

## Gardening Q&A

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Q. What is the weed that is sticky and creeps along the ground? What is the best way to control it?

A. The weed you are describing is probably bedstraw. It is an annual winter plant that reseeds each year about now. The best way to control bedstraw is by using a pre-emergent herbicide such as Dimension or Amaze. Apply it in late August or about Sept 1 to prevent its germination. Right now, a product like Fertilome's "Weed-Free Zone" will kill it if it is growing in the lawn. Check the label to make sure the herbicide is appropriate for your type of lawn grass. My favorite way to control bedstraw is to use a steel rake and rake it up. The process creates compact bundles that are good additions to the compost pile.

On the general weed front, it is time to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to prevent the germination of sand burs, crabgrass and other summer weeds. Amaze and Dimension work for that task as well.

Q. Where are the cedar waxwings this year? Usually they have eaten our pyracantha and ligustrum berries by now.

A. I don't know where the cedar waxwings are. I have only seen one flight in my neighborhood this winter and they did not stay long. The mid-November freeze reduced the berry crop some but there are lots of berries falling to the ground now that would usually be eaten. Hopefully they will visit us in March.

Q. What is the chill hours situation for our fruit trees so far? Will we receive enough cold to have a normal bloom period after 2 years of disruption due to warm winters?

A. I received a second source report from Dr. Larry Stein, the Texas A&M Fruit Specialist, through Dr Jerry Parsons that they have received 750 chill hours on his ranch near Hondo. That would indicate that the Hill Country has received adequate cold weather. In San Antonio the low-chill Florida King peaches are blooming which means they received over 350 hours of cold weather (32-45 degrees F). It looks like the low chill fruit varieties will receive enough chill hours but depending on where you live, some of the higher chill fruit may have another tough year.

Q. Is there still time to plant sweet peas? I love the fragrance.

A. It is late to plant the sweet pea seeds. It is best if they are in place by mid-February. Instead consider some stock or alyssum transplants from the nursery. The stock makes good cut flowers that may keep blooming through April. Alyssum is not usually used as a cut flower, but it also has a good fragrance. Try the variety Lobularia White Stream. It can tolerate the summer heat.