Q + A

**By Calvin R. Finch, Ph.D., Horticulturist and Director**

**Texas A&M Water Conservation and Technology Center**

Q. Please compare the new Tygress tomato that was introduced at the San Antonio Stockshow and Rodeo this year and the Tycoon tomato which is my new favorite.

A.

1. ‘Tygress’ is the Rodeo tomato for 2013. It produces large (deep oblate shape) smooth, uniform fruit on a vigorous, determinate plant with a high-yield potential. ‘Tygress’ is resistant to tomato yellow leaf curl (TYLCV) virus; Alternaria stem canker; Fusarium (F) wilt, 1,2; Gray Spot; common mosaic; and Verticilium wilt (V-1).
2. ‘Tycoon’ has the same disease resistance as ‘Tygress’ but is also nematode (N) resistant. ‘Tycoon’ was the Rodeo tomato in 2011. The main difference is that Tycoon is nematode resistant and Tygress is not.

Q. Why don’t horticulturists recommend pecans for a shade tree as much anymore? We love the look of our trees and we even get pecans.

A. Pecans have several issues that have made them less popular as a shade tree. They generally grow so tall that they take over the neighborhood. They are often too large for small modern lots. Pecans are thought of as being messy by many homeowners. They drop leaves, branches and honeydew. The branch dropping can be dangerous. In addition to honeydew from aphids, pecans often are infected by webworms. Spraying a pecan is almost impossible in an urban situation. Pecans also do better in deep soils with plenty of irrigation. If you still want pecans as a lawn tree, consider Pawnee. It is relatively small and seems to be resistant to aphids.

Q. How long will my cyclamen last this spring?

A. As long as it does not get hot early and you keep them well watered, expect the bloom period to continue until May.

Q. I tried to grow my own BHN 968 this year but seeds were too expensive. They are tasty and good producers but why the outrageous cost?

A. BHN 968, Cherry Rodeo Surprise is the most expensive hybrid seed available according to Jerry Parsons.

1. It is worth the extra cost. ‘Dwarf Cherry’ has nematode (N) resistance as well as resistance to other serious disease and virus problems such as Fusarium (F) Wilt disease, Tobacco (tomato) Mosaic Virus (TMV), Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV) and Verticilum (V) Wilt. These are compact (five feet tall rather than 10-12 feet tall for the standard (‘Cherry Large’ tomato) with broad disease resistance which enables the plant to produce high yields of shine red cherry tomatoes. See: <http://plantanswers.com/Articles/DwarfCherrySurpriseTomato.asp>.
2. The first generation (F-1) seed is expensive because of the production labor required. Second generation seed are available from plantasnswers.com in the “Parsons’ Preferred Seed” section. If you would like to order some seed and grow your own transplants or sow them directly into the garden, send a self-addressed, STAMPED envelope with a check for $5 made payable to Dee Emory to: Dee Emory, 2830 Bee Cave, San Antonio, Texas 78231