

Gardening Q&A

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Q. We live on a river that was dammed to make a small lake. The dam collapsed and the lake drained. It may be rebuilt in 3 years. The horticulture issue concerns the bald cypress trees. Most are now not in contact with water. What do we need to do to protect them? Will a drip line at the base of each tree be adequate?

A. This is a difficult question. I have seen bald cypress planted in landscapes that were very drought tolerant and survived without supplemental irrigation once they were established. It may be different however, if the trees originated in a stream or lake situation. We have Caddo Lake in NE Texas to serve as an example where some of the bald cypress survived a change in the water situation. Rather than drip irrigation, can the landowners access the water in the river to provide flood irrigation for the trees once per month in the summer? It would probably be best to confer with an arborist or forester with experience at Caddo Lake or another situation with bald cypress.

Q. You will be happy to know that I followed your recommendation to pull my declining zinnias and weeds in our cut flower garden with the expectation that a new crop of zinnias would germinate, and it worked! The seedlings are growing very quickly. We expect new blooms next month.

A. An important part of your success was due to the water you applied three times/week to the soil where the zinnia seeds had accumulated.

Q. Our peach trees are doing well but they are producing new stems at the base and from the root system. It makes the trees look untidy. Can we prune them out? When?

A. We call those stems "suckers". Go ahead and prune them out at soil level now. Some of the suckers derive from the rootstock. If they are allowed to grow, they will overcome the desirable top of the tree and reduce or end production of the desirable fruit.

Q. When can we plant lettuce in the vegetable garden? How about spinach?

A. Plant lettuce now by placing seed on the surface of prepared garden soil. Don't cover the seed. It is best to plant spinach transplants in late October or November. Spinach requires cool soil and reasonable air temps.

Q. Is it time to apply a preemergent herbicide to control bedstraw, rescue grass and other winter weeds?

A. Yes, do not wait any longer. Use a product such as Amaze, XL, or Dimension to control both the broadleaf and grassy winter weeds. Follow the label instructions.