

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

QA1069

I have a question concerning the oak growth under my live oak trees. Several years ago we built a large raised flowerbed around a group of trees. Over the years of cultivation of the bed, the oak growth has over taken the bed. We have kept it down the last few years with weed-eating. Naturally it has finally gotten completely out of hand. My thought was to lay down plastic and cover it with mulch and just put potted plants on it.

My question is if it can be sprayed with Roundup.... would it endanger the trees? I was told it would be okay if the spray did not get on the trees, but I want to be completely sure it would not harm my trees.

I would appreciate your input on the situation. Thanks – J. M.

Garden aids containing the active ingredient glyphosate are very effective on grasses but usually have limited success in controlling tree growth.

If you wish to have containers of color your suggestion is viable. I'd cut all the sprouts down to the ground, install landscape fabric, mulch 3-4" deep and place the containers as desired. A possible option is to mow the area each time the lawn is cut.

Dale,

We have a couple of Bradford Pear trees about 9-10 yrs old, they seem to have some sort of blight, leaves and small limbs dying and falling off. Is there something we can do for this? Thanks – M. L.

You may have fire blight. Cut some samples of the problem twigs and take in to your local Extension Agent with Texas Cooperative Extension or a nursery for confirmation. If it is fire blight copper based garden aids such as Bordeaux mixture will control it.

Remember, always read and follow label directions when using any garden aid.

I see crape myrtles blooming but mine are nor. What's wrong? – F. K.

Some varieties bloom earlier than others and is most likely your situation.

These beauties bloom best on new growth. To stimulate new growth you may wish to apply (N) nitrogen fertilizer according to label directions.

If your plant(s) have any dead wood, old spent blooms or two or more limbs competing for the same space they may be removed by pruning now also. This activity increases also increases new growth and improves each plant's individual look.

I'm new to Bermuda grass lawns and would like to know the correct mowing height. Thank you. – E. H.

One to one and one half inches is the recommended mowing height for Bermuda lawns.

Mow frequently enough to remove no more than 1/3 of the grass blade's height each time you cut the lawn. And, mulching mowers work well on Bermuda grass lawns.

I recommend mulching mowers and frequent mowing of all our warm season Southern lawn grasses. The cultural practice of frequent mowing is the number one activity to encourage quality lawns. Recycling grass clipping with mulching mowers reduces landfills and ... fertilizer usage.

During the growing season Bermuda grass lawns will do well with approximately 1 ½" of water per week

Bermuda grass is for full sun locations only.

We are interested in some color that will bloom in the summer each year and come back each year. What do you recommend? – G. D.

Some of the best color plants include but are not limited to:

All types of lantana, ruellia Mexican or summer petunia, Bouncing Bet, 'Lady In Red' Salvia, crape myrtles, salvia greggii, 'Knock Out', 'Belinda's Dream and the other (11) Earth Kind Roses™', gaura or whirling butterflies, and butterfly bush. Give any or all of these a try, because I'm sure you will enjoy them.

All of these need to be planted in full sun locations with well-drained soil. After planting is complete, water thoroughly and mulch the entire planting with 3-4" of your favorite organic mulch such as pine bark mulch.

Water as needed and these selections should bloom throughout the summer.

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