

Ask The Plant Groom(tm) The Plant Groom(tm)

QA1104

I have a running rose and heard it did not need to be pruned in February like all other rose's is this true and when should I prune it? I have been pruning it in the past and the stems grow as long 10-14ft long. Also the trunk is getting real large can it be split to form another bush from it?

I have an hibiscus that's in the ground and would like to put it in a pot until I find another location for it, is this time of year okay to do that?

Should crepe myrtles be trimmed back every season, I see people trimming them all the way to the thicker part of the branch? - L. A.

Running roses are suppose to ... run. Pruning back severely is not recommended in mid Feb. However, if they are turning into monsters do whatever is needed so you and your family may utilize the space.

Yes, some roses can live for generations and their main trunk become woody and in some cases almost tree trunk in appearance. This is no problem with these specific plants. DO NOT split these trunks to obtain more of the same plant to use at additional locations. If more plants are desired, root branches and utilize these in additional locations.

If you like to utilize super easy to grow roses in you landscape applications let me highly recommend EARTH-KIND(tm) roses. Once established these beauties are never fertilized with any type of fertilizer, sprayed with any type of gardening aid and no deadheading or pruning is required. They need three basic environmental conditions to do well; good air movement around them, great soil drainage and full sun. More information on EARTH-KIND(tm) Roses is available at <http://dallas-tx.tamu.edu/hort/Links/Links.htm> then click on **The story of Earth-Kind(tm) Roses** near the bottom of the links page.

If you choose to dig and place a hardy hibiscus into a container this time of year be prepared to protect its' roots from freezing. These plants are very winter hardy when allowed to remain in the ground but will loose several degrees of winter hardiness if lifted out of the ground and installed in an above the ground container. Most area growers provide various means of protecting container grown landscape plants root systems each year at their outdoors growing facilities. It's wise to take hints from these professionals.

Crepe myrtles should never, never, never ever be cut back as you see some folks doing. It ruins their physical shapes. Please don't do it.

Small twigs around wooden kitchen match and smaller and spent bloom pods may be removed if desired. Limbs competing for the same space and all dead limbs should be removed back to another limb or branch. And ... STOP. That's all. Do no additional pruning on crepe myrtles' canopy's. Remember, just because some folks are taking specific actions does not mean they are the best management practices.

Removing root suckers at or below ground may be done anytime.

Mr. Groom

Hi, I have noticed that quite a few of my trees still have the dead leaves on them. Are the trees dead or will the leaves drop in the spring when the trees bud? I live in central Texas just East of Waco.

Thanks for the information. - P. Q.

Certain varieties of trees will not abort this past season's leaves until new growth begins in the spring. This is not a problem no matter where you live.

As to your tree's viability, I sent my crystal ball out to the tune up shop on my sixty third birthday and it hasn't come back yet so I can't give you a definite answer here. What I can testify to is, trees have terminated throughout Texas in urban as well as rural settings do to these past two years of drought and heat. Let's think "positive" regarding you trees ... they are going to drop their current dead leaves in the spring, set a wonderful canopy of new leaves and look super in the landscape.

Hello Dr. Groom,

I purchased a home in Bryan, TX It has a very shaded back yard (1-2 Hrs./Day of direct sunlight). I want to plant a privacy hedge within my fence line. The soil appears to be well drained sandy clay with almost straight clay starting around 12 to 18 inches deep. For these conditions, What plants would you recommend for an 8 ft or higher privacy hedge? We have a 2 yr. old child and anticipate more to come, so we are trying to avoid plants that would be harmful if consumed.

Thank you, - D. L.

My favorite plant for this situation is 'Nellie R. Stevens' holly. This is an outstanding evergreen shrub that's very easily grown. They should be widely available at area nursery retailers state wide. These beauties have the potential to reach 10- 12'.

There are several holly varieties that will grow in shaded areas as well as full sun locations. 'Nellie R. Stevens' is one variety for both situations. Note. Most of these plantings will not be as thick in shaded as in sunny locations. One option is to install a fence and cover with a shade tolerant vine such as English ivy, Persian ivy or one of the honeysuckle varieties.

I'm a father of three and appreciate your concern regarding children eating something that's not good for them. Judy, child bride of 38+ years and I policy has always been to teach children never to put anything in their mouth unless Mom or Papa said it is OK. And, we continue to believe this is the strongest and best policy.

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 questions to Dale at dalegroom@tamu.edu To receive free live help with horticultural issues call the Master Gardeners M-F, 8:30am - 4pm at 214-904-3053.

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