

Gardening Q&A

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Q. You and Dr Parsons on your radio show were talking about a product that you should apply to the pruning cut on hackberries, mulberries and other invasive plants that would travel down into the roots and kill them so they would not resprout. What was it again?

A. There are several products including Vine and Stump Killer. The product has the same active ingredient as the herbicide Remedy. It is inexpensive, effective, and easy to use. It has a small brush connected to the cover that allows you to place the active ingredient on the fresh pruning cut.

Q. I know you love zinnias and hesitate to replace them until the last minute with snapdragons, stocks, and other cool weather annuals but when would be the best time to plant them?

A. You would probably be successful planting snapdragons, stocks, dianthus, petunias, ornamental kale, and calendulas now, but I would wait for a few more weeks before planting sweet peas, pansies, cyclamen, and primula. The latter group of cool weather annuals is more sensitive to any warm spell that may arise in October. -

Q. How can we tell if our satsumas are ripe enough to harvest? Do they need to be orange?

A. They do not need to be orange. I received some satsumas from a gardener this week that were still mostly green but tasted excellent. If you have lots of fruit on your trees test a few so that the excess fruit does not go to waste. Use them as have the opportunity. If you do not have a large number of fruits you can wait until later in October. They are good now but will be even sweeter later.

Q. We have decided to rely on a Sustainable Winter Lawn (SWL) dominated by rescue grass and horse herb because our soil is shallow the lawn is shady, and we don't want to spend all winter watering the lawn. How tall should it be mowed?

A. I mow mine at 3 inches tall every 2 weeks. I believe Dr Parsons mows his lawn at 2 inches tall. He relies on horse herb and more annual blue grass rather than rescue grass. For more information on the SWL visit plantanswers.com.

Q. Is now a good time to begin feeding the birds for the winter?

A. Yes, use a weight sensitive steel feeder for sunflower seeds for the seed eaters such as cardinals, titmice, goldfinches, and chickadees. The weight sensitive perches will allow you to limit access to squirrels and white winged doves. To attract insect eaters like wrens, warblers, mockingbirds woodpeckers, and kinglets try pepper flavored suet.