**WEB**

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**Monarch Q&A**

Q. I went to the nursery to buy some Asclepias for Monarch butterfly breeding sites. They did not have any native varieties, but they tried to sell me Mexican milkweed. They said it was better than common milkweed as a Monarch breeding site. Is that true?

A. According to Geyata Ajilvsgi’s book, “Butterfly Gardening for the South,” it is true. The common milkweed is a great nectar plant, but its blend of toxins is not as potent as Mexican milkweed and the other native milkweeds. One of the features of Monarch reproduction is that the more toxins in the milkweed foliage that the caterpillars eat, the less desirable they are to predators.

Q. If we prune off dead branches from our live oak tree, do we have to paint the wounds like we would if it were a live branch?

A. A cut into dead wood would probably be safe without pruning paint, in terms of susceptibility to sap beetles and their spread of the oak wilt fungus. If there is any question, however, it is best to paint the wounds. Some communities also have a pruning ordinance that may not differentiate between live wood and dead wood.

Q. What vegetables can we plant now?

A. By seed, plant cucumbers, summer squash, green beans, beets, radish, turnips, rutabagas, lettuce and sweet corn. It is late for tomatoes and peppers, but if you plant the largest tomato and pepper transplants you can find and the weather cooperates, you may be able to harvest a crop before the first freeze.

Q. Should we still fertilize our summer annuals? How much fertilizer should we use?

A. Yes, zinnias and other summer annuals will bloom until cold weather arrives, perhaps until Thanksgiving. Provide one half cup of lawn fertilizer per 8 foot row every month.

Q. We were plagued with bedstraw and annual bluegrass in our lawn last winter. What pre-emergent herbicide will work to prevent them?

A. Amaze or XL will do a good job in preventing them if you apply it now according to the instructions.