**Q&A**

**Calvin Finch Ph.D.**

**Horticulturist and Director**

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

Q: What do you think of vitex as a landscape plant in our area? I have had one for years and love the purple blooms, but now my neighbor says we shouldn’t have it because it is an invasive plant!

A: I am with you in terms of appreciation for the vitex as a landscape plant. It can be grown as a blooming shrub or as a small tree. Deer do not eat vitex, but hummingbirds and butterflies like it as a nectar source. It is an excellent part of a low-water use landscape because of its drought tolerance.

In some regions, vitex may have some “invasive” capabilities, but I have not seen it in our area.

Q: Should we pull the cauliflower and broccoli once we harvest the head?

A: Pull the cauliflower plant for fuel in the compost pile, but the broccoli will produce side shoots that can be harvested until late spring.

Q: My husband and I are getting into gardening and landscaping, and my mother chastised us for fertilizing the lawn this month. We thought that an early fertilization would speed greening up the lawn this spring. She says no, our warm weather grasses won’t benefit by fertilizer until May 1. When I asked her what made her such an expert, she said she reads your column each week. Is she right about the lawn fertilizer?

A: Yes, your mother sounds like a good gardener and a very intelligent person!

Q: The cold weather did not kill our snapdragons, stocks and calendula, but it seemed to freeze the flowers. Will they recover and start blooming again?

A: Yes, but it may not be until late February depending on the weather. Most years the “second” bloom period is from the end of February through mid-May.

Q: What does it mean if our Meyer lemon defoliated from the cold?

A: Hopefully the stems survived. If it is only the leaves that froze, it means you will probably not have lemons next year. They will come back the following year to produce fruit.

For questions about horticulture, water conservation and the environment, email Calvin Finch at [Calvin.finch@tamu.edu](mailto:Calvin.finch@tamu.edu)