**WEB**

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**Mosquitos Q&A**

**Q. What insecticide can we use for mosquitos? They seem to be hiding in our shrub border.**

A. Malathion is the traditional control for mosquitos. Dilute it according to the labeled instructions, and spray the area where the mosquitos seem to be hiding before they swoop out to bite you and your guests. Some of the organic sprays may also work. Check the labels on spinosad and garlic mixes.

**Q. Our tomato crop has been great this year, but now birds are getting as many as we are! What is the best strategy? Should I leave pecked fruit in place or discard it? Will the birds concentrate on the already penetrated fruit and leave the good fruit?**

A. I wish it were true that they would concentrate on just a few tomatoes, but that has not been my experience. I pull the bird-penetrated fruit and put it on the ground in the area around the garden. The birds and other varmints eat them up, but I am not sure that it reduces damage to the blemish-free fruit still on the plant. There are benefits and problems with encouraging birds into the garden!

**Q. My live oak tree is about 20 years old. It is planted 15 feet from the front of the house and 10 feet from the sidewalk. Will it hurt the foundation? It already seems to be lifting up the sidewalk.**

A. Live oak and other shade trees don’t show much interest in growing under house foundations, because this area is usually dry and sterile. The exception may be where there is a long-time water leak. The house foundation should be safe.

To protect the sidewalk, you could cut and remove the offending root at its intersection with the sidewalk. Live oaks are tough and can adjust to such a root removal.

**Q. I saw some zinnia seeds at the nursery. They were Cactus and California Giant. Can I plant zinnias by seed here?**

A. Yes, both the varieties you mention do well when planted as seeds. The advantage of the hybrid transplants is that they are close to or already blooming, and they often have positive characteristics, such as superior mildew resistance. Cosmos, marigold, moss roses and purslane are also very easy to grow from seed.

**Q. When should we plant broccoli and cabbage for the winter garden?**

A. I recommend September or October.