

## Gardening Q&A

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Q. What is wrong with my lantanas? H year they bloom profusely during the spring. In the summer months they stop but I notice everyone else has them blooming all summer. They are old plants and freeze back in the cold weather but always come back. I believe they would be New Gold because they are bright yellow.

A. Despite your observation you are not alone in having your New Gold lantanas quit blooming in the summer. A high number of New Gold beds quit blooming in the summer because they are infested with lace bugs. The insects suck the juices from the plant and cause them to stop blooming. Put a note on your gardening calendar to spray your bed with acephate or another systemic insecticide about May 15 and then again on June 15 to prevent the damage. For the plants that are already affected it often helps to start a rebloom if you do a shallow trim with the string mower. It works like deadheading zinnias or other flowers.

Q. My neighbor allows a patch of native sunflowers to grow every summer. They are a bit wild looking but are great because they attract lesser goldfinches, Inca doves, and cardinals to feed on the seed. What is the best way to start the process in my yard?

A. See if your neighbor will let you harvest some of the mature flower heads and break them up to release the seed. You can also buy seed for the annual sunflowers from most retail nurseries or a wildflower seed supplier on the internet. Identify a portion of the yard in full sun where you will grow the sunflowers. The seed will have to make contact with the soil, so a sodded area usually does not work. Spread the seed this fall and expect it to grow next summer.

Q. Our coleus is leggy. Will it work to prune it back some?

A. Yes, tip it back up to one half the plant as long as there are some leaves on the portion remaining. Apply some lawn fertilizer such as 19-5-9 as a side dressing and water twice per week.

Q. Is there still time to plant tomatoes for the fall?

A. It is pretty late but if you can find some large transplants in 1-gallon containers they will work to produce fruit before the cold weather arrives. Use the recommended determinate varieties like Tycoon, Celebrity, BHN 968, Ruby Crush, Red Snapper, Valley Cat, or HM 8849.

Q. My husband and I liked the sycamore trees we grew in our home in Kentucky. Our local nursery said that they recommended Mexican sycamore rather than American sycamore for this area. Is that correct?

A. Yes, your nurseryman is correct, Mexican sycamores are just as fast growing, just as showy, and much more resistant to diseases like anthracnose that attack American sycamores in our area. Recognize the Mexican sycamore by its fuzzy white leaf bottom.