

## Gardening Q&A

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Q. The ivy is growing thickly over our brick walls. Is it a problem? Should we control it?

A. Ivy covering the outside walls of a brick house is usually attractive, but it can become a problem as it grows up to the roof and into the eaves where it will penetrate joints, cracks, and crevices. The best strategy to protect the building may be to set a limited height to allow the ivy to cover and then remove everything above it. It is often easier to remove all the ivy than just the higher levels, so you must consider that as well.

Q. What is happening with my St Augustine lawn? There are wide areas that are turning straw colored.

A. When we have had the kind of weather that we have experienced, my first suspicion is that the hottest part of the lawn is drying out. Look and see if the brown/straw-colored areas are the sunniest parts of the lawn. It also makes a difference how deep the soil is across the lawn. Areas with shallow soil dry out fastest. Test the lawn drying out theory by identifying several 3ft. by 3ft. squares in the brown area and apply a generous amount of water by hand every day for one week. You should see a greening response if the cause is "drying". You will then have to adjust your irrigation applications.

If the cause is not lack of moisture suspect chinch bugs. If you find the small insects at the plant base, apply a lawn insecticide.

Q. We are new to the area and have lots of questions about growing a lawn, raising vegetables, and growing flowers here. Do you have a suggestion about how to learn the basics?

A. There are lots of resources. Now during the Corvid 19 Challenge there are not many face- to- face classes but go to the Texas A&M AgriLife website for your county to see if they have any horticulture webinars scheduled. I know Bexar County does. The ZOOM classes are free, and all area gardeners are welcome. You can also visit [plantanswer.com](http://plantanswer.com) for a large amount of information. The SAWS website [Gardenstyle.com](http://Gardenstyle.com) is also a good source of information.

Q. Nandina has sprouted all through our 2-acre lot is there any easy way to kill it?

A. It is unusual for nandina to be so invasive, but we have heard several examples from listeners to our South Texas Gardening radio show lately. At least one horticulturist does not think Round-up will work. Another option may be the herbicide Remedy. You could try a small container before investing in a larger container needed for 2 acres. Follow the label instructions.

Q. Can we still plant flowers for this summer and fall?

A. Yes, in the sun plant vinca, zinnia, moss rose, purslane, or marigold transplants. In the shade use pentas.