

Gardening Q&A

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Q. Why don't you and other horticulturists in the Central Texas area recommend "Weed and Feed" products? It seems like having both a herbicide and fertilizer in the same package would save half the work?

A. Unfortunately the timing is never right for use of both products at the same time. The fertilizer works best for the lawn on May 1 and October 1. The preemergent herbicide works best on March 1 and September 1. If the herbicide portion of the "Weed and Feed" is a contact herbicide for broadleaf weeds it is a constant issue of the product accidentally being used to injure flowers, groundcovers, or newly planted shrubs and trees! You are right, the horticulturists in Central Texas are unified in not recommending "Weed and Feed" products.

Q. Is Mexican flame vine a good choice for landscape color in our area?

A. Yes, it is blooming in landscapes right now. It works on a trellis or even across the ground. It works best in full sun but has some shade tolerance. I promote Mexican flame vine as a nectar source for butterflies in the autumn.

Q. We provide sugar water for the hummingbirds, but the honeybees are so thick it looks like the hummingbirds never reach the sugar water. In addition, we do not want to get stung by the bees! Are there any recommendations to overcome these problems?

A. The bees can be very thick on the feeder, but the hummingbirds always seem to get their share. Quite often the bees retreat in the evening or even the morning. Another option is to make a water source (bird bath) available for the bees, or even add another hummingbird feeder a distance away from the current ones. In my experience honeybees at sugar water feeders are not aggressive and not inclined to sting anyone?

Q. What is that wildflower you recommend to provide nectar for the butterflies in the spring while you are waiting for the mistflower, zinnias, and milkweed proceeding to full bloom? Where do we find the seed?

A. The plant is called blue curl (Phacelia). Find the seed from a neighbor who grows it or order it on the internet. Wildseed Farms in Fredericksburg offers it for sale. It will grow in full sun or shade and blooms over a long period.

Q. My nurseryman says it is too late to plant Bermuda grass by seed this fall. Unfortunately, I had already planted it. What will happen with the seed?

A. Some of the seed may germinate in late April or May but it is best to be ready to reseed about May 1. Bermuda grass seed requires warm air temperatures and soil temps to germinate. It then requires warm winter temps for a period if the roots and foliage are going to develop.