**Q&A**

**Calvin Finch Ph.D.**

**Horticulturist and Director**

**Texas A&M Water Conservation and Technology Center**

Q: If you only had room to plant one tomato variety what would your choice be?

A: For a full size tomato in the garden, I think Tycoon is superior. In addition to heat setting capabilities and large production, it has superior disease resistance.

For a cherry tomato, BHN 968 is my favorite. It makes a reasonable size plant and produces in the heat. It would also be my choice for a container plant.

Q: What controls stink bugs? They have really devastated my fruit production this year.

A: Sevin works well for me. Stink bugs are large and can fly so you need a potent kick as well as some residual power.

Q: My son and daughter-in-law visited this summer and they diagnosed the poor appearance of my lawn to soil compaction and no organic material. Is that a reasonable diagnosis?

A: It is certainly a common problem in our area. If you have a deep soil (6 inches or more) and can irrigate every week, plus have controlled grubs and chinch bugs, the next likely source affecting lawn performance could be compaction. Fertilize with a winterizer lawn fertilizer on or about October 1 and then aerate and top dress your lawn in February to improve the appearance.

Q: We need another shade tree. What do you recommend?

A: My favorites are Texas red oak and Mexican white oak. They are long-lived drought-tolerant trees that look good and grow fast. Other shade trees to consider are live oak, bur oak, chinkapin oak, cedar elm and Mexican sycamore.

Q: Is there any way to eliminate ants from our hummingbird feeders?

A: Some feeders come with ant guards. Instead of filling the traps with water (which evaporates) fill them with cooking oil.

You may have to just move your feeders to different locations every two or three weeks.

Some gardeners hang the feeder on a wire and cover the wire with Vaseline. Good Luck!

For questions about horticulture, water conservation and the environment, email Calvin Finch at [Calvin.finch@tamu.edu](mailto:Calvin.finch@tamu.edu)