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AGRIVIEW

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We are fortunate to have a number of flowering annuals available that will withstand out hot, dry summers. Marigolds, zinnias, periwinkles, cleome, portulaca, gloriosa daisies, and globe amaranth are all extremely heat tolerant, and well adapted to our environment. Castor beans will provide huge masses of tropical foliage in green, bronze or purple, with minimum effort. For shaded areas, chose from impatiens, begonias, caladiums or coleus. All these are available in a variety of foliage or flower colors to suyit most any scheme. Moon flowers and morning glory vines may be planted from seed and when grown in arbors, provide shade and flowers later in the summer.

Summer is a time for enjoying the landscape. By carefully selecting and placing colorful, easy-to-grow annual flowers, you can make our outdoor areas more attractive, and still have plenty of time to relax.

Diseases can occur on home lawns throughout the summer. Two common ones are caused by fungi.

In St. Augustine grass, gray leaf spot is common during summer months, especially in shaded areas with abundant moisture. This fungus causes diamond-shaped tan to gray spots with brown or purplish borders on the leaf.

To control gray leaf spot, avoid using soluble nitrogen fertilizers. Water the lawn in

early morning and only when footprints can be seen in the grass or the leaves start curling.

Late afternoon and evening watering encourages diseases by keeping the leaf surface wet for long periods. Catch and remove clippings where gray leaf spot is a problem. Several fungicides are effective for gray leaf spot control.

Bermudagrass may develop a fungus called helminthosporium (Hel-MIN-tho-spore-iun). This fungus causes small purplish to black spots on leaves, stems or crowns of infected plants. Severely infected leaves may die and appear straw colored. When temperatures are high, the fungus attacks the crowns and stolons, thinning large areas of the lawn in irregular patterns.

Helminthosporium is often associated with other stresses such as low fertility, drought and soil compaction.

A soil test will help determine how the lawn should be fertilized.

Additionally, aeration and good drainage also reduce helminthosporium.

Don't water too much or too frequently. Fungicides can protect the grass during high disease activity but preventive applications are more effective than treating severe outbreaks after they occur.

ROAD RAGE:

The 2014 crop season is underway. That means motorists traveling Henderson County highways and rural roads may find themselves sharing the road with the large, slow-moving farm equipment.

As a result, motorists should keep both eyes on road and traffic conditions, learn how to identify slow-moving equipment and give it a wide berth whenever possible.

Not recognizing slow moving vehicles, or simply not being aware of them until it is too

late, is a leading cause of collisions between motorists and farm equipment.

Farmers and ranchers are very busy at this time of year, and they often have to move their equipment along the road. Motorists who encounter this situation should remember they have a limited time to slow down or pass.

A car traveling 55 miles per hour can close a 300 foot gap (the length of a football field) and overtake a tractor moving at 15 miles per hour in about five seconds. At 65 miles per hour, that time drops to about four seconds.

You should also be aware that the most common farm vehicle accident occurs when a slow-moving vehicle makes a left turn after the motorist behind begins to pass. So let's be careful out there.

Rick Hirsch is the Henderson County Extension Agent - Agriculture for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit our web page at <http://henderson.agrilife.org/>.