

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

For: QA1036

I have heard it's time to winterize the lawn. What does this mean? – F. K.

This is prime time to winterize our warm season southern lawns. The best approach is to have a professionally conducted soil test. This will provide specific fertilizer recommendations. Follow the recommendations.

The second route to travel is utilizing premium quality long lasting slow release lawn fertilizers applied according to label directions. Either of these two actions will “winterize” your lawn.

Most soils in Texas and the lawn grasses grown will benefit from 3:1:2 or 4:1:2 ratio products. However, those in heavy clay areas such as Dallas, Waco, Temple, etc. often only need (N) nitrogen. N or nitrogen is the first number on any fertilizer container label sold in Texas. The N should be in a slow release form.

A soil test will show what nutrients soils need as well as their levels plus pH. Should you wish to have a soil test conducted contact my office for a free soil test kit. Send your request to Dale Groom, CEA-Horticulture, Soil Test, 10056 Marsh Lane, Suite B-101, Dallas, TX 75227 and include a long self addressed envelope with two 1st class stamps on it and we will send you the kit free.

Follow the directions on the instruction sheet or the soil sample containers and send to the lab with appropriate fee as soon as possible. If you will do have a soil test done every 2 – 3 years it will aid your lawn in the utilization of available soil nutrients and those added in the form of fertilizers. A positive, positive, plus, plus activity we can all easily accomplish.

NOTE: The soil test kit offer is open to all readers of this column.

To some who have been impacted by damage from Rita plant salvage may be on the low end of a priority list

. However, some plants are very special for a wide range of reasons. I have two in our landscape that were starts my departed Granny Miller gave me. They are very valuable to me.

Here are some suggestions:

- A high percentage of relative large trees are not salvageable. If you want to know for sure contact a certified Consulting Arborist. Their phone numbers should be in the yellow pages under Arborists or Tree Care/Service. My council is to avoid folks with a truck; ladder and saw if you are seeking certified professional advice and assistance with a tree issue. Some but not all County offices of Texas Cooperative Extension maintain lists of Consulting Arborists in their offices. If you can't locate the TCE office in your county e-mail me at dalegroom@tamu.edu and I'll secure the number for you in any Texas county.
- Small trees, shrubs both large and small, roses, perennials and other landscape plants are often salvaged or rescued successfully after storms.

If uprooted replant at original depth.

Remove soil fill over root zone to original level. Soil washed in over root systems could be terminal to plants. Leaves, twigs and other "organic matter" on top of root systems should not create a problem unless the entire plant is covered and unable to receive sunlight.

- If it's going to be several days before any corrective action is taken to impacted plants select undamaged parts and make (10) or more cuttings, place in a zip lock bag with a couple of damp paper towels and place in the bottom of the veggie bend of your frig.

You, friends or relatives may use these collected and saved cuttings to start new plants.

- Soil 2" deep or more should be removed from lawns.

I hope you and/or your loved ones are not impacted by the storm but if so these suggestions should aid in landscape rescue/salvage.

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

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