**Q&A**

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Q: I like the looks of Texas Gold Columbines and want to plant some this spring. Can you give me any guidance?

A: Texas Gold Columbines bloom in March and April. The golden flowers resemble shooting stars. The blooms are beautiful, but the foliage is also attractive. It resembles maiden hair fern.

Grow Texas Gold Columbines in plots where they are shaded from the summer sun. Winter sun is okay. Planting under deciduous trees works out quite well. During dry periods, they will need some hand-watering.

Q: What are the recommended tomato varieties this spring?

A: We don’t know the Rodeo Selection yet as it is always a secret until the San Antonio Stock Show and Rodeo, but other varieties to seek out include Tycoon, 604, Solar Fire, Celebrity, 444, Cherry Surprise and Tigress.

Q: My onion foliage has a milky color. Is it a disease?

A: It sounds like thrips. Your onions should grow through the attack, but you could apply Spinosad.

Q: How much “chill” do peach varieties require if they are going to do well here?

A: One of the problems with our weather is that it is different every winter. This year it appears we will have well over 600 hours of temperatures between 32 degrees and 40 degrees, which is the definition of chill hours.

Depending on how much room you have, plant several varieties. June gold and La Feliciana are larger peaches at the highest end of our usual chill quota. Also consider some low chill selections as Florida King.

Q: Our lawn in 2013 was a disaster. We moved into a new house and between our dogs and lack of water, the St. Augustine declined. We have full sun. What would you recommend for our situation?

A: Bermuda grass has the best traffic tolerance and has good drought tolerance. Let it get established by seed or sod before the dogs are turned loose on it. Mow the grass when it gets 1.5 inches tall, and it can look like a golf course.

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