

Gardening Question and Answer

Distribute 03-13-2017

Q. I have a rose that keeps changing colors. It appears to be pollinated by whatever rose I plant near it and so changes color? Is that is what is happening?

A. No. Flowers can be pollinated by flowers of the same species that are a different color but it does not change the bloom color of the existing plant. The genetics of the blooming rose does not change. The new color is expressed in the seed produced by the two pollinating parties. It is hard to see the result in roses because most do not produce a seed. It is easier to see in zinnias because they readily produce seed. The seed produces new plants that share the genetic material of the two parents.

Q. You and Dr Parsons were discussing weed control on your Gardening South Texas Radio Show. He said that Turks Cap is not susceptible to damage from glyphosate, the active ingredient of Round-up. Does that mean I can spray Round-up into my Turk's Cap bed to kill the bedstraw and beggar's lice weeds and it won't hurt the Turk's Cap?

A. Yes, that's the claim. Test the realty by spraying a small test area first. Follow the dilution instructions on the label. If it works as claimed, then proceed to spray the whole bed.

Q. I understand that it is getting close to the time to plant tomatoes. Please repeat the recommended varieties. My favorite varieties from Pennsylvania have not worked here over the last two years and you have finally convinced me that the indeterminate selections such as Big Boy and Beefsteak don't work in this climate. They produce big pretty plants but no fruit.

A. Try the determinate selections such as the new Rodeo tomatoes- HM1823, Red Deuce, Tycoon, 444, Phoenix, Valley Cat, Celebrity, and BHN 968. The BHN 968 is a wonderful cherry tomato.

Q. My peach trees are in the midst of blooming and forming fruit. They are covered by cucumber beetles. Is that a problem? It looks like they are eating the flower petals.

A. Spray every week with an insecticide such as malathion or Sevin as soon as half the petals of the flowers on any tree drop. It is also recommended to include the fungicide Captan in the weekly spray. Follow label instructions to have the right dilution. Cucumber beetles can cause damage.

Q. When can I fertilize the lawn? What kind of fertilizer is recommended? The Weed and Feed products look like a good value.

A. Weed and Feed products are not recommended in our area. The herbicides should be applied at different times than the fertilizer. Apply a contact herbicide such as Weed Free Zone to control broadleaf weeds in the lawn now but it is not time to fertilize until you mow real grass 2 times which is usually near May 1. Use a slow release lawn fertilizer such as 19-5-9 at that time.