

## Gardening Q&A

02-25-2020

Q. My Bermuda grass usually greens up after dormancy at this time of the year. Based on the photos do you recognize anything that has killed the grass? Some of my neighbor's lawns are green like our lawn usually looks.

A. I think the Bermuda grass is just dormant. There have not been many freezing temperatures, but the weather has been cold with many days in the low 40s and 30s. As for the neighbor's green lawns, St Augustine grass is more cold tolerant and many lawns are green because of the rescue grass and annual blue grass winter weeds.

Q. We saw the herbicide Barricade advertised for use as a preemergent for sand burs at an area farm store. Is it a good choice?

A. The product is not promoted as much as Amaze, XL, and Dimension for the purpose, but it is apparently used in some situations. Check the label for the application requirements and compare the cost to determine if it is a competitive option for your landscape.

Q. A neighbor gave us some blue curl seed to plant as a butterfly nectar source. We realize it should have been planted last fall to germinate and bloom this spring, but it was not! Should we plant it now or wait until next fall? What else can be planted now by seed for the butterflies.?

A. I would plant half of the blue curl seed immediately and save half for next fall. Blue curl blooms over a long season so I think you might get some plants to germinate and flower this spring. Plant annual sunflower seed in full sun now. The butterflies use it for nectar and bordered patch butterflies lay their eggs on it. Sunflowers also are the favorite food of seed-eating birds such as lesser goldfinches. Salvia coccinea can be planted in sun or shade.

Q. What is the best tasting tomato to plant? What about patio tomatoes?

A. Everyone has a different opinion but there are several us that think the two cherry tomatoes BHN 968 and ruby crush are the best tasting varieties. Ruby crush is a bit sweeter but BHN 968 has just the right amount of acidity. Patio tomatoes make an attractive plant and fruit, but they do not rate high in taste tests.

Q. Our garden is covered with leaves now. In a few weeks we are going place an attractive cedar mulch over the entire surface. Is it necessary to remove the leaves before we apply the cedar?

A. No just put the cedar mulch on top of the leaves. Each year or two you can add a fresh batch of mulch on top of the old material. Of course, the cedar will last much longer than the leaves before it decomposes.