

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

For: QA1040

The leaves on our magnolia have brown edges on them. Why, should we be concerned, and what should be done? Thanks. – K. D.

Leaves of several tree types are currently experiencing difficulty with our long period of high heat and low rainfall issue. This includes both evergreen and deciduous trees.

The browning of leaf edges or margins as they are called will normally be the first signs of prolonged moisture stress in evergreen trees. It is referred to as marginal leaf burn. Wilting will precede margin burn in some but not all trees. Most evergreen trees do not wilt but they may have marginal leaf burn.

What to do? Asking for a steady week long rain would be a great starting place. Prior to the rain we will receive some time this fall give your tree a good soaking. Irrigate in the drip line, which is the outer, most spread of the tree's branch and leaf canopy. The drip line is where nutrients, oxygen and ... water are absorbed by trees' root systems.

If your tree is young recovery may be retarded next growing season. Most mature and five plus years in the landscape magnolias should recover next season. However, like life ... there is no guarantee.

A Note: This question plus similar ones remind me to again suggest plants for our landscapes that are ... Water Wise. Water Wise and Earth Kind landscapes are not difficult to create and do offer a wide range of plant materials. It is not just cacti, yucca, agaves and rocks, as some folks may believe.

Water Wise and Earth Kind landscapes are beautiful easy to care for loaded with color including roses plantings for all of Texas.

Prior to installing new landscape plantings ask your local nursery to show you their selections of Water Wise plants, do great soil preparation and install properly this fall. Following these suggestions is a good start on how to create a more ... “Water Wise” landscape.

Is now a good time to plant new bulbs? I see them at lots of stores but it seems to early to me. – D. H.

Now is a good time to select and purchase all types of new spring blooming “bulbs” Hyacinth and tulip selections need (6) weeks of chilling prior to planting. The remaining “bulbs” may be planted during late Nov. and Dec.

Existing plantings of iris, cannas, day lilies and similar perennials may be dug, divided and transplanted now and through the fall.

I want to plant some fruit trees this year and need to know the best time to do so. – F. J.

Bare root trees will normally begin showing up at retail stores in Dec. It is often a major post Holiday activity in Jan Bare root plantings should be completed prior to the end of our dormant season.

The dormant season begins after a hard “killing” freeze/frost and ends when new growth begins. This season varies north to south in Texas as well as when it arrives and departs each year.

As with landscape plants container grow selections may be planted any time of the year they are available. If I were to plant container grown selections it would be during the fall.

Select locations that are in full sun where the soil drains well to install your selections. Do not plant fruit trees in shady areas or those where water does not drain well.

Let me suggest contacting your local office of Texas Cooperative Extension for a list of recommended fruit varieties. You may find your local office by visiting the web site of Texas Cooperative Extension and then click on your county. Their phone numbers are also in your phone directory under County listings.

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