

## Gardening Q&A

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Q. When should we prune off the dead wood from our old fig tree? It has not been very productive in the last 3 years. Is there anything else we could do to perk up the production?

A. The weather the last few years has not been good for fig production. Do a little digging in the root system and make sure that nematodes aren't present. You will find rotted roots and lumps (nodules) on the roots if nematodes are a problem. A nematode infected fig is unusual but should be removed if there are nematodes. Figs aren't usually fertilized but you may perk it up with 3 or 4 inches of compost spread over the roots. Also consider irrigation if we go through a dry spell like we went through last spring and summer.

Q. We have an armadillo coming into our yard every night and digging up the grass. It has dug a route under the fence. How do we deal with it?

A. Armadillos usually follow the same route every night, so the usual tactic is to put a large live trap in its path and channel it into the trap. The next issue will be to find a place to release it or dispose of it far from your landscape Good Luck!

Q. Is there any problem you can think of to prevent the use the leaves from our neighbor's yard for mulch and compost production in our yard? Any plant diseases or other issues?

A. No, it is a common and effective way to recycle leaves that a neighbor does not have a use for.

Q. What are the easiest and best peach trees to grow in this area?

A. Peach tree varieties require differing amounts of winter cold (chill hours) to successfully bloom and produce fruit. Use low chill varieties like Florida King, Junegold, and La Feliciano for east and South of San Antonio. Higher chill selections such as Redskin can be used in the hill country. Red Baron has a spectacular bloom and will work through the region.

Q. Are there directions on how to prune the various fruit trees? I planted a plum, apple, pear and 2 peaches last year and now I find out each species should be pruned differently! When is the best time to prune fruit trees?

A. Prune your trees in early February. Plantanswers.com has information on how to prune each species, including diagrams.