

Question and Answer

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Q. I have a brown thumb but at least I am trying. I have 2 Mexican limes and a satsuma that I want to repot. The Mexican limes are good producers and the satsuma is just so-so, but the containers are old and falling apart. What is the best way to repot them?

A. If the containers were not falling apart, I would recommend that you just let the Mexican limes be. As it is you can repot them into a half whiskey barrel or a plastic or wood container of similar size. The plants with roots are heavy but you can tip the pot over on the side and roll it out. Place the new container in position and partially fill it with a good quality potting soil. Get some help lifting the plant into its new container and fill up the pot with soil. Try and minimize the dislodging of soil from the root ball but citrus is tolerant of transplanting. Add Osmocote and water it in well (make sure the new containers have drainage holes). Satsumas do best planted in a raised bed or even native soil. Find a location in full sun.

Q. Is it normal for Japanese blueberries' leaves to turn brown and die?

A. The leaves do turn color and drop for a short period before they re-foliate each year. They are sensitive about drainage and moisture. They do better in a raised bed soil and cannot tolerate dry or soggy soil.

Q. Can we obtain and lay sod now or do we have to wait until spring?

A. If you have a good source of sod you can purchase it and lay sod now. The key is to prepare the soil by tilling and leveling it after adding compost. Roll the sod with a weighted roller and keep it watered.

Q. What is that product you recommend spraying newly planted flowers and perennials within deer country?

A. I recommend Liquid Fence be sprayed on newly placed plants even if they are plants that are not normally eaten by deer. Liquid Fence discourages curious deer from testing plants like lantana, salvia, iris, and other plants they normally don't eat. It won't protect plants like pansies that they will eventually eat.

Q. Will spraying dormant oil to control scale on peach trees damage the foliage of snapdragons and stocks growing in the raised bed at the edge of the trees?

A. A number of horticulturists say that it will damage the leaves on annual flowers and even the new blooms and leaves on the trees. I used a paraffin based horticultural oil labeled for spraying scale and,

so far, the snapdragons in the vicinity seem okay. Spray for the scale before the trees' buds swell and do your best to avoid spraying any foliage in the area.