

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

For: QA1055

I heard you on the radio while headed to work last work. You were talking about a particular plum tree that works well in Texas. Would you please send me the name of it? Thank you.- M. H.

Sure. The variety is Methley. Methley is a self-fruit and does not need another variety to insure fruit production. It is an excellent home gardening selection. And, for most families one tree provides sufficient production

Hello, Dale

Is it too late to plant bluebonnet seeds in SE Fannin County? Should I wait until spring or next fall? I've got 20 lbs of bluebonnet seeds for a large acreage.

Thank you.- M. C. F.

Bluebonnet seeds are best planted during the fall. Early spring is the second best time to seed these natives. This planting time information applies in all Texas counties.

I need some information on growing tomatoes this season  
On my balcony. What varieties of tomatoes, container sizes and types  
and soil should be used? - S. K. W.

You can grow the same varieties of tomatoes in container as in a garden setting. Some of the best varieties include Celebrity, Carnival, 444, Porter and Sweet 100. All of these should grow and produce well for you. Porter and Sweet 100 are small varieties the remaining suggested selections are “slicers”.

I would not try growing these puppies in any type of container less than 12" across and deep with one plant per pot. Larger containers certainly may be used and are advised. You may even choose to have planter boxes constructed from decay resistant wood. I think this would be good to do if you are going to continue with container gardening for several years.

I would purchase coarse well-drained potting soil for the growing mix. The light small particle blow away or the heavy as lead soil mixes would not get my nod. A drip irrigation system for your containers would be ideal in providing just the right amount of moisture relatively easy. This along with adequate container size, good growing mix, recommended varieties, and fertilizing as needed should be a way to grow some wonderful container grown tomatoes this season.

For more information on growing veggies in containers or beds I suggest you visit <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu> and pick up a copy of "Container Vegetables" - The Easy Way To Garden by Sam Cotner from Texas Gardener Press. It is a very specific paper backed low cost book on exactly what you want to accomplish.

Do you recommend using garden soil and cat litter for growing cactus plants in containers? - G. H.

The use of any garden soil without pasteurizing it first may bring all kinds of soil born disease problems with it to your plants. Most are very poorly drained for pot culture also. I do not know what other materials a clay cat litter may have in it which could limit plant growth.

If you are a real do-it-yourself type gardener here is a soil based mix that can be amended for your plants that

I know will work:

(1) Part by volume of a coarse pasteurized soil.

(1) Part by volume of brown Canadian sphagnum peat moss or finished compost.

(1) Part by volume of perlite or coarse washed sand.

After this is blended well then add an additional 1/3 coarse sand or perlite by volume and blend well for the plants you have wish to grow.

For long-term one application per year fertilizing you may want to apply a 12-month formulation fertilizer according to label directions.

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist-Dallas County, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A & M University System, Native Texan, Columnist, Author, Radio/TV Host is also known state wide as The Plant Groom™. Send your lawn, garden and landscape questions to Dale at [dalegroom@tamu.edu](mailto:dalegroom@tamu.edu)

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