**Q&A**

**Calvin Finch Ph.D.**

**Horticulturist and Director**

**Texas A&M Water Conservation and Technology Center**

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Q: What are the best blackberries to plant in this area? What about the thornless selection?

A: Brazos is the old reliable but Kiowa has gotten lots of attention because of its superior performance in field tests. I have not had good luck with the thornless selections. They do well the first year but because they produce their fruit later than the regular varieties, they seem to have trouble regenerating canes.

Q: You recommend viburnum as a shrub for shade. We purchased a “Spring Bouquet” thinking it would be 3 feet tall but it is 8 feet tall. Was it mislabeled?

A: It sounds like it. Viburnum tinus has attractive red buds followed by pinkish-white flowers and blue berries in the spring. The plant appears to be deer-proof and is evergreen. Once it becomes established, it is drought-tolerant. Nurseries offer the dwarf variety and also the full size. The large version can grow to 12 feet tall. I like the large version best.

Q: We are growing Chinese cabbage that is being attacked by small beetles. The numbers are unbelievable. Should we just toss the plants?

A: Flea beetles feed on Chinese cabbage. Sevin (carbaryl) does a good job of controlling the pests. Follow label instructions.

Q: We have a roadrunner in our yard. The books all say they eat lizards and snakes. We saw it catch and carry off an English sparrow under one of our feeders. Is this an aberration?

A: Roadrunners will eat whatever they can catch including small birds. We have also seen them catch English sparrows.

Q: Does it matter what fertilizer we apply to our onions, chard and kale.

A: Slow-release lawn fertilizer (19-5-9) or winterizer lawn fertilizers such as 18-6-12 work well. The important thing is that the first number (nitrogen) is high.

Q: Our favorite nursery has bluebonnet transplants. Should we plant them in a row, in the garden or spread them out in our vacant lot?

A: Both techniques work. If you allow the plants to mature and drop their seed, and the seed falls where it reaches the soil in the full sun, the plants will naturalize and return every year.