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PLANT OF THE
 MONTH: *MISTLETOE*

Mistletoe is a partial parasite; it can make its own food through photosynthesis, but it also sends roots down into the vascular tissue of the host tree to obtain water and nutrients. Birds spread the plant by eating and disposing of seeds. Large populations of mistletoe can severely stunt the growth of the tree and even kill it over time. If mistletoe is a problem, use Florel Brand Fruit Eliminator by Monterey Lawn and Garden Products to help suppress it. This product can be sprayed on the mistletoe any time after the leaves have fallen from the host tree through mid-winter.



BECOME A MASTER GARDENER

The Texas Master Gardener program is designed to train volunteers to educate and engage Lubbock County residents in the implementation of research-based horticultural and environmental practices to create sustainable gardens, landscapes and communities in coordination with AgriLife Extension. Applications are required and will be available at the Lubbock County Master Gardener Intern Class Information Session from 2-3 p.m. Jan. 10 at the AgriLife Extension office for Lubbock County, 916 Main, Suite 401, Lubbock. For more information, contact Christina Reid at 806-775-1740 or christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu.

“If you love gardening, want to learn more and would like to share knowledge with others, the Lubbock County Master Gardener Association offers the opportunity to learn and to serve the community”

Landscape Design Series



PART I: WHY PLAN

A landscape is made up of all the living and nonliving components of an area of land including plants, landforms and manufactured structures. Fences, or any kind of boundary, and lighting are as much a part of the landscape as trees and shrubs. A well-designed landscape provides many assets to homeowners; landscaping boosts property and resale values, improves the beauty and utility of spaces around buildings, and establishes a unique sense of place for relaxation and enjoyment. Proper planning is crucial to attain the greatest returns from your investment and to bypass common landscaping mistakes. In this series you will learn how to conduct a site evaluation, identify design objectives and create a rough landscape plan.

Landscape planning and design are fluid processes. There is often no correct sequence of steps. If you are designing or renovating an entire landscape, you will start by creating a site map and conducting a survey of the whole space. When creating a small garden or bed for a specific purpose, we normally start by identifying our goals such as creating a xeriscape garden or establishing plants to screen a patio. The same set of techniques are used whether planning an entire landscape or designing a single garden.

Planning a Landscape:

- Conduct a site evaluation – identify positive, negative, permanent, and temporary features, and environmental conditions of the planting site or landscape. If windows are present, consider the views.
- Identify landscaping goals – consider how you and others plan to use the area. Also consider current city laws, ordinances, and environmental stressors.
- Create a bubble diagram – define areas for each planned use of the landscape and how they interact with one another.

Read next month's issue for Part II: Site Evaluation

UPCOMING EVENTS

What is a Master Gardener and How to Become One

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10 2:00

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Lubbock County

916 Main, Suite 401 806.775.1740

Everyone interested in applying for the program is strongly encouraged to attend this information session.



Texas Alliance for Water Conservation TAWC Water College

THURSDAY, JANUARY 17 8:30-3:30

Lubbock Memorial Civic Center

1501 Mac Davis Lane

For more information please visit www.tawcwatercollege.com



ASK AN AGENT...

Q: Can you identify this plant please and why it might be planted in ag fields around Lubbock?

A: You are holding a Daikon Radish. (please do not eat this as we are unaware of what has been applied to it) Farmers in this area plant these to help break up and aerate the soil. They also serve another important function- nutrient storage. The radish absorbs and holds nutrients from the soil and when the farmer lets it decay/tills it under in the fields, it then releases these nutrients for the next planted crop to absorb.

Have a question you would like to see answered in a future issue? Email christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu today!



"All the flowers of all the tomorrows are in the seeds of today."



DEICING SALTS AFFECTS ON PLANTS

Winter months usually bring the South Plains ice and snow making travel difficult. Public safety is of highest priority and is addressed by the use of deicing compounds. Deicing compounds make it safer for us, but often damage concrete surfaces, automobiles and landscape plants.

There are several deicing compounds on the market, each with pros and cons. Sodium chloride (NaCl) is the most common and known as table or rock salt. It is the least expensive and is most effective when temperatures are above 15°F. Unfortunately it is very corrosive, damaging to landscape plants, and excessive sodium in the soil can destroy its structure. Calcium chloride (CaCl₂) dissolves readily, acts quickly, and is effective in very cold temperatures - down to -20°F. However, it is highly corrosive to concrete and metals, but slightly less damaging to plants than sodium chloride. Calcium magnesium acetate (CMA) is an environmentally friendly compound derived from dolomitic limestone and acetic acid. CMA is considered safer for plant material, non-corrosive to concrete surfaces and biodegradable. It is also effective at melting ice to around 15°F. The downside, it is 30 to 40 times more expensive.

Deicing materials are salts that melt ice, creating a brine solution (salty water) which freeze at lower temperatures. The problem in the landscape occurs when this brine solution is splashed onto plant foliage or runs off pavement into the soil. An accumulation in the soil near plant roots results in damage to the plants. Plants suffer a salt-induced water shortage, even though there may be moisture in the soil, because roots are unable to absorb sufficient water. To minimize damage by deicing materials in the landscape consider the following approaches

- Mechanical removal – the less ice and snow present, the less deicing material needed
- Use abrasive materials in conjunction with mechanical and/or deicing materials – abrasives such as sand have few impacts on the environment. They do not melt ice, but do improve traction on slippery surfaces.
- Plan ahead – plant salt tolerant plants in areas receiving large amounts of deicing material; locate salt sensitive plants away from areas deicing materials are used; use hardscapes (gutters, barriers) to channel runoff away from planting areas; do not pile snow containing deicing materials onto planting areas; and irrigate once heavily in the spring to leach salts away from root zone.



Hyacinth bulbs forced indoors Courtesy of P Allen Smith



For more information on any of the topics, or to ask questions please contact:

Christina Reid, County Extension Agent Horticulture

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