Distribute 6-15-15

Question and Answer

Q. Our zoysia grass is a bit off color and has clumps of powdery, rust-colored material clinging to the grass blades. Do you know what is wrong with it?

A. Sometimes zoysia grass is infected with a fungus disease called rust. It usually occurs in the fall and does not cause any long-term problems. The weather conditions this spring were autumn-like. You could treat the lawn with a fungicide labeled for rust or you can let it cure itself as the weather changes.

Q. We are growing a vegetable garden for the first time. We have 6 tomato plants that are doing great. We harvested our first fruit last week. There are three of us in the family. We like okra and eggplant. How much okra and eggplant do we need for the three of us?

A. Plant two eight foot rows of okra (8 total plants) and 4 eggplant transplants for a family of three.

Q. What is the small tree blooming now? It has blue blooms on stalks that emerge from the end of the stems. The leaves look like a hand with skinny fingers. The leaves resemble marijuana. Deer don’t seem to eat the flowers or the leaves. The neighborhood where I saw them was loaded with deer.

A. The plant you are describing sounds like vitex. It is a drought tolerant shrubby tree that grows to 20 feet tall in full sun. It is deer-proof and pest free.

Q I thought the new vincas were disease free? This spring during the rains all of mine mushed down to nothing from aerial phytophera. Does that mean that fungus conditions were so severe that even the disease resistant varieties were overcome?

A. Are you sure that you had the variety “Cora”? It is the variety that is resistant to aerial phytophera. It is possible that the disease resistance has weakened as new colors and new generations have been produced, but try again. Make sure the variety you obtain is “Cora”. If anyone else has experienced aerial phytophera with “Cora”, please let me know!

Q. Our neighbor gave us some cherry tomatoes he called “cherry surprise”. They were great tasting. Is it too late to plant some? He says he got the plants in San Antonio.

A. Cherry Surprise is a variety also called BHN 968. I agree that they are a great tasting selection. It was the “San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo” selection a few years ago. It is too late to plant it now but use it for a fall crop. Plant it about August 1. I suggest that you touch base with your local retail nursery to see if they can obtain transplants.