

Ask The Plant Groom(tm) by Dale Groom, The Plant Groom(tm)

QA1099

For over 40 years I have pruned old garden variety nandinas and have thrown the clippings out in the woods. Many have come up, and are now producing berries. I have a friend who wants to plant some. When should she harvest the berries, and how should they be handled.[She does have a greenhouse]

Thanks - S. N.

What a super group of WaterWise and EARTH-KIND(tm) landscape plants. These puppies are one of my favorite group of plants for Texas landscapes.

Some options on sharing nandinas:

- * The plants that sprouted from your cuttings may be dug and transplanted now
- * If your friend's greenhouse is heated the seeds may be planted now in a lightweight potting soil 3/4 - 1" deep utilizing any container from a 4"pot to a specifically constructed seed starting bed
- * Should heat not be available wait until day and night time temperatures are above 70 degrees F and plant in the same manner as previously suggested

The seeds/berries may be stored at room temperatures until they are dry then stored in jars or other air/moisture tight containers and placed in vegetable compartments of refrigerators or other cool locations until ready to plant in 2007.

Is it to late or to cold to plant azaleas now?

They will be on south side of house with lots of sun.- P. A.

Azaleas that are winter hardy may be planted throughout the winter.

If your soil is not naturally acidic, plant in raised beds with 6 - 12 inches of a media that is acidic.

My question is I have moneywort ground cover on the south side of my house During the winter

the moneywort gets covered with pecan leaves from my trees. Should I rake these leaves off or leave them to cover the moneywort during the winter. Usually, when it starts getting warm and the moneywort perks up, it is a yellow color and takes a while for it to green up. Could you please advise me on this.

Thanks!! - M. W.

Here's the deal. Allowing leaves to remain on the lawn or groundcovers may and I say may offer some potential winter freeze protection. However, plants often do not go totally dormant under this layer of insulation.

Plant dormancy is a protective measure for survival through the winter. If a severe and prolonged freeze hits your area it could penetrate the layer of leaves and cause damage to your desirable plantings.

The decision to allow leaves to remain on any groundcover planting or lawn is an individual choice.

Off color is not unusual on groundcover plantings coming out of the winter. If your specific planting begins look like you expect it should in 4 - 6 weeks after the last killing spring frost/freeze it should be doing well.

How could I best care for my banana tree through the winter? - G. K.

If you have not removed the freeze damaged top do so now. After it is removed apply your favorite bark or similar mulch 6 inches deep over the trunk.

There is never a guarantee that tropical plants will regrow next season but this method has been successfully utilized in Central and North Texas for fifty years. When the soil is warm in 2007 the plant should send out new shoots.

Dale Groom, Extension Horticulturist, Master Gardener Program Coordinator-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(tm). You may send your horticultural related questions to Dale at dalegroom@mycvc.net To speak directly with a Master Gardener for free horticultural help M- F, 8:30am - 4pm dial 214-904-3053.

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