**Wildflowers Q’s & A’s**

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Q. The wildflowers were beautiful last spring and I want to plant them in a sunny vacant field next to our property. How do we prepare the site? Where is the best place to buy seed?

A. Preparing the Site– You can grow wildflowers on a site enriched with organic material, fertilized and irrigated, but if you are going to go to such an effort, you may as well grow snapdragons, stocks, petunias and pansies. The attraction of wildflowers is that they survive and even prosper on sites with minimum attention. Select the right site and the right seed; apply it now so that the seed makes contact with the soil and you can expect it to respond to a minimum amount of rain and bloom next spring. Rake the soil if you need the exercise but do not cover the seed.

Selecting the Seed– I have had good luck with the Texas or Southwest mixes available at some area nurseries or from Douglas King Seed (San Antonio) or Wildseed Farms (Fredericksburg) and other internet seed services. Wildseed Farms has a particularly good website. It can be reached through Plantanswers.com or you can Google the two seed sources.

Q. Can we pick up the pecans from the ground and use them? There is an abandoned tree at an old school building in our area.

A. Yes, most pecans are harvested by picking them up of the ground. The quicker they are collected after they fall, the higher quality they will be. Refrigerate or freeze them to extend the storage life.

Q. Why don’t we use fescue grass as a lawn grass here? They use it in Phoenix and it is hotter there than here.

A. Fescue grass does not last in Central Texas because of our hot nights. A desert climate can be very hot in the day but cools off most evenings which allows plants like fescue to reload their chemistry. Every few years the new fescue varieties are tested, but none have survival capability yet.

Q. I like to grow snapdragons but have trouble keeping them standing upright. Do you have any ideas how to solve my wind problem?

A. There are several options you can try.

* Rocket is the tallest snapdragon and the selection with the most sensitivity to rain and wind. Try the medium-size selections. They grow to 14 inches instead of two feet and seem less inclined to fall.
* If you grow snaps in containers, use a tomato cage to support them. It works great.
* Grow snapdragons in plantings several rows wide so that they reinforce each other. It also works to grow them against a wall or fence as long as they are still in full sun.