**Q’s & A’s**

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

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

Q: January is such a dreary month. Are there any plants that will perk it up with color?

A: There are many good choices. Consider paper whites, Cemetery irises, and winter annuals such as pansies, cyclamen, primula, snapdragons, alyssum, stocks and calendula.

Q: Are the tomatoes I picked green to protect from the cold supposed to taste just as good as the vine-ripened fruit I harvested earlier? I have been disappointed.

A: The tomatoes may not be as good as the vine-ripened fruit but they are arguably as good as store bought tomatoes and certainly better than no tomatoes!

Q: My neighbor is growing the new Legacy onion. Is it as good as they say?

A: I don’t have any reason to doubt the claims. Texas A&M University developed the onion to replace the 10-15 onion. It is supposedly more productive, sweeter and faster to mature. Let’s try it this year and see. New supplies should show up in nurseries this month.

Q: We received a whole sack of Cemetery iris bulbs from a friend. They look dried out. Is it worthwhile to plant them? If so, when and how?

A: Cemetery irises are tough. Most of them will grow if you plant them now and into February. Plant the rhizomes in full sun. They are not fussy about soil as long as the soil is not soggy. It is important to plant the rhizome so that the top is level with the soil surface. They do not need mulch.

Q: Our peach trees have grown too tall for us to reach the fruit. I understand we should have been pruning them down each year. Can we start now? Are there instructions some place?

A: Prune your peaches in February. Diagrams and instructions are available on plantanswers.com or from your local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office (usually at the courthouse).