**Q’s & A’s**

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Q: Every year my lantanas are attacked by lace bugs. I never see the pests but know they are active because the leaves turn dusty looking and the lantana quits blooming. Is there anything I can do as a preventative?

A: Acephate applied now and every two weeks through the summer works to prevent them from doing damage. For organic gardeners, spinosad may also work. It does the job for thrips on roses so it may also control lace bugs.

Q: How do you use bulbine in the landscape? I hear that it is tough in terms of drought and I like the lush foliage and blooms.

A: Bulbine can be used as individual specimen plants in perennial border in full sun. If you want to take advantage of the lush look, it could be used for a drift of five or seven plants next to autumn sage or Salvia farinacea. The individual plants will expand to fill any space you allow them. Bulbine is very drought tolerant despite its lush look.

Q: When I mow my zoysia grass, it leaves scalp marks. What is the solution?

A: To avoid scalp marks on my Emerald zoysia, I mow once every week with a sharp rotary mower. You can’t wait until it grows tall between mowings. Another solution is to use a reel mower.

Q: Is there a danger from oak wilt if I cut down the oak suckers with my lawn mower or string mower?

A: Plant pathologists have said “no” because the stems are so thin that they do not attract sap beetles and the oak tree’s chemical deterrents move quickly to protect the wounds.

Q: What is the verdict on tomato production this year? Is everyone having problems because of the cold weather, hail, wind, spider mites and insects?
A: Not everyone. Some callers to the Gardening South Texas radio show report a good crop but at least some are experiencing the same issues that you report. My tomatoes are dismal compared to the good results experienced last fall.

For questions about horticulture, water conservation and the environment, email Calvin Finch at Calvin.finch@tamu.edu.