**Hedge Q&A**

By Calvin R. Finch, Ph.D., Horticulturist and Director of Texas A&M Water Conservation and Technology Center

Q. We need a tall hedge to block our unpleasant view. We have several limitations; part of the area is in sun, and part in shade. The hedge will have to be tall, at least 8 feet. Will red-tipped photinia work?

1. Red-tipped photinia grows fast and is attractive, but it is not a shrub I recommend because of its short life. Many that are planted only last 5–7 years because of their inability to tolerate our alkaline soils and susceptibility to a fungal leaf spot.

Consider using one of the large Viburnums. I like *Viburnum tinus*, but make sure you obtain the full-size version. They can tolerate shade or sun, are evergreen and make a dense hedge. Viburnum do need regular water to get them established. Viburnum is also a good choice because they bloom in the spring and produce berries that birds quickly eat.

Loquat or standard-size yaupon holly may also work.

1. Should I have to water my tomatoes every day? That often seems extreme, but they seem to wilt every day.
2. In 95 °F plus weather, tomatoes can use lots of water if you want them to keep growing. Make sure that you are applying enough at each application to penetrate the whole root zone area.
3. This hot weather has showed us that we need a new shade tree. What are some options in addition to live oak?
4. Medium white oak, Texas red oak, cedar elm, bur oak and chinkapin oak are all good choices.
5. When should you plant broccoli? I want to use seed.
6. We generally plant transplant in October, so you need to plant seed now. The problem with using seed is that it has trouble germinating in hot soil. Start the seed inside where the soil will be cool and move it outside after it reaches several inches tall.
7. If our Bermuda lawn is dormant, this fall should we fertilize it anyway?
8. No, fertilize the lawn until about October, if it is green and growing.