

SEPTEMBER TO DO LIST

- Please note, most of the information shared here was obtained from Research-based sources (see contributors acknowledgements below), and from individuals who are considered very knowledgeable on a particular subject. While some little tidbits here may be of interest, they should be taken "with-a-grain-of-salt".

(compiled by MG Brian D. Townsend)

Half the interest of a garden is the constant exercise of the imagination. -

Mrs. C.W. Earle, Pot-Pourri from *A Surrey Garden* (1897)

1st WEEK:

The first wave of migrant hummingbirds should have arrived in San Antonio. Watch for Ruby-throats and Rufous hummingbirds in addition to the resident black chins. (Migrating hummingbirds will be busy at feeders and blooming firebush, salvia and firespike. - *EO*)

Hum's the word! (Gary Clark, *Texas Highways*, July 2006, pp. 46- 51)

* In the spring, most hummingbirds hurry through Texas toward breeding grounds farther north, but during their fall migration- which begins in July and ends in mid- October- they linger for days or weeks at a time. * North American hummingbirds weight from 3 to 8 grams (about the weight of 2 to 4 dimes) and range in the length from 3 to 5 inches. * Hummingbirds do not suck nectar, but lap it up with a tongue that can extend well beyond the tip of the beak. The nectar flows up by capillary action through tubular membranes in the tongue. * Hummingbirds also eat insects and spiders. * The female Ruby-throated Hummingbird usually lays 2 eggs, each about the size of a jellybean. * Hummingbirds zip through the air at speeds of around 30 mph, and they reach velocities close to 40 mph when jetting to a feeder. * Watch for Hummingbirds Festivals in Rockport-Fulton, and at Lake Jackson during the month of September.

Keep birdbaths clean and full of fresh water daily (or every other day), if possible as this helps keep mosquitoes from laying eggs there.

It is time to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent winter weeds in the dormant lawn. I like *Amaze* or *XL*, but read the labels to see which best suits you. Weed control with a pre-emergent is especially necessary for buffalo grass lawns that are kept short.

Apply iron foliar treatments to chlorotic (yellow) plants and St. Augustine grass, but wait until Oct. 1 for winter lawn fertilizers.

Sow seeds of winter annuals and wildflowers in full sun.

Plant perennials like Asters and Garden Mums for fall color.

Order spring bulbs for later planting. Most require a six-week stay in the refrigerator before planting.

A superior ficus plant, "Midnight," may be available in nurseries and garden centers. It has darker green leaves and a compact crown, and resists leaf drop.

It is not too late to get fall tomatoes in the ground. *Surefire* is the quickest to mature, but, *Sun Master*, *Solar Fire* and *Sun Pride* also are good choices. If tomatoes have been in the ground and are growing, now would be a good time to apply a slow-release fertilizer.

Plant green beans, radishes, carrots, beets, squash and sweet corn for fall (transplant broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower also. A protective cover such as *Grow Web* will counter any searing sun. - *EO*).

Finish pruning cold-tender shrubs now to avoid having new growth killed back by first

frosts.

For summer-planted trees and shrubs, make sure you water the root ball (outer edge). Roots are confined to that area for the first few months.

The brown scorching symptom you see on citrus, bur oak, ivies and other leaves is likely the result of sunburn. When temperatures fall, the symptoms will cease.

If leaves and pecans are dropping, it is in response to heat and dry weather. Watering deeply at the drip line once a month will help.

If the lawn is dying in patches, check for GRUBWORMS, CHINCH BUGS or a fungal disease.

This is probably the last week to seed Bermuda grass without a high risk of freeze damage (buffalo grass can be planted also - LR). Prepare the soil and water twice a day until a good stand appears - usually about a week (see article below on The Smart Lawn). - CF

Prepare garden soil now for fall vegetable transplants by adding 2" of compost and tilling to a depth of 6" to 8".

If your yard needs more trees, research recommended varieties, mature size and heights so you can plant in fall. - EO

Use glyphosate-type herbicide to eliminate all existing grass and weeds in areas you intend to develop this fall or next spring as cultivated beds. Application must be made several weeks before first killing freeze. - NS

A practical tip shared by a gardening friend that makes a good rule of thumb with plants you like: Don't give up on a new plant until you've tried it in three different spots. - DMS

Prune perennials such as butterfly weed, cigar plant, four-o'clocks and Ruellia that bloom well into fall. - DP

Clean up iris beds and thin out clumps, if crowded. - LR

You can do a simple soil test to see if your soil is alkaline or acid. Place a pinch of garden soil into a bottle or glass of vinegar. If the vinegar starts to bubble, your soil is alkaline. If it doesn't bubble, then it is acid. With the exception of east Texas and a few other locations, Texas soils are generally alkaline. - TG

Ragweed Season should begin about now! If you're susceptible to allergies, now would be a good time to check into "preventative measures" such as allergy shots or nasal spray solutions such as *Nasal Crom* and others. - me

Major Benefits of Turfgrass - Some individuals and organizations continue to question the need for turfgrasses in our landscape, believing that turfgrasses waste water and require too many pesticides and fertilizers that can be harmful to the environment. With the extended drought condition that we have had in our area, turfgrasses are coming under even more scrutiny. It is important to recognize that turfgrasses provide many benefits to the environment. Listed below are some of the major benefits of turfgrass.

Turfgrasses act as a great air filter. It is estimated that turfgrass areas trap some 12 million tons of dust and dirt in a year's time. Just one acre of grass can absorb hundreds of pounds of fossil fuel-created sulfur dioxide in a year.

Turfgrass growing in lawns can act as a sink for carbon dioxide. This process is referred to as "carbon sequestration." The ability of a plant to take up carbon into its leaves, roots and other plant parts is seen as a way to reduce excess carbon in the air from the burning of fossil fuels which, it is theorized, causes global warming. Researchers at Colorado State and the USDA-ARS estimated that golf course greens and fairways alone can sequester up to 1 ton per hectare (2.47 acres) of carbon per year.

Turfgrasses act as nature's air conditioner. In a city block of eight homes, the front lawns

have the cooling effect of 70 tons of air-conditioning. Without turfgrasses in the urban areas, temperatures would rise significantly.

Turfgrasses are a good source of oxygen. A 2,500 square foot lawn can produce enough oxygen for a family of four.

Grass contributes greatly to improving the underlying, existing soil. The lawn can continually improve topsoil by producing new plants with roots that have their own life cycle, adding organic matter as plant parts die off and decompose.

Grass/soil systems have the ability to trap large amounts of water. A healthy 10,000 square foot lawn can absorb more than 6,000 gallons of rainwater without noticeable runoff. The water nourishes the grass, trees, shrubs, and flowers before soaking through the topsoil to replenish groundwater. - *TMcK*

The SMART Lawn: Where you have lawns, seed or reseed (or sod) with first-class certified grass seed. This helps produce a healthy, vigorous, well-adapted lawn with fewer weeds. Seed (or sod) should include a variety of grass selected for your area. Look for seed containing Endophytic fungi, which are repellent to certain lawn pests, such as Chinch bugs. SEED IN THE FALL. The cooler days provide an ideal environment for grass seed germination (keep in mind Bermuda needs warm days in the 80's) and deeper root growth. WATERING your lawn is not only unnecessary; it is a waste of water resources and can harm the grass if improperly done. If a hot, dry summer turns your lawn brown, it is probably dormant and will recover when it rains. If you must water, do so early in the morning to cut down on evaporation. Water deeply and infrequently to encourage deep roots. Remember that the more you water, the faster the grass grows and the more mowing is needed. Summer dormancy is a natural rest period for grass in hot weather. GRASS CLIPPINGS contain about 4% nitrogen, .5% phosphorus and 2% potassium. Clippings decompose quickly, thanks to earthworms and microorganisms, and do not contribute to thatch accumulation. Thatch is composed of dead roots caused by over fertilization and soil compaction. Grass clippings conserve water by shading the soil from the hot sun and reducing moisture loss from evaporation. - *W/V*

In Our Rose Garden: As we approach the fall blooming season, we hope for a weather change to more normal (?) rainfall and a little relief of both day and night time temperatures. Let's talk rose activities for September. A) Bush Manicuring, Grooming or Pruning - If we get our normal fall weather break this month (rain and trending off in temperatures), our roses should respond with good growth. Usually during the first two weeks of September your bush grooming can take place. If you're looking for good fall color, your bush manicuring can be done over a 2-3 day period. The following practices should be followed: 1) Cut out all twiggy and spindly growth that clutters up the bush. 2) Remove all spent blooms down to a good outside eye with a five leaflet node. 3) Remove any canes that are dead or show die back. 4) Most fall bush grooming should be made on pencil sized canes, taking 1/3 to 1/2 off the top. The hard-nosed rose exhibitor will cut deeper looking for that heavier cane growth that can produce larger blooms for exhibition (* Timing your pruning so you will have some roses for the show will depend on several factors including atmospheric and soil conditions, the availability of water, and whether the roses are a large or small pedaled variety. The many pedaled rose will require more time to bloom, while the smaller pedaled varieties take fewer days from time of pruning to time of blooming). B) Spraying - After you have done your fall bush grooming or manicuring, the new fresh growth should be appearing. You should then resume a regular weekly spraying

schedule using products with *Triforine* (formerly *Funginex*) @ 1Tbsp. per gal. of spray, or other approved fungicide (including organics such as *Neem oil*, if the temperatures have tapered off), remember to alternate spray mixes throughout the season to avoid disease resistance to chemical. Spray both tops and bottoms of the foliage. As the night time temperatures trend off, the fresh, tender growth will be susceptible to the unwanted, powdery mildew. As buds appear, it's time to start misting them for THRIPS with either Orthene liquid @ 2tbsp. /gal. of spray, or powdered Orthene @ 1Tbsp. /gal. of spray. Use a quart-sized hand mister or a 1 gal. pump-up sprayer and mist only the buds and flowers about every three days. A regular spray schedule will keep this unwanted visitor out of your garden. C) Feeding - You did your organic feeding in late August, so now is the time to give your roses a quick boost with a water soluble feed of 20-20-20 (2 cups) and fish emulsion (1 cup) mixed in a 32-gal. garbage can. Give each bush one gal. of this mixture poured around the drip line. Miniatures should get no more than a quart. D) Watering - (Please note, watering should be done the day before pruning, spraying or feeding, AND right afterwards.) As the new fall growth lengthens, it is imperative that you keep your rose beds moist, not soggy and wet. If we are under water restrictions, water wisely and timely and your roses will still grow. E) Finger Pruning - "Let your fingers for the walking through the yellow roses!" After you complete your fall grooming or pruning and the new growth lengthens and buds begin to appear on your hybrid teas, miniatures and floribundas, etc, check for side buds on the hybrid teas and miniatures (normally Species and Old Garden roses are left alone). Remove these, leaving the main or terminal bud. This will allow more of the nourishment to go to building one flower per stem, making for a larger bloom. Floribundas, which form sprays of florets, should have the terminal bud removed. This will allow the rest of the florets to develop evenly. If you want miniature sprays, the same practice should be followed. F) Mulching - Continue to keep a mulch depth of at least 2" to 4" on your rose beds. A good cover of mulch will help maintain moisture and temperature levels in your beds plus adding precious organics to your soil. This will invigorate your bushes to send out all that new growth which, in turn, will provide you with some beautiful blooms come later this fall season. * Remember, when feeding or spraying your roses they must have been watered adequately beforehand.

Expect the first wave of Fall coolness to flow into San Antonio the third week of September. Until then, protect yourself from the sun! (Visit the San Antonio Rose Society's web site @ www.sarosesociety.org

Organic Rose Program - HG (see Feb2do List for complete program or visit his web site @ www.dirtdoctor.com)

Watering: If possible, save and use rainwater. If not, add 1 tbsp. of natural apple cider vinegar per gallon of water. If all else fails, just use tap water, but don't over water. Avoid salty well water if possible.

Fertilizing Program Round #3: Sept. 15-30 - organic fertilizer @ 20lbs. /1,000 sq.ft. sul-po-mag @ 20lbs./1,000 sq.ft. (in sandy acid soils use soft rock phosphate instead at 30lbs. /1,000 sq.ft.). Apply wheat/corn/molasses soil amendment at 30lbs. /1,000 sq.ft.

For best results foliar feed with Garrett Juice (visit his web site for the recipe to make your own or pick it up from a local nursery) every 2 weeks, but as least once a month. When soil is healthy, nothing but Garrett Juice is needed in the spray.

Pest Control Program: Add the following to Garrett Juice and spray as needed.

Garlic teas or mild vinegar - 1/4cup/gal. or label directions for minor insect or disease

infestations.

For thrips, apply beneficial nematodes to the soil in early spring.

Potassium bicarbonate - 1 rounded tbsp. /gal. for minor diseases.

Liquid biostimulants - Use per label - Medina Soil Activator, or similar product.

Neem or plant oil product - Use per label directions for more serious insect and disease infestations.

Fish emulsion - 2 oz. /gal. for additional nutrients (may not be needed when using compost tea).

A YEAR IN THE ROSE GARDEN: by A.J."Pop" Warner

Keep up the watering. If the water bill goes too high it is better to cut down on the number of bushes next year than cut down on the water. Six well-watered, well cared-for roses will produce more blooms and more satisfaction than 60 neglected bushes.

Mildew season is at hand. When the nighttime temperature drops below 70-80 degrees F start watching for the telltale wrinkled new foliage and distorted bloom buds. Don't wait until the new leaves turn white or you are in trouble. *Triforine* (formerly *Funginex* (?)), applied regularly should head off mildew before it starts.

Blackspot has been seen in several area gardens. It probably resulted from the time you were on vacation and tried to stretch the spraying intervals. *Dithane M-45 (Maneb* (?)) or a product with *Propiconazole* at 1/2 Tbsp. per gallon, once a week should clear it up in three or four weeks. *Dithane M-45* (?) @ 1/2 Tbsp. /gal. of spray plus 1 Tbsp. *Funginex* (?) (or product with *Triforine*) per gallon seems to be more effective than the *Maneb* (?) alone and also gives some mildew protection.

Continue to spray in the cooler part of the day. Many September days will still be very hot and spray burn could result. But do spray. Spray burn is not contagious like blackspot and mildew.

A heavy feeding is due around the first of September, perhaps not as much as the spring feeding but a good handful of 10-20-10 or 12-24-12 per bush. Then water, water, water. Two weeks later many good growers, especially exhibitors will use "soluble" fertilizer at 2 Tbs. per gallon at one gallon per bush. They will continue this every 2 weeks until the last week or so before show time. Note: All fertilizers are soluble; else they would not be fertilizers. The solid granular fertilizers sometimes are less readily dissolved than, say, Peters or Carl Pool, but before they can be used by the plant they must go into solution. The granular residue left on the mulch after fertilizing with solid products is not the fertilizer, but the carrier. Don't worry because it is not dissolved. If you got a good rain or watered heavily the fertilizer is already in the soil.

If stink bugs, bud worms and cucumber beetles start showing up, 10% *Sevin* dust, applied lightly over the top before they multiply too much will control them. *Mavrik* is extremely effective and many of us are using it for these critters. (It also controls thrips.)

Don't let weeds go to seed in your rose beds. It will multiply your weed problems for all next year if they seed themselves.

Get started on that new bed you didn't start last month because it was too hot.

In Our Herb Garden: The library at the Garden Center has an excellent horticultural collection and is available for use to any SAHS member. One of the best ways to water outdoor container plants is to set them in another container of water and let them absorb as much as possible. Or let water drip into the container for an hour or so until the soil is well saturated. - EW *Plant frost-tolerant herb transplants and seeds from now until mid-

November. This may be the best time of the year to plant (or transplant) herbs! Include annuals from seeds (parsley, dill, cilantro, anise, chervil, chamomile, edible flowers and greens), annuals from transplants (parsley and chervil) and perennials from well-established transplants (chives, rosemary, sage, salad burnet and English thyme). * Plant everlastings for spring harvesting - perennials such as bergamont, yarrow, puchellum and annuals such as statices, larkspur and strawflowers. * Harvest basil and preserve by freezing as an oil paste. * Re-pot container-grown perennials as needed. - *HERBS: A Resource Guide for San Antonio*. Visit the San Antonio Herb Society's web site @ www.sanantonioherbs.org.

2nd WEEK:

The first "full" week of September is "Fire Ant Awareness Week", check with your local neighborhood organization or Tx. Coop. Extension Office (for Bexar Co. the number is 467-6575). *NR*

Apply pre-emergents to control winter annual weeds. Some are for turf, others for beds, veg. gardens; double-check.

If rains pick-up, you may see a NUT GRASS invasion. Control it with herbicides such as *Image*, *MSMA*, *Roundup* or *Manage*. Read product labels carefully before purchasing to match the herbicide with your particular conditions. For a bad infestation of nut grass, apply baby shampoo with a pump-up sprayer before applying herbicide (a hose-end sprayer may produce bubbles all the way to the next county! - *me*).

Spiders are nature's weathermen. They will only weave their webs when the air is dry, no rain. So, when you see them building new webs you can be sure that the weather will be clear. - *TGS*

Fall is for planting. Plant garden mums and fall marigolds (choose mums in full bloom, but select marigolds that are not yet blooming). Plant hardy trees, shrubs, vines and groundcovers from now until mid to late November.

It is not too early to divide irises, day lilies and Shasta daisies, after two or three years without dividing can reduce blooms. (Use a sharpshooter shovel to divide the clumps and transplant into full sun areas. Remove 30 to 40% of the foliage of the transplants in order to reduce stress. - *LR*)

Remove seedpods from *esperanza* and *poinciana* so they will keep blooming.

When you water container plants, water until the moisture drips out of the drain hole to make sure a salt layer does not form.

Watch for the SOPHORA CATERPILLAR on Texas mountain laurels. They can strip a plant of leaves quickly. Control with *Bacillus thuringiensis* or *Bt* as soon as activity is noticed.

If the weather brings the FIRE ANTS out in exposed mounds, apply fire-ant baits such as *Amdro* or a product with *Hydramethylnon/ S-Methoprene* (formerly *Logic*) to control the pests in fall and spring. Check and follow directions, (use around the outside edges of the vegetable garden, not directly in it. - *LR*). (Try a bucket of soap sudsy water on the mound; the ants hate it!)

Cut at ground level the suckers that emerge from the roots of peaches, plums, pears, apples, Oriental persimmon and citrus to prevent the rootstock from taking over the fruiting top (scion).

As the temperatures cool this month, many plants will have a growth spurt. It is a good time to use *Roundup* or *Finale* (?) to control poison ivy.

With hot, dry weather after a cool, wet spring, many deciduous trees may lose their leaves early. Use the leaves for mulch or in compost.

Lawnmower blade height can be lowered 1/2" to 3/4".

Don't be too hasty. Pansies, Johnny-Jump-Ups and Snapdragons are set out after Columbus Day. Hot weather will kill them. - CF

To attract butterflies, plant mist flower (*eupatorium*), lantana, butterfly weed (*asclepias*), buttonbrush (*cephalanthus*) and indigo spires sage.

Add compost to flower beds to boost tired flowers.

Plant Mari-mums for fall color. These large-flowered American marigolds are low maintenance.

Prepare beds for spring-flowering bulbs by adding a generous amount of organic matter such as compost. Bulbs need good drainage so raised beds might be necessary. - LR

NO WARTS HERE. They may be slimy and somewhat unattractive, but did you know that toads are one of the most beneficial and natural additions to your garden for curbing pesky insect populations? The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture estimates that a single adult toad can eat 10,000 insect pests over the course of an average summer- including slugs, gypsy moths and earwigs. About 21 different species of toads live in North America, the most common ones being: the American toad, western toad, Fowler's toad, Woodhouse's toad, and southern toad. The bumpy-skinned toad differs greatly from the smooth-skinned frog, and spends most of its time on land. You can welcome these toads to your garden by providing them veritable lodging - in a toad abode. Toad abodes provide a safe haven for toadlets and may act as a hideaway from predators. You can buy toad abodes at most lawn and garden centers or make one using a large flower pot half-buried on its side in a shady spot. Some do's and don'ts from the National Wildlife Federation: a) avoid buying abodes with a "floor", as the toads usually like to dig in the soil to customize their daytime retreat. Also make sure the door is wide enough for larger species (such as American and Fowler's toad) to enter; b) your toad abode should be situated in a shady spot (under a bush) and in the dampest spot in your yard (near a gutter downspout, a/c drain, low spots that collect rain water); c) toads are particularly partial to garden soil, well amended with compost (because it is easier to dig into and supports plenty of sow bugs and earthworms for them to eat); d) avoid pesticide and lawn chemicals that can permeate a toad's sensitive skin.

Plant spring wildflowers

Now is the best time to plant bluebonnet and other spring wildflowers. They must germinate in late summer or early fall, develop good root systems, and be ready to grow in spring when the weather warms. Plant seed in well-prepared soil, one-half inch deep, and water thoroughly.

Did You Know...

Since wireworms attack potatoes, some old time gardening wisdom suggested scattering potato peels around the garden to trap the worms. For this to be effective, you should punch holes in several old tin cans, fill them with potato skins and then bury them near your potato plants. You will need to empty your cans once every week or so and fill with new skins as needed. - TGS

Week of Hummingbird Festival in Rockport!

3rd WEEK:

As nighttime temperatures start to come down, let your lawn (especially like "Raleigh" St. Augustine) dry out between waterings and water only in the mornings in fall to prevent brown patch fungus. If round, brown areas appear in your lawn, treat with *Daconil*, *Terrachlor*, *Fungaway* or another fungicide labeled for the problem.

Dig and divide spring or summer blooming perennials.

Get ready to fertilize your lawn using a "winterizer" formula. Buy a fertilizer that is 15 to 18 percent quick-release nitrogen and apply to lawn around Oct. 1. Look for a fertilizer with a 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio of nutrients. 19-5-9 is a common formula.

Fertilize tomatoes with 1/2 cup of lawn fertilizer per plant when the first fruit sets.

Spread fertilizer over the roots of the plants.

Pepper sauce seems to be effective for protecting plants from both squirrels and deer.

Apply weekly.

If the temperatures are cooling, oak wilt fungal mats may appear on diseased red oaks.

Paint all wounds on Spanish oaks and live oaks to prevent new infections (Even if the daytime highs are hot enough to keep oak wilt from being active, play it safe by applying pruning paint to all wounds more than 1 inch across- *EO*).

Plant shade trees now to take advantage of mild fall and winter weather for root development.

Failure to apply pre-emergent herbicides permits cool-season weeds to germinate. Only YOU! can prevent weeds! - *CF*

To attract hummingbirds, plant cardinal lobelia, trumpet vine, lantana, Turk's cap, and autumn sage. Plant perennials now or plan to incorporate them into your landscape in spring.

Control PILLBUGS in your veggie garden and in newly germinated wildflowers with bait or *Sevin* dust. (Lay some plywood or cardboard over moistened ground at night and pick it up the next morning. It's like a magnet to pillbugs! - *me*)

Divide perennials such as daylilies and irises. Use a sharpshooter shovel to divide the clumps and transplant into sun areas. Remove 30 to 40 % of the foliage off the transplants to reduce stress. - *LR*

Since wireworms attack potatoes, some old time gardening wisdom suggested scattering potato peels around the garden to trap the worms. For this to be effective, you should punch holes in several old tin cans, fill them with potato skins and then bury them near your potato plants. You will need to empty your cans once every week or so and fill with new skins as needed. - *TGS*

4th WEEK:

Fall is here! ("Equinox: the time when the sun crosses the equator, making night and day of equal length in all parts of the earth.) - *SB*

Changes in the weather are more likely a few days after a full or new moon because the moon moves the tides and the flow of water around the planet. - *TGS*

Did you know that some city trees keep their leaves longer than country trees (leaves next to street lights are less affected by the decreased daylight that triggers leaf drop.)? Also, take a look at those leaves next to city lights, their *dull*. (-*AARP, Sept./Oct. 2003*)

Make sure your Crepe Myrtles are starting to go dormant. If not, stop watering and remove their mulch.

Perform final pruning of hardy shrubs and vines; but not those, which bloom in spring.

Still time to sow wildflower seeds in your landscape, as well as in waste places around your neighborhood. Good soil preparation will yield better germination. At minimum, the seeds must touch bare soil, and light must penetrate to the soil.

Treat rust on zoysia grass or figs with *Bayleton* or another labeled fungicide. If fruit tree leaves show rust, apply wettable sulfur to prevent them from dropping all their leaves.

The organic material in raised beds decomposes and compacts as we garden. Replenish now

with compost to get ready for fall vegetables.

As average temperatures drop, be careful not to overwater your lawn. Lawns require less water in fall. - *CF*

Look for the *Pawnee* variety of pecan to mature its nuts soon, it is probably the best pecan variety for the San Antonio area because it is very productive and naturally resists aphids.

Wait for our first cool spell before setting out plants to provide cool-weather color. Try ornamental kale for colorful, fringed foliage with inner leaves of red, white, rose and pink.

Dianthus, calendulas, stock and snapdragons offer flowers in a wide range of hues.

Lightly prune and fertilize geraniums and begonias for further blooming. - *EO*

Sow seeds of snapdragons, dianthus, pansies and other winter flowers in flats for planting outdoors in October.

Root prune established plants you intend to move this winter to allow them time to establish new roots within the soil balls that will be lifted. Do not cut taproots at this time.

Mums are setting buds now. Pinch off about 1/3 of the buds to encourage larger flowers in fall. Fertilize them with a balanced fertilizer such as 20-20-20 to increase flowers and healthy foliage. - *LR*

Did You Know...

Goldenrod has been incorrectly blamed by many folks as the main cause of hay fever.

Unfortunately for Goldenrod, it blooms at the same time as ragweed, the true perpetrator and a member of the same plant family. Goldenrod is a spectacular fall bloomer that should be used more often. It is very striking when planted with Mexican sage. - *TGS*

Monarch butterflies should be heading our way back to their winter homes.

Bird migrations are beginning. You may see changes with visitation of different types of bird at your feeders. Always keep water supply fresh. - *me*

* In updating this collection of useful tips, I have come across several comments, instructions and chemicals that are being replaced with newer techniques and materials. In some cases, I do not want to change what others have written, but I need to bring "them" up-to-date by putting a "(?)" right behind the point in question and maybe adding my two-cents-worth. - *me*

Many thanks to my contributors for sharing their wisdom so I can learn and share it with you.

CF - Calvin Finch, Bexar County Extension Agent for Horticulture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News).

EO - Edna Ortiz, Bexar County Extension Agent for Horticulture, Texas Agricultural Extension Service (courtesy S.A. Express-News).

LR - Lynn Rawe, Bexar Co. extension agent for horticulture, Texas Cooperative Extension (visit their web site @ www.bexar-tx.tamu.edu) (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

NS - Neil Sperry, Texas horticulturalist, Publisher "Neil Sperry's GARDENS" and contributor to S.A. Express-News (visit his web site @ www.neilsperry.com).

DMS - Diane Morey Sitton, gardener, writer and contributor to Neil Sperry's GARDEN's Magazine.

DP - Diane Pfeil, Bexar County extension associate for horticulture, Texas Cooperative Extension (courtesy S.A. Express-News)

TMcK - Tara McKnight Wichita County extension agent for horticulture, Texas Cooperative Extension (courtesy *TGS*)

WN - William Niering, PhD. (began a program called SALT-Smaller American Lawns Today)

AJW - A.J. "Pop" Warner, from his book "A Year in the Rose Garden".

HG - John Howard Garrett, aka the "Dirt Doctor" (visit his web site @ www.dirtdoctor.com)

TGS - Texas Gardener Seeds; visit their web site @ www.texasgardener.com.

SB - Steve Brown, meteorologist for KSAT 12 (visit their web site @ www.ksat.com).

NR - Nathan Riggs, Extension Agent, Integrated Pest Management - Bexar Co. (courtesy S.A. Express-News).

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