

Gardening Q&A

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Q. You recommend that wildflower seeds be spread on sites where the seed makes contact with the soil, bare soil is best. Would it work if we applied mulch after seeding so we could conserve water and reduce weed competition with the wildflowers?

A. The problem is that wildflowers perform exactly like weeds in most plantings. The mulch is just as likely to prevent germination of the wildflowers as it is the weeds. It works to plant wildflowers such as bluebonnets in rows in prepared soil with irrigation and mulch adjacent to the rows, but you may as well plant petunias, snapdragon and zinnias. Bluebonnets in rows are no longer wildflowers!

Q. Our okra has not been very productive this summer, now that the temperatures are moderating should I fertilize and expect yield to increase?

A. That sounds logical, except that okra is a daylength plant and is going to reduce its production now that the days are shortening. To maximize production for the rest of the fall—keep the pods harvested, water regularly, and control fire ants with an insecticide labeled for the vegetable garden. Fertilizer is not recommended at this time of the year for okra.

Q. You were right about most of the browning in the lawn caused by lack of water. The half inch of rain we received 2 weeks back greened it up remarkably. How do we keep it green?

A. Apply one half inch of water from your sprinkler each week if it does not rain every week.

Q. Is there still time to apply a preemergent herbicide to prevent the winter weeds in the lawn? Henbit and beggar's lice drove us crazy last year.

A. You need to apply the preemergent as quickly as possible. Dimension and Amaze work well to prevent henbit, beggar's lice plus rescue grass, thistle, dandelion, chickweed, and bedstraw. If you wait any longer some of the weeds will germinate as the nighttime temps moderate.

Q. We have a wonderful bed of oxblood lilies but now that our peach trees are growing strongly the lilies are hidden under them! What are the options?

A. You could prune the lower part of your peach trees early so the lily blooms would be visible, and some sun would reach them. You may also want start transplanting oxblood lilies to other locations in the landscape. They are a beautiful and valuable flower. Mark the area to be dug up and transplant the bulbs after foliage declines late in the winter. You could sell some of the bulbs if you are inclined. Check with folks in your Master Gardener chapter or Garden Club.