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May Gardening Calendar 2016

May is the month when oak wilt is likely to infect new trees. To prevent new infections, delay pruning until later in the summer, or be sure and paint all wounds immediately after they are made. Visit the Texas Forest Service Oak Wilt site for photos of symptoms and other information on the disease. Google oak wilt Texas.

Most of the warm weather vegetables should be planted and nearing production. The first green beans, sweet corn, potatoes, summer squash and cucumbers will be mature in May. You probably harvested some cherry tomatoes in April but serious tomato harvest will begin in May.

Keep up the irrigation and watch for insects. Maintain the program of applying Sevin every week to the growing point of the summer squash to control vine borers. Sevin is also the most effective insecticide to use to protect tomatoes, peaches and blackberries from stink bugs. Follow label instructions.

It is not too late to plant pepper and eggplant transplants. Plant okra and southern peas by seed.

Stop the advance of early blight fungus on tomatoes by applying a fungicide with the active ingredient daconil ( chlorothalonil). To slow down the population growth of spider mites on tomatoes mix 2 tablespoons of seaweed extract in a gallon of water and spray every week under the leaves.

Citrus in containers often show leaf discoloration caused by nutrient deficiencies. Consider applying a soluble fertilizer from a watering can every 3-4 weeks to correct the problem. Miracle Grow or Peters work well. Mix up a large batch in a plastic garbage can from which you can draw the mix as you need it.

If your stock, snapdragons and other cool weather annuals made it through April, expect them to decline in May as the temperatures increase. The exceptions may be petunias and dianthus. The new Texas Superstar “Silver Stream Alyssum” may also persist into the summer.

For summer color plant zinnias, cosmos, moss rose, and purslane in the sun. In the shade consider waxleaf begonias, caladium, coleus, and penta. The new “Whopper Begonia” is also available. It resembles the waxleaf begonia but has larger leaves and grows larger.

Wildflowers have generally moved into their “ugly period”. There are few blooms as the plants mature the seed crop that will become next year’s plants. Resist the inclination to mow them before the pods brown and drop their seed.

Keep up the spray program for fungus and insects on peaches and apples if you want to escape damage by stink bugs and brown rot. Captan and Sevin work well.

Fertilize the lawn in early May if it did not grow enough in April to merit fertilization. Use a slow release lawn fertilizer such as 19-5-9 with sulfur and iron.

Mow St Augustine at 3 inches tall. Zoysia does well at two inches. Bermuda grass can be mowed at one inch or lower if your mower has that capability. Most mowers are limited to mowing at 1.5 inches or higher, which is an acceptable height for Bermuda grass.

Buffalo grass is very drought tolerant but has a weed problem if it is mowed low. Treat it like a groundcover and mow at 5 inches or higher to help reduce weeds.

If you applied a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent sand burs in early March, make a second application at the end of May to prevent germination of the late sand burs.