**Q&A**

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Q: My live oak tree was newly planted two years ago. It looks great except for a second central stem that has developed. Should I cut it out? The tree is now 8 feet tall.

A: Many live oaks prosper as multi-stem trees, but I recommend that you cut out the smallest stem to allow the development of a single trunk tree. In live oaks, it is more of an aesthetic preference than other species, but for the largest eventual development, a single stem is best.

Q: You were right, my tomatoes picked up as soon as the weather became cooler. The plants have set some fruit. Will it mature before cold weather arrives?

A: That is always the gamble. Prepare to protect your plants with a blanket or other covering when the first freeze is forecast. Quite often if you protect the plants through the first freeze, we will have three to four more weeks of mild weather. It is a good idea to hedge your bets by picking the full-size fruit before the first freeze and let it ripen in the house.

Q: I just planted Bermuda grass seed and now my neighbor says it is too late in the year. Even if it germinates, he says it will probably freeze. Is he right?

A: He is correct. It is late in the year to plant Bermuda seed. It may not germinate and develop unless the weather stays warm for eight to 10 weeks. It will be more susceptible to freeze damage than established Bermuda grass, but it all depends on how cold the weather is. You may have to replant on or about May 1.

Q: I know it is time for the fall fertilizer, but I have an open bag of “slow release” fertilizer. Can I finish using that?

A: Yes, the lawn may not benefit by all of the nitrogen but it will be almost as efficient as a “winterizer” application.

Q: Which are the best old-fashioned roses to use in the landscape?

A: I like Martha Gonzales (red quarter-size blooms), Mrs. Dudley Cross (crème-pink large flowers) and mutabilis rose. Mutabilis roses have flat, single petal blooms that change color. It grows to be 8 feet by 8 feet. All are long season bloomers (eight months.)