**Q’s & A’s**

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Q. Our loquats for the first time have fruit. Are they good to eat? Are there other uses for them?

A. Yes, loquats, also called Japanese plums, are edible. The seeds are big but the fruit is sweet and tasty. They are a favorite of birds, squirrels, raccoons, deer and even dogs. Loquats are a good landscape tree. They are evergreen, shade tolerant and drought resistant.

Q. How do you prepare rutabagas? You write about them so much we thought we would give them a try. You are right; they are easy to grow.

A. Peel the bulb and cut it into chunks for boiling. Add butter and mash them like potatoes. Season to taste.

Q. Can we grow sweet corn?

A. Yes, plant sweet corn beginning in early March. Plant it in compact short rows or in a circle to encourage pollination. If you have the space, plant a batch every 2 weeks through April for a longer harvest.

Q. What are the sprays you recommend for roses again? We had insect and fungus disease problems last year.

A. The traditional spray program includes triforine (Funginex and other brands) for disease and acephate (Orthene) for insects. Organic gardeners can try sulfur products, neem oil, and Spinosad.

Q. We sprayed the ball moss on our live oaks with Kocide as you recommended. Should it have fallen off?

A. I don’t recommend that ball moss be sprayed. The native epiphyte does not hurt the trees, but if you do not like the look, Kocide will kill it. If you sprayed according to label instructions, most should gradually fall off of the tree as rains and winds occur.

Q. Our new home has lots of trees and no lawn. What is the best grass for a shady situation?

A. St. Augustine has the most shade tolerance and Floratam is the St. Augustine with the most drought tolerance. Zoysia has some shade tolerance. If your yard is very shady, no lawn will prosper. Consider shade tolerant groundcovers like Asian jasmine, dwarf ruellia and liriope. Mulched areas also work well. Groundcover and mulch are also more drought tolerant than lawn grass.