

Gardening Q&A

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Q. There is a clover growing in my lawn and shrub border. I applied Amaze in November, but it still came up, what can we do to control it.

A. Our most common clover is black medic. It is a weak reseeding perennial that grows on poor soils. A preemergent like Amaze would not prevent the regrowth of the established plants. It would also be more effective if you applied the Amaze by September 1 to limit new germination of seeded weeds for the winter. Try the contact herbicide, Weed-Free Zone, on the established broadleaf weeds. Follow label instructions. Be especially careful if you try to use it in a flower bed or shrub border. An effective control for black medic is to increase the fertility and growth of the lawn grass.

Q. What is the trick to growing large onions? Mine look pitiful compared to those in a garden at a friend's house we visited last week.

A. The onions do best in full sun, but the key is to keep them well fertilized, Prepare the bed with 10 cups of "winterizer" (18-6-12) or slow-release (19-5-9) lawn fertilizer per 100 sq. ft. of bed. Every 3 weeks side dress the row with another half cup of the fertilizer through April.

Q. Our stocks look beautiful this spring and the fragrance is wonderful. The problem is that they don't bloom very long. Some are going to seed already. Would it extend the season if we "deadheaded" them? Are there any other tactics to be considered?

A. I experimented with deadheading stocks last year. It seemed to work to stimulate more blooms. We use some for cut flowers and will cut off spent flowers on the rest.

Q. Are there any conifer trees recommended for growing in our area? We have some oaks but miss pines and other evergreens from the Midwest where we grew up.

A. Central and South Texas are not the best areas for growing conifers unless you have ashe junipers. Arizona cypress is the most reliable conifer to grow but Deodora cedar, Montezuma cypress, Aleppo pine, Italian stone pine, and Japanese black pine also work. The pines are often available at area nurseries to use as living Christmas trees that can be planted in the landscape after the holidays. Arizona cypress offers an attractive conical shape, has bluish foliage, and is very drought tolerant.

Q. Is it time to begin pruning back the freeze killed stems and foliage on our esperanza, poinciana, firebush, lantana, and salvias? How about the citrus trees?

A. Yes, February is a good time to trim off the dead wood. It is also time to prune fruit trees and roses. Visit plantanswers.com for diagrams and other instructions.