

“Ask The Plant Groom”™ by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom™

QA1025

Is it OK to prune shrubs now? - J. G.

Yes. Nearly all shrubs may be pruned now. The shrubs I would not recommend pruning now include all the ones loaded with blooms such as gardenia and hydrangea. Prune these beauties right after blooms stops.

Starting into summer is it still Ok to plant roses? - F. T.

Sure. Is it the best time to plant roses? No. However, it's acceptable to plant almost any plant except cool/cold season plants including pansies and snap dragon, IF and sometimes it is a big if you are going to be able to provide sufficient moisture.

I would recommend two gallon and larger container grown selections this time of the year.

What color could I plant now that will stay with us through the summer? Thanks. – D. C.

For tropical summer color; allamanda, tropical hibiscus, mandevilla and bougainvillea will all do well in Texas through out this time of year. Additional suggestions include; lantana, Mexican fire bush, periwinkle, pentas, mealy blue sage, purple fountain grass, salvia coccinea and 'VIP' or 'Wave' petunia.

We don't have much light in one room and would like to have a plant. Are there any varieties of houseplants you recommend which will grow in an area with little sunlight? – H. K.

The two tropical plant groups I find works best in the situation you've described are; Spathiphyllum which is also known as; Closet Plant, White Flag and/or Peace Lily and Aglaonema or Chinese Evergreen.

Both of these plant groups do well long term in low light situations at home or office. There are several varieties of each so, select the ones you like best.

I would love to plant some crape myrtles in my yard! I'm somewhat confused by the different heights and colors.

You have also mentioned there are mildew resistant varieties. Are they as pretty? I'd appreciate any help you can give me on selecting some crape myrtles for our landscape. - E. J.

Good idea! Now is a good time to plant crape myrtles because they are in bloom. This let's us see the actual bloom color before purchasing and planting. While there are some very good color photo tags on crape myrtles there's nothing like the real "thing" ... a pretty show of their actual blooms.

Container grown crape myrtles may be planted anytime of the year. They are very heat and drought tolerant once established in the landscape. The main tip on successfully planting these beauties during our summers is to keep their soil balls moist. Moist is the key word. Do Not keep them wet or allow them to totally dry.

Yes, there are some varieties which are powdery mildew resistant and absolute knock outs. One variety we are growing is 'Natchez' which is a tall growing beautiful solid white bloomer. At maturity it may reach 25' so, plant it an areas with lots of room. 'Natchez' is a rapid growing crape myrtle that also shows beautiful cinnamon colors when the old bark naturally peels off. 'Natchez' is tops in my opinion. Crape myrtles are one of the best landscape color shrubs for Texas when proper selections and planting locations are made and adequate care is provided. They will reward us with years of beauty in our landscapes.

How will a lawn fare over the years if only watered and mown but never add new grass seed for future growth? – N. C.

In addition to mowing frequently and supplying water as needed lawns should also be fertilized in Texas. It is normally not necessary to add new seed to our law grasses.

Re seeding permanent lawns on an annual basis is a normal practice for northern lawns. I do recommend fertilizing as soon as you see new growth in the spring with a premium quality long lasting slow release fertilizer according to label directions. Highly advertised national brands don't always contain the analysis our warm season Southern lawn grasses need. Look for quality Texas made products with a 3: 1: 2 or 4: 1: 2 ration for best results. Numbers for this analysis include; 21-7-14, 19-5-9, 18-6-12 and 15-5-10. DO NOT fertilize this time of the year. Do wait until next spring for your first application for the season.

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