**WEB**

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**“Cosmos Q&A”**

**Q. Our vacant lot is covered more than usual with weeds this summer, but there are still open areas where we would like to plant a tough-blooming wildflower. Do you have any suggestions?**

A. The best choices for summer and fall wildflower color seem to be cosmos, *Salvia coccinea* and purple coneflower.

Cosmos are available in gold, yellow, pink, lavender and white. The gold and yellow are the showiest and toughest. *Salvia coccinea* has red blooms on a 1- to 2-foot stalk. It also has some shade tolerance. Coneflowers are available in purple, white and pink. The purple is easiest to grow.

The seed of all the summer wildflowers must reach the soil and not be covered with weed growth. Find the seed at your favorite nursery or check out [Douglas King Seeds Company](http://www.dkseeds.com/) or [Wildseed Farms](http://www.wildseedfarms.com/home.php) for mail order supplies.

**Q. What are the recommended tomatoes for the fall planting? When should the transplants be placed in the garden?**

A. Plant your fall tomatoes in the late July or early August. Recommended varieties include Surefire, Solar Fire, Cherry Surprise (BHN 968), Tycoon, Phoenix, Valley Cat, 444 and Celebrity. Surefire may not be available but Early Girl has similar characteristics.

**Q. We have large areas of our backyard that are brown with sparse foliage despite all the rain. There are some mud tunnels around the edge of the dead areas. What do you think caused it, and how do we control the problem?**

A. The symptoms sound like you have agricultural or subterranean termites. These insects don’t eat buildings but feed on grasses and weeds. They eat both the roots and the tops.

They are relatively easy to control with a soil insecticide applied in and around the infestation.

**Q. What are the best container plants that we can have on the patio to attract hummingbirds?**

A. Use firebush and zinnias in full sun. Pentas and firespike do a good job in the shade.

**Q. Can we spray an herbicide on oak tree suckers without harming the parent tree?**

A. It is not recommended. Just cut the suckers with the lawn mower, string mower or pruners.