

## Gardening Question and Answer

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Q. We made the mistake of planting a wisteria vine on the arbor attached to our house. How come no one warns us that the plant will grow into joints and lift pieces of the house right up from other sections? We had to work hard and even enlist the help of a carpenter to repair the damage. The work was completed but now the bad news is that the vine is resprouting. What can we do?

A. Prune off the new sprouts and then brush on some of the product "Cut Vine and Stump Killer" on the fresh cuts. The material will translocate from the fresh cut into the roots and kill the roots. The product is inexpensive, easy to use and effective. It also works on seedlings from hackberry, Chinaberry, and other unwanted weed trees.

Q. What are the huge grubs we discovered in our compost pile when we were using the material to enrich our garden for the fall tomatoes? We put them in the garbage! Will remnants of the population attack our garden plants?

A. The grubs you describe sound like the larvae of rhinoceros beetles, a beneficial insect. The adults eat other insects. The beetle lays its eggs at the edge of compost piles and the larvae feed on the decomposing organic material until they emerge as the adult beetles. Next time move the grubs to safety so they can mature.

Q. We have room for 2 citrus trees in half whiskey barrels. What is the best to plant?

A. My favorite for containers are Meyer lemon and Mexican lime. Both are cold sensitive so you will have to be ready to cover them in freezing weather. The satsumas are less cold sensitive but, in my experience, do better when planted in a raised bed. They will get 12 feet tall. All the species are attractive and productive. Cover the lemons and limes when temps are predicted to fall below 28 degrees. Protect the satsumas when temps will fall below 26 degrees. For more detailed accounts on backyard citrus visit [plantanswers.com](http://plantanswers.com).

Q. The fire ants are making it difficult to work in our garden, especially near the okra. Is there any other option than to just pull the plants?

A. There are organic insecticides with Spinosad as the active ingredient that can be used in the vegetable garden. It also works to apply a bait such as Amdro outside but near the garden. Even a water spray directed at the plants just before you want to harvest the pods will clear the ants enough to harvest.

Q. We thought the purple martins had left our neighborhood and were heading to South America so we lowered the martin houses and plugged the nest boxes so the sparrows wouldn't raise more young. Unfortunately, a large group of martins visited after we thought they all left. What will happen next year?

A. Yes, I have done the same thing in past years. Some martin aficionados think that the late groups of purple martins that visit birdhouse sites are checking out potential housing for next spring. I don't know if I would have had more nesters if I wasn't so quick to lower the houses, but I always end up with some birds each year. Join me and try to be more patient. An August 1 birdhouse lowering date may be a good target.