**Q&A**

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Q: What are some perennials I can plant for fall blooms?

A: Fall aster and mint marigold are two mounding plants that make spectacular but short shows (three weeks for aster and sometimes longer for mint marigold in November). Mint marigold is deer-proof. Two other plants to consider are cape honeysuckle and firespike. Cape honeysuckle is a fast growing vine-like plant with small orange or yellow tubular flowers. It blooms from August until December most years. Firespike is a shade loving plant with shiny green leaves and red flowers that emerge on spikes over the plant. Both cape honeysuckle and firespike are favorite nectar sources for hummingbirds.

Q: The sand burs are terrible on my vacant lot this year. It is too late for a herbicide? Is there anything we can do?

A: One trick that works to reduce the amount of sand burs is to drag a carpet remnant around the infested area. It can be dragged behind a riding mower or a 15-year-old in need of exercise. Discard the carpet piece when it becomes saturated with burs.

Q: What works to control webworms in pecans and other trees?

A: The best control is to spray one of the Bt products around the webs. The worms ingest the leaves and quickly develop a case of terminal constipation. Unfortunately most of us do not have a sprayer capable of spraying the Bt into the trees.

On my trees I try to open up the webs with a bamboo pole to leave the caterpillars unprotected from the sun and predatory wasps.

Q: My neighbor has a great bed of monkey grass. He says I can use some of the plants to start my own bed under the oak tree. The lawn won’t grow in the deep shade and I want to duplicate his monkey grass groundcover. Is it easy to transplant?

A: Prepare the soil under your oak tree by tilling in 2 inches of compost and two cups of slow release lawn fertilizer for every 100 square feet of bed.

Dig out 4 inch strips of monkey grass spaced every 8 inches in his bed, then plant the monkey grass plants every 2 inches in your bed or put small clumps in 2-inch squares every 4 inches in your bed. The clumps are easier to plant. His bed will fill back in quickly. Water your new bed every two days for the first two weeks and gradually fall back to a water application every week this first summer. A project like this is always easier in the fall, winter or spring.

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