**Plantanswers.com Q’s & A’s**

**By Calvin R. Finch, Ph.D., Horticulturist and Director**

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

Q: My broccoli, cauliflower and cabbage look great. Do we have to protect them from cold weather?

A: No. Unless the temperature falls below 25oF for a long period, they should all do fine without protection.

Q: The cut ants have attacked my rose garden again. What can I do to protect my plants?

A: Cut ants are tough because there is no easy way to destroy their mounds. The best you can do is to apply acephate to their trail leading to your rose bed or to their mound. The ants will walk in it and carry some into the mound.

Keep close watch on your rose bed. When cut ants are identified, apply the acephate across the trails. It will kill the ants and they will seek a different food source.

Acephate is the active ingredient of Ortho Fire Ant Control. If you know where the mound is, acephate can be applied as a powder or dissolved in water. The tunnels are often so large that you won’t be able to destroy the whole population.

Q: Is there a good rose that can be planted in a bed straddled by a sidewalk at our church? It is in full sun. We think a rose because we need something that will keep people from cutting through.

A: The best rose for the situation you describe is the Martha Gonzales rose. It is a tough, old fashioned rose that grows to about five feet tall. Eight months of the year it is covered with quarter-size, blood-red blooms. The foliage is also red-green. The thorns are serious enough to divert traffic, but will not cause excessive blood loss to trespassers. Plant them about six feet apart.

Q: Is it too late to apply fertilizer to the lawn?

A: It is pretty late, but as long as the grass is green, it can utilize the nutrients.

Q: What is the tree with thick, furry leaves that is blooming now? The leaves are long and tongue-shaped. It is an exotic-looking tree.

A: The tree you are describing is probably a loquat (also called a Japanese plum). It is an evergreen that has good shade and drought tolerance. The tasty fruit will be ripe in February if it does not freeze.