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**“Monarch Q&A”**

Q. We have planted milkweed for the monarch butterflies. The milkweed is doing well but is loaded with aphids. Should we try to control them or can we just leave them be?

A. Just leave them be. The milkweed should survive fine despite the feeding aphids. Hopefully, lady bugs and other predatory insects will reduce the population. Some gardeners spray aphids off with water from the hose. Any insecticide that controls aphids will also probably interfere with monarch egg laying, hatching and feeding processes.

Q. Which is the best lawn grass for a high-traffic situation? We have two dogs and three children.

A. If your lawn is in the sun, Bermuda grass has the most traffic tolerance. Zoysia grass is also traffic tolerant and has some shade tolerance.

Q. What do you recommend for cut flowers in the garden? We have full sun.

A. Zinnias and cosmos do well as cut flowers. Gladiolas are outstanding, but it is getting too late to plant them. Consider some of the tough roses. Belinda’s Dream, which is pink, Grandma’s Yellow and Mrs. Dudley Cross, which is peach, are easy to grow and provide a long season of cut flowers.

Q. Should we try to remove the mistletoe from our mesquite trees? Is it killing them?

A. Mistletoe is a parasite that adds some stress to the trees it parasitizes, but it is not a major problem. It can be cut off the branches but will return. There are no effective spray programs.

Q. What are our choices for shrubs in the shade? Which are deer proof?

A. The viburnums grow in the shade and are not eaten by deer. Some have attractive blooms. They come in small to large sizes and are evergreen. Pittosporum also meets the requirement for growing in the shade. The deer in my neighborhood do not eat it. Dwarf Chinese holly does well in the shade, as does dwarf yaupon holly. Again, the deer in my neighborhood do not eat them. Primrose jasmine is another deer-proof plant that grows in the shade.

For questions about horticulture, water conservation and the environment, email Calvin Finch at Calvin.finch@tamu.edu.