**Big Doings on October 20**

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Two of the biggest horticulture events in the year are the Herb Market and the Mitchell Lake Fall Festival. This year, both events occur on Saturday, October 20.

From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., the Fall festival event at Mitchell Lake occurs. The Event features native plant sales, the native plant garden, Last Chance Forever Raptor Show (1 p.m.), birding walks, environmental exhibits, a live reptile display, hayrides every 20 minutes, and a nature book sale. One of the most popular activities for the youth is the opportunity to build their own birdhouse or feeder. The sponsor, Home Depot, provides the materials and tools, and their volunteers help with the construction. Plant sales are conducted by the San Antonio Botanical Society, the Gardening Volunteers of South Texas, and Audubon Center volunteers. SAWS will provide a free blooming xeroscape plant to the first 800 visitors. CPS and the City of San Antonio will provide a free shade tree while supplies last. If you want to see what Jerry Parsons, Calvin Finch or Milton Glueck look like, we will do the Gardening South Texas radio show on-site, live from noon to 2 p.m. During and before the radio show we will answer any gardening questions you may have.

The Mitchell Lake event is free. The way they earn money from the event to support of their wildlife habitat and youth education programs is the big raffle that concludes with the drawing at the event. The top prize is a custom built hummingbird and butterfly garden built on the site of your choice. Landscape architect terry Lewis works on the plan with you; Milbergers provides the plants; Keller Materials supplies the mulch and compost; Hall Irrigation puts in the drip irrigation; and the Gardening Volunteers of South Texas do the planting.

There are many other prizes supplied by Green haven Industries, Wild Birds Unlimited, Coopers’ Nursery in Floresville, Schultz Nursery in Marion and on Broadway, Fertile Garden Supply, Rainbow Gardens on Bandera, Fanicks on Holmgren, GardenVille, Shades of Green and Burns Nursery in Boerne. The tickets are only $2 each! The tickets can be bought on the day of the event.

The Herb Market takes place at the Pearl Stable from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the 20th. The event is sponsored by the San Antonio Water System, San Antonio Herb Society and several nurseries and herb suppliers.

The main attraction of the event is the 11 vendors selling every kind of herb you can think of, but there is also an interesting slate of speakers. Since the Herb of the Year in 2012 is the rose, the speakers will concentrate on the use of rose as an herb.

At 9:30-10:15, the first speaker is Shane Dunford. The title of his program is Growing Herbs 101. At 10:30, Robbi Will will discuss the lore and legends of the rose. Chef Steve McHugh is scheduled from noon to 1 p.m. to demonstrate Cooking with Rose. At 1:30-2:30, selected members of the San Antonio herb Society will discuss Aromatherapy and Crafts with Roses.

Herbs are a good addition to San Antonio landscapes. Most are drought tolerant, some are very attractive and all contribute flowering and/or fragrance to the gardener who grows them in containers or in the garden. For the fall and winter, parsley, mint, arugula, fennel, chives, garlic, cilantro and thyme are especially useful.

For year round value, rosemary heads my list because of its landscape value in addition to providing its value in the kitchen. The evergreen foliage is interesting and attractive. In early spring, the plants produce a blue flower that is showy. Deer do not eat rosemary and it is very drought tolerant. Use the upright version as a specimen in a container or the shrub border. It also works as a border or in a mass planting. The prostrate rosemary makes a great groundcover for full sun. It is especially attractive as it hangs over the edge of a wall.

If you grow fennel or parsley this year, expect the swallowtail butterfly to use the plant for egg laying. It is a favorite food for caterpillars. They can usually be picked off by hand. You may want to leave one or 2 to mature if you have enough foliage to share.

Mint is available in several flavors. Spearmint and peppermint are the most popular. Use mint to flavor drinks or as a garnish on desserts and lamb. As pleasant as mint is to smell, and as a flavoring, it can become a pest in the garden. It spreads by stolons very quickly. Control mint by growing it in small containers—one for each flavor.