

Concho Valley Horticulture Update

September 2016

Growing Cool Season Vegetables

Fall is a great time of year to work in the garden, especially after our hot Texas summers. The mild weather that gets cooler as time goes by creates the perfect environment for delicious cool season crops like broccoli, cabbage and lettuce. Growing these types of crops in the spring causes the produce to be bitter due to the temperatures warming up, but tastes great when grown in the winter.

Another good benefit of fall gardening is that insect pest populations are on the decline and not as abundant as in the spring.

Probably the best reason to garden in the fall though is that it's more fun because it feels good to be outside and is more comfortable due to milder weather.

An extensive vegetable garden isn't the only place to grow cool season vegetables; many of them are attractive in the landscape and can be planted in flowerbeds and in containers.

Cool season vegetables can brighten up a landscape, especially the nice leafy greens like kale and swiss chard. Early September is still a bit warm for planting winter vegetables, but as soon as it really starts to cool down in later September, it's a great time of year to renew the garden with new crops, or plant some winter vegetables in the landscape.



The following list of cool season crops will work well in any type of gardening system whether it be row crops, container gardening, small garden plots or flower beds. Most cool season crops can be planted any time from fall through winter. They include:

Beets, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, carrots, lettuce, kale, mustard greens, onions, spinach, swiss chard, radish, collards and turnips.

These vegetable crops will need to be watered and fertilized just like warm season crops, but due to the cooler weather and lower water use, they won't need it as frequently. And though pest populations aren't as bad in the fall as in the spring and summer, still keep an eye out for insect pests such as cabbage loopers and harlequin bugs. Contact the Extension office if you want any info on cool season crops or pests.

September To-Do's

- Purchase bulbs while selection is good, but wait until November to plant
- Plant wildflower seeds
- Divide spring blooming perennials such as iris and day-lily
- Adjust irrigation as temperatures cool down
- Apply Pre-emergent weed control for winter weeds

Pecan Update



From the Pecan IPM Newsletter by Bill Ree

Late season pests to keep an eye out for:

Pecan Weevil - timing depends on variety, treat when nuts enter dough stage and repeat 10 days later
Stink bugs/leaffooted bugs: pyrethroids give best control
Black Pecan Aphid: continue to monitor and control though September

Testing Soil for Landscape Plants

The two things that impact plants most are soil and water. Now that some work in the garden and landscape is starting to slow down, it's a great time to do a soil test. Especially if your plants didn't perform as well as you expected in the previous months, a soil test is a very simple thing to do and can be really helpful.

A soil test done through the soil lab at Texas A&M University will tell you how much nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium there is in the soil, and what the pH is. You can even find out what micronutrients you have in your soil if you suspect deficiency.



It's important to note that more is not better when it comes to fertilizer for plants. Never just put down fertilizer without knowing if the soil

needs it or not.

Many plants don't need as much fertilizer as they get, if any at all. Applying too much fertilizer is a waste of time and money, and is not good for plants.



Taking a soil sample is easy. All you have to do is dig up some soil in several different spots in the area you want to test. Remove all leaves, roots and rocks and mix it all up in a bucket.

Then you need a submittal form that you can get from any county extension office, or online at soiltesting.tamu.edu. Place about 2 cups in a plastic zip top bag and mail it as directed on the submittal form.

A properly done soil test will be a big help in producing a beautiful landscape and a great harvest next year. When you soil test results come in, usually in a week or two, feel free to contact the extension office for help interpreting the results.

Plant Spotlight

Red Spider Lily
Lycoris radiata

It's a great time to plant spider lilies! These plants pop up with beautiful, large flowers in early fall.



Water Lilies

Water lilies are a beautiful plant, and water features like ponds are always nice to have in the landscape because they are relaxing and just add a lot of atmosphere to the yard. So if you have a pond, be sure to utilize water lilies to add life and color and interest.

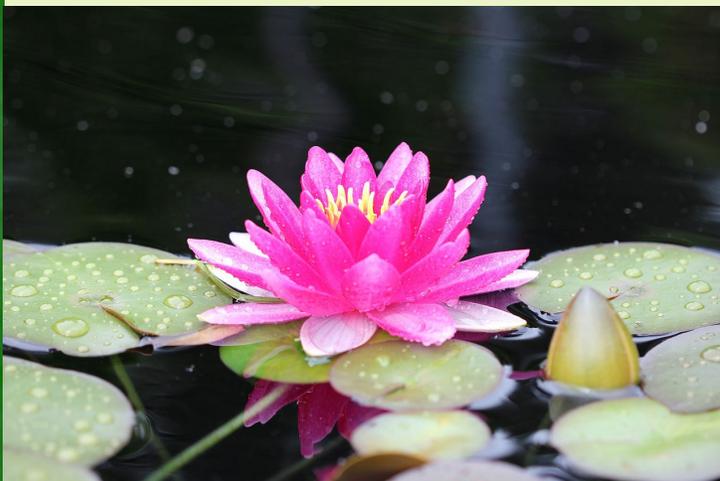
Water lilies good to have around in ponds even just for functional purposes, if there are enough to cover at least 50% of the surface of the pond they will greatly reduce the amount of algae that grows in the pond.

If you would like to try using water lilies in your landscape, there are two basic types – tropical and hardy plants. The tropical lilies bloom either in the day or at night, and are considered annuals because they don't survive the winter. Hardy lilies are day time bloomers and can be overwintered in a dormant state.

Even if you don't have a pond in your landscape to plant water lilies, you can still enjoy some beautiful water lily gardens right here in San Angelo. We are so lucky to have the International Water Lily Collection which is a world-renown collection of beautiful plants many of which are varieties developed by the curator Ken Landon.

The Water Lily Collection is located at Civic League Park, at the corner of Beauregard and Park Street and it's free and open to the public.

There is a great opportunity coming up to stop by the collection, it's the annual Lily Fest on Saturday September 24th - which is a fun family event to come enjoy the lily garden, learn more about growing water lilies, and do other activities. So be sure to come by Civic League Park on Saturday, September 24th from 9am to 2pm for Lily Fest.



Pre-Emergent

It's so nice to start another change of seasons, and with the change in weather comes a change in the landscape. The warm season weeds we've been fighting all spring and summer are on the way out, but that just means there's a new type of weed that will come up - cool season weeds. Winter weeds can be just as bad as warm season weeds, and need to be prevented or taken care of promptly to keep them from creating a bad problem. If you've ever noticed a yard that's solid purple, that's henbit – a really common winter weed.

Weeds can damage the lawn even when the lawn is dormant, so keep up with weed control even through the winter. For bermudagrass, it can be pretty simple – when it goes completely dormant and brown, you can spray glyphosate (trade name Roundup) which will kill weeds but not hurt the dormant grass.

The preventative measure to take for weeds in the lawn is to apply pre-emergent. This should be done right now. Pre-emergent is a herbicide that does not harm existing established plants, but kills seedlings when they germinate. So don't apply a pre-emergent in the vegetable garden or in flower beds that you plan on seeding later.

Of course, a simple chemical free way to help control weeds is the heavy use of mulch. Be sure to replenish the mulch in your flower beds and in the garden if you're growing cool season crops. A thick 3 to 4 inch layer will help a lot.

For the vegetable garden, hand pulling or hoeing is probably the best way to take care of weeds that do come up. But if you're looking for a chemical to use, be sure to only use one that is labeled for vegetable gardens such as Treflan and follow the directions carefully.

Cool Season Flowers

The weather is just starting to cool down, and it won't be too long until many landscape plants will start going dormant. But that doesn't mean you can't have color in the yard even in the winter time, there are a lot of great cool season annuals to keep the landscape bright and attractive through the fall and winter.

Pansies are the most common solution and are a great choice, but don't plant too early. October through November is the best time to plant these flowers, which come in lots of different colors. They can withstand temperatures as low as 10° F, and they will continue to bloom until hot weather comes back in the spring.

Pansies work best in a location that receives full sun, and will keep blooming throughout the season if kept moist and by applying a balanced fertilizer program and pinching any blooms that have died

Pansies are so popular because they come in so many different colors and color combinations, and keep blooming steadily.

Some other great options for colorful, cool season annuals are things like snapdragons, flowering kale, and Johnny jump ups.

Johnny jump ups are similar to pansies, but have smaller flowers. They also do extremely well in the cold winter weather, and will reseed themselves every year. Watch out because they can start to take over flower beds if left alone.

One of my favorite cool season annual flowers is called stock. It's really hardy and tough, but is also beautiful and smells wonderful.

Garden mums are a great autumn plant; they do well in the cool fall weather but don't last into winter. Be sure to get garden mums, florist mums won't come back next year

When planting any cool season annuals, be sure to till up the soil well, incorporate some compost, and mulch over well after planting. This will help your plants stay healthy and beautiful as long as possible.

Utilizing Grey Water

This has certainly been a great year for getting rain, in San Angelo we are well above the 'normal' amount for this time of year. But we shouldn't get complacent, water conservation is always important to remember and practice.



There are many different ways to conserve water in the landscape and be creative with utilizing new sources of water, like harvesting rainwater. Another great option to consider is utilizing grey water from the home for landscape use.

Basically, graywater is "soapy" water left after tap water has been run through a washing machine or used in a bathtub, bathroom sink or shower and does not contain serious contaminants. Water from a kitchen sink drain cannot be used as greywater because it can contain harmful substances.

Greywater would normally end up going into the sewage or septic system, but it's clean and safe enough to use to water plants, as long as a few rules are followed. So it's a great source of irrigation water to supplement the landscape, and save on the water bill.

If you're in the San Angelo city limits, the clothes washer is the only grey water source that the city ordinance allows us to use, but even just that is a significant amount of water that should not be wasted.

No matter what your source of greywater is, whether it's laundry water or shower water, there are a few rules to go by to make sure everything is safe and clean. First, greywater cannot be stored – it has to be released directly into the landscape. Second, it can't be sprayed in the air, but can be used in drip or flood irrigation.

So to use greywater from a clothes washer, just divert the plumbing to go outside to a landscape bed. It's a good idea to install a valve so the water can go either into the landscape or into the sewer line, so just in case cloth diapers or something similar needs to be washed and drained into the sewer.

Classes & Programs

September 2016

Saturday, September 10, 8:00am to 3:15pm

Fall Landscaping Symposium

Location: A&M Agrilife Research and Extension Center, 7887 N. US Highway 87, San Angelo

Cost: \$40, must register by September 6

Instructors: Mike Shoup, Jerry Parsons, Steven Chamblee

Hosted by the Concho Valley Master Gardeners, join us for this wonderful full day of educational presentations from top-notch speakers! **Pre-registration required, visit txmg.org/conchovalley or call 325-659-6528**



Friday, September 16, 12:00pm

Lunch N Learn Class - Herb and Butterfly Plants

Instructor - Allison Watkins

Location: Tom Green County Extension Office

Judge Edd B. Keyes Bldg, 113 W Beauregard

Cost: \$5

Fall is a great time to plant an herb garden, as well as butterfly plants!

Saturday, 24, 9:00am to 2pm

Lily Fest

Location: Water Lily Collection at Civic League Park,
2 S Park St, San Angelo

Cost: Free

Bring the family and come enjoy the beautiful, internationally renowned water lily collection! The annual Lily Fest event is a great opportunity to learn more about growing water lilies and enjoy various activities. The fall is when the lilies are at their peak, so don't miss it.



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



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