeria" on Saturday, September 7, at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office.

Over the last few weeks of August, daytime temperatures in the upper nineties have been common. It's more than ironic when daytime temperatures in the lower nineties begin to sound pleasant. However, September is a transition month as the latter part of the

month should welcome cooler temperatures.

The mere anticipation of cooler days is all that it takes for the ardent gardener to want to till the soil, pull away what summer has burned, and plan for a newness of season and spirit. September pre-

sents many gardening opportunities, so here is a short list of items to consider for this month.

Annual Fall Plant Sale:

The 2019 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 for Saturday, October 12. A diverse variety of ornamentals, perennials, bulbs 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.

A Passion for Plumeria: Plumerias are well known for their striking clusters of intensely fragrant and spiral-shaped flowers which appear at branch tips from around April through November. Plumerias are also known as Frangipani and Hawaiian lei flowers.

When in full bloom, plumerias can fill a patio with a rich, heady, exotic perfume, especially during evening hours when the air is calm. The aroma lingers deep within each flower in each cluster.

There is absolutely nothing like the sweet fragrance of plumerias in bloom, with fragrances of jasmine, citrus, spices, gardenia, and other delightful scents. These flowers are also treasured for their durability.

Whether you already grow plumerias or you are interested in growing plumerias, plan to attend an educational program on "A Passion for Plumeria" to be conducted on Saturday, September 7,

from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main Street in La Marque, Texas). The program will be presented by Master Gardener Loretta Osteen who is a long-time resident of Tiki Island.

Loretta will provide a PowerPoint program covering the history and culture of plumerias, how to use the flowers, propagation by seeds and cuttings, and grafting, as well as storage and preparation guidelines for overwintering plumerias.

The enchanting plumeria can provide a tropical addition to almost any landscape and deserve wider use.

Pruning Shrubs and Bushes: September is also a good time to likely 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.

Pesticide Applications: Avoid spraying insecticides, fungicides and other pesticides during the heat of the day when temperatures are above 90 degrees.

The "carrier" of many liquid pesticides is petroleum-based and can cause some burning of leaves if applied when temperatures are high, and plants are water-stressed or heat-stressed. Spraying should be done in early morning or late evening.

Divide Perennials: Late September is time to divide spring-flowering perennials such as irises, Shasta daisies, gaillardias, cannas, day lilies, violets, liri-ope, and ajuga. Reset divisions into well-prepared soil with generous amounts of organic material worked into the top 6-to-8 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.

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 induce late succulent growth and possible winter injury.

