

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

QA1106

What can I use to get rid of clover in my yard? - M. M.

Clovers and other broad leaf plants including chickweed and henbit along with cool season annual grasses, rescue grass and annual bluegrass are only in our landscapes, lawns and gardens during this time of the year. They ... leave when it gets hot.

One approach to managing a current crop of these "guests" is low mowing. Utilizing a walk behind or rider mower set a notch or two below their normal mowing heights with sharp blade(s) on this equipment will remove nearly all existing top growth. It is often difficult for these plant tops to regrow sufficiently before our warm weather arrives.

The best weed control for annual weeds in any lawn is to grow a thick healthy vigorous lawn. Lawns that are open or thin allow weed seed the opportunity to reach the soil, germinate and establish themselves. A thick turf prevents this opportunity.

The second best venue to prevent annual uninvited plant guests in our lawns is the selection and properly timing the applications of weed preventers. These should be applied in Sept. for cool/cold season and now for spring/summer weed prevention in the lawn.

During 2007, Dr. Jim McAfee, Associate Professor, Extension Turfgrass Specialist, Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas A & M University System recommends ... no application to St. Augustine lawns with any pre-emergent due to their weak conditions brought about the weather's impact on the plantings.

If you do decide to apply a weed preventer of any type this spring be sure to read and follow label directions.

The best weed preventer in all gardens is to prepare them using EARTH-KIND(tm) techniques including 3-4" of shredded tree trimmings or bark as mulch and maintain this depth year round throughout the beds.

More information on turf management is available at <http://dallas-tx.tamu.edu/>, click on Horticulture, Links then <http://aggieturf.tamu.edu/>

Additional information on EARTH-KIND(tm) is available at: <http://dallas-tx.tamu.edu/> click on Horticulture, Links then <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/tamuhort.html> and the Earth-Kind logo.

Master Gardeners are available to assist you free with horticultural issues live M - F, 8:30am - 4pm at 214-904-3053.

Dale:

I have a 2 year old Mexican (key) lime tree still in it's pot. I have been very good about keeping it out of the cold except for one or two nights. I have moved it inside, and it is receiving good or decent indirect sunlight through windows. However, it has lost just about every leaf. There are several new blooms and several blooms turning brown. I have been keeping the soil good and moist and not over watering. Last year it produced a good crop! Is it time to plant it in the ground and forget about it or can it be saved? I enjoy your show!

A Brown Thumb, - M. T.

The only winter hardy member of the citrus family for N. TX is trifoliolate orange, a war horse thorny not good to eat miniature fruit producer. All other varieties will freeze dead, dead and triple dead. This included in-the-ground or container grown applications.

Oranges, lemons, limes, kumquats and even grapefruits have been successfully grown in areas of TX outside of the TX Gulf Coast and Rio Grande Valley for decades in large containers. This practice continues to be the viable method of culture for these yummy fruits.

Your lime tree in question may or may not recover this spring. One hard freeze on these babies while outside may terminate them. Moist is the key word regarding your plant's soil/growing medium. DO NOT keep it wet or allow to remain dry for long periods. Sufficient moisture to prevent dryness at the root zone is what I suggest.

After all dangers of frosts and/or freezes are past in 2007, move this puppy outside in full sun, fertilize one time with a high (N) nitrogen fertilizer according to label directions, keep the soil/growing medium moist and think ... positive.

Thanks for your kind comment about my ktbb.com horticulture show.

Dale's Notes:

- * Transplant woody ornamentals ... now.
- * Conduct an irrigation audit on your sprinkler system prior to spring use.
- * In 2007 design or contact a landscape designer to design WaterWise color beds prior to preparing and planting
- * Now is onion transplants, English/sweet peas, cole crops including broccoli, cabbage and Brussels sprouts transplants and white potato starts planting time
- * Prior to installing new color (annual or perennial), herb, ornamentals and/or roses be sure to utilize the EARTH-KIND(tm) program principles in bed preparation
- * Now is time to prune modern roses
- * I know it's not pretty or fun but it is also gutter cleaning time.
- * This is THE time to plant fruit trees, grape or blackberry plants and pecan trees

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 issues including lawns, gardens and landscapes to Dale at dalegroom@mycvc.net

Copyright 2007 by Groom Media and all rights are reserved.

