**WEB**

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**Vitex Q&A**

**Q. Tell me about the Texas Chaste Tree. I heard someone call it the Texas lilac tree.**

A. Most of us call it Vitex. It is a drought-tolerant species that has plumes of blue or white flowers through the summer. The Texas Lilac Vitex selection has superior color and plume size when compared to the older selections. Hummingbirds and butterflies like Vitex as a nectar source. The species can be managed as a small tree —25 feet — or cut back to the ground every year. I have several old Vitex in my landscape and like them as a full-sun landscape specimen that deer do not eat. In some situations, however, Vitex has been described as invasive.

**Q. The leaves on my tomatoes have faded and look dusty. Is it just the heat?**

A. The normal problem at this time of the year is spider mites. They suck the juices from the leaves and the plants quickly decline with these symptoms. As the mite populations increase, webbing may even appear. There is no effective treatment. The best plan is to harvest the large tomatoes that are on the vine and pull and discard the plants. Replant tomatoes for the fall in early August.

**Q. Is there any treatment that works to remove Bermuda grass from Zoysia grass? With drought conditions all winter and now good rains, the Bermuda grass has moved into Zoysia and looks terrible.**

A. The traditional method is to kill the Bermuda and Zoysia surrounding it with glyphosate — Roundup — and then add some new Zoysia sod, or let the Zoysia move in from the sides. Zoysia is slow to fill in, so this tactic requires you to pull any weeds during the fill-in time. An easier solution is to obtain a grass-specific contact herbicide with Fluzaflop as the active ingredient, such as Fusilade. Be sure to follow instructions on the label. Zoysia grass is less sensitive to the chemical than Bermuda grass.

**Q. All this talk about oak wilt scares us. Our oak trees make our landscape spectacular. Now some appear to be declining. Is there an expert we can call to check them out?**

A. First, go to the Texas A&M Forest Service oak wilt website, [texasoakwilt.org](http://texasoakwilt.org/), or google oak wilt. The site shows the distinctive symptoms for oak wilt. If the symptoms match these, you can request a visit from the regional forester listed on the website. A number of county extension agents are also knowledgeable about the disease and have smaller territories to cover. It may be easier to arrange a visit from the agent.