

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

For: QA 1029

I planted new flowerbeds in my front yard and put down 2 layers of weed cover, except where I started to get tired. Now nut grass has shot through the one layer of weed cover. How do I get rid of it? It is starting to be too covered with the nut grass to pull each one. Thank you for any information concerning this.

I enjoy your advice column in the local newspaper. - J. C.

Unfortunately, the news is not good. Nut grass/sedge is one of if not the most difficult pest weed we deal with. This “pain” weed will grow through asphalt, oil top, cracks in concrete, tarpaper and every brand of weed “cover/block” I’m aware of.

Look for products at your local retailer that’s labeled to control nut grass/sedge in landscape beds with the existing plants you have installed. My experience has taught me it is always best to eliminate this pest weed ... before planting.

How in the world do you discourage the lopped off stubs of pecan, cedar elm and hackberry trees from resprouting? The squirrels and birds plant hundreds of these in my flowerbeds - some of them, especially pecans, have been lopped off repeatedly but continue to resprout. Some of them must be at least 10 years old with such big roots that I can't dig them out. I would rather not use noxious chemicals. - C. W.

Some possible solutions to your problem and thoughts:

- Hire someone or a firm that can remove your plants ... roots and all.
- Attempt to cover all the cut off stumps with cylinders of PVC plastic, iron, steel, concrete or other material. The idea here is to discourage resprouting by denying access to sunlight. Solid wooden, plastic or metal boxes may also be utilized.
- Remember, everything we utilize when broken down is ... chemical. If, you decide to utilize an aid labeled to control brush, woody plants or broadleaf weeds do read and follow label directions.

I am a novice gardener and have several vegetables in my very small, ground plot as well as a planter garden. My question is about squash. I have huge leaves on my crookneck squash and many blossoms, but many

of my squash simply rot on the vine. Some of these squash are small, some about 4 inches long, just ready to harvest. There is a grey, fuzzy fungus that grows on many of the squash. Others just rot. I water every day in the morning. Any suggestions? - C. W.

Your problem is not uncommon. You are not alone.

The problem is lack of pollination. These puppies have both male and female flowers on the same plants. However, the pollen must get from the male flower to the female flower in order to obtain fruit set.

Lack of air movement sufficient to distribute pollen by wind or the absence of bees or other pollinating insects usually the reason pollination does not occur on squash. One solution is to pluck a male flower, remove its' petals and "dab" on a little pollen in the center of all female blooms. The female blooms have swollen bases while male blooms do not.

Back off your irrigating practice. Only water as needed.

We recently moved to central Texas and need to know what grows in Texas and when we should plant. I know that you have a book called Month by Month Gardening in Texas but does it cover all types of plants including flowering shrubs or does it just cover vegetable gardening? - C. W.

Yes. 'Month-By-Month-Gardening-In-Texas' does cover Vegetables and Herbs however; it also contains chapters on Lawns, Trees, Roses, Bulbs, Perennials, Annuals, Houseplants, Shrubs plus Vines, groundcovers and Ornamental Grasses.

The book is available at independent retailers, boutiques and major national bookstores state wide.

Dale's Notes:

- It's time to plant fall vegetables.
- Water lawns during the early morning hours
- Keep all plants mulched 3-4" deep with your favorite mulch
- When selecting new plants for the landscape purchase Water Wise plants
- Observe and note blooming plants in the landscape that are putting on a ... show because these are handling our Texas heat

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist-Dallas County, Author, Columnist, Radio/TV Host is also known statewide as The Plant Groom™. Send your lawn, garden and landscape questions to Dale at dalegroom@mycvc.net

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