

Gardening Question and Answer

03-09-2020

Q. There are seedlings sprouting all around my large live oak tree. They look great and I would like to transplant some. What is the best way to do it?

A. The seedlings you describe are actually suckers sprouting from the roots of your large live oak. They do not transplant successfully. You would be more successful planting acorns from the tree. Test the viability of the acorns by placing them in a bucket of water. The ones that float are not viable and can be placed in the compost pile. The acorns that sink are usually viable. Spread about 5 of the acorns in a container of potting soil about 1 inch deep. Water them when the soil dries to an inch. Transplant seedlings that germinate to a larger container or into the landscape.

Q. I purchased a new home this winter. The lawn is nice and green except for one large round area that is in a deep and in a hot spot where it receives full sun. I have tried watering to green it up but it does not work. Do you have any ideas?

A. There are at least two reasons that might cause the problem. The fact that it is a low spot and didn't respond to watering may indicate that it is a patch of brown patch fungus. Another situation that may cause such a situation is if the green lawn you see is rescue grass and/or annual bluegrass. They are winter grassy weeds that sprout in shady lawns with shallow soil. They would initially be dried out in a sunny area during a period of dry weather. It is probably best to conserve your water which ever situation has caused the brown area.

Q. Our cyclamen have been beautiful this winter but now we have two of the ten in large containers wilting. They are not responding to a special hand watering like they did earlier in the year. Is it the hot weather already?

A. It could be caused by 80 degree weather if the wilting plants are in more sun than the other cyclamen, but in my landscape this problem arises this time of the year when the squirrels dig in the containers reclaiming their buried pecans and acorns. The base of the plant is broken and or the roots are disturbed. In my yard it does not help that my west highland white terriers also jump up and down on the containers in pursuit of the squirrels. Do you have squirrels and terriers?

Q. Is it time to plant tomatoes? What are the recommended varieties? Why don't you ever recommend heirlooms?

A. The tomato varieties that work best in our two short growing seasons are determinate varieties that set fruit in the heat. A determinate tomato is one that quickly grows to full size and then concentrates on maturing fruit. The recommended varieties are Celebrity, Tycoon, BHN 968(cherry), Red Deuce, and Valley Cat. Red Snapper is the Rodeo tomato for 2020 and HM 8899 was the designee for 2019. One

heirloom tomato that has been a successful performer is Cherokee Purple. Yes, it is a good time to plant tomatoes.

Q. When will the bluebonnets bloom?

A. They are beginning to bloom in the southern part of the region. The main bloom period will be in early April.