**WEB**

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**“Rye Grass Q&A”**

Q. Is it a good idea to plant rye grass in the lawn for the winter? It is so attractive.

A. Overseeding the lawn for the winter can be attractive, but it involves considerable water and only works well for Bermuda grass. Zoysia and St. Augustine are too thick. Buffalo grass declines if the winter lawn is watered. Even a Bermuda grass lawn can be adversely affected. I don’t recommend overseeding in the winter.

Q. What is the verdict on the Early Girl/Surefire tomato variety experiment that you described on the Gardening South Texas radio show? Did Early Girl produce fruit as readily or as early as Surefire?

A. The results are still incomplete, but it looks like Early Girl is not as prolific a fall tomato producer as Surefire.

Q. Why did they change the recommendation about filling hollow areas in oak trees with concrete? It seemed to work for me all these years.

A. The heavy concrete changed the center of gravity of the tree making it more likely to break or fall over. The cement was also damaging to tree cells, reducing the ability for the tree to repair by growing scar tissue. The recommendation now is to use chemically inert foam or leave the hollow area open.

Q. We purchased garden mums to decorate a walkway for a party we hosted. They were beautiful and still look good, but what do we do with them now. They are still in the containers.

A. Mums are a perennial that will grow back from the roots each spring. In our climate they bloom in the spring and then again in the fall. Plant them in drifts or as a border in full sun.

Q. When should we plant onions?

A. Plant 1015 and other short-day sweet onions by seed this month or plant seedlings in December or January.

Q. Our neighbor gave us some of his excess iris rhizomes. We don’t have time to plant them now. Will they rot or decline?

A. Iris rhizomes will last a long time if they are kept dry. If you wait too long this winter, however, you will miss the bloom period next spring.