

Gardening Question and Answer

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Q. What does it mean if my live oak tree has already dropped its leaves? Is it a problem? None of the other trees in the area have dropped their leaves.

A. Live oaks purchased from the nursery are all seedlings so everyone has different genetics leading to differences in leaf dropping times. Soils, moisture and slight differences in their mini-environments can also make a difference when the leaves fall. We are getting reports of numerous trees that are dropping their leaves at this time so it probably is not a problem.

Q. You stated that it was time to apply a preemergent herbicide to prevent sand burs this summer. What are some of the products we could use?

A. Amaze, XL, and Dimension all work well. Follow the label instructions. A second application will have to be made about June 1.

Q. Zinnias that germinated from seeds dropped last summer are coming up in my snapdragons. Is it worthwhile to let them grow or should I use transplants from the nursery later after the snaps finish their bloom?

A. If you have the space you can let the zinnias grow. The butterflies will love the early availability of the zinnia blooms. The seedlings are easy to transplant so you could transplant all or a portion of them to locations where they will not interfere with the snapdragon bloom.

Q. We want to buy our tomato transplants early when the selection is good and were planning on potting them up until the garden soil warms up but we can't find any 1 gallon containers to buy! What do you recommend?

A. I would call around to other nurseries if your usual supplier doesn't have containers to sell you at a reasonable price. You may also be able to find containers to recycle by calling your local Master Gardener chapter or garden club. Some gardeners have big piles of containers that they are willing to share.

Q. Our Texas mountain laurel has been in the ground for 3 years and has grown to 7 feet tall but didn't bloom again this year. What could be the problem?

A. Is your Texas mountain laurel growing in full sun? They do not bloom well in shady situations? Have you been fertilizing the plant heavily? Reaching 7 feet in 3 years is a fast growth rate. Discontinue the fertilization so the plant concentrates on blooms rather than growth. Has the plant been pruned? It is not unusual for inexperienced pruners to cut off the unimpressive bloom stalks.

Q. Are there any small shrubs that we can plant that the deer won't eat?

A. In most situations deer do not eat dwarf yaupon holly, dwarf Chinese holly or the compact nandinas. They will eat dwarf Burford holly but pass up Sandankwa and Spring Bouquet viburnum in the six feet tall shrub category.