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**Q&A**

Q: You convinced me to grow onions in a whiskey barrel. What kind should I plant?

A: For decoration, it would be nice to plant some yellow (10-15), white (Bermuda) and red (hamburger) but one bunch is all you need. I like the 1015s the best because they grow fast and large and store well. Plant them close together so you can use the thinned onions for green onions. You eventually want 4 to 6 inches between each onion. They will be mature around May 15.

Q: What can you tell me about “Habiturf?” Does it do well in the shade as some claim?

A: Habiturf includes buffalo grass, curly mesquite and blue grama. All are drought-tolerant sun lovers. The blend should be best if used as a groundcover. All three varieties are prone to weeds if they are mowed low. I would be surprised if it performs well in the shade.

Q: My tomatoes escaped the last freeze. Should I try to protect them again or just collect all the mature fruit and call it a season?

A: I am in the same situation and think I will not try and protect them any further. Most will ripen in the house.

Q: I have two questions:

1. When is the ideal time to plant my caladium bulbs?
2. My pomegranate plant bore heavily this year but needs to be pruned. When should I prune?

A: 1) Caladium bulbs are planted in May. 2) Prune pomegranate this winter after you harvest the fruit. The most common pruning tactic is to remove a portion of the older branches that emerge from the ground. You want to save some mature wood because it bears the fruit.

Q: I have a very tall and healthy Meyer lemon tree. It gave me more fruit this year than I could ask for, but in that flowerbed, I noticed mounds of ants that keep growing. I heard sprinkling corn meal on the mounds might kill them. I did, and I think the ants eat it and keep growing. Do I need to kick the beds over first and then sprinkle the corn meal or water them? My worry is that the ants seem to keep building up on the stalk of this tree, and I would hate to think they could kill it. Or should I just get real ant killer? There aren’t pets back there in this area. Thank you for any advice to protect my lemons.

A: The corn meal won’t kill the ants. I would get some regular fire ant insecticide. Concern with Spinosad is an organic insecticide and it works. The ants won’t hurt your lemon tree. They may be feeding on scale or aphids on the tree.

For questions about horticulture, water conservation and the environment, email Calvin Finch at [Calvin.finch@tamu.edu](mailto:Calvin.finch@tamu.edu)