**Leaves and the Drought**

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If you have live oak trees, the leaves are probably covering your lawn right now. You have several choices in dealing with the leaves. If they are not piled too deep, you can let them lay and they will decompose over the next few weeks. Speed the decomposition process along by mowing the leaves where they lay. The small pieces decompose faster than whole leaves.

If your upbringing and traditions forces you to rake the leaves, use them for mulch or as material to add to the compost pile.

Whether you let them decompose on the lawn, in the compost pile or use them for mulch, the live oak leaves are reusable as a source of organic material.

Sod can be applied anytime for a new lawn or to repair killed areas in the existing lawn. Wait on Bermuda seed until about May 1. The soil and air temperature are warm enough for it to germinate at that time.

If the drought continues however, and we move into Stage 3 restrictions, 2013 may not be the best time to establish a new lawn. Visit the San Antonio Water System website to review the watering rules for lawns: [saws.org](http://saws.org). There may be waivers for new lawns if there is a reasonable justification. At best, though, it is tough to establish a new lawn in the midst of a drought.

**Garden Tasks**

Spider mites are a major tomato pest. To slow down their spread, apply a spray of 2 tablespoons of seaweed extract in 1 gallon of water each week. Spray under the leaves.

If your roses have begun to bloom, encourage maximum bloom production by using blooms for cut flowers and/or deadheading the spent blooms.

Live oak and pecan flowers will drop down on the lawn under the trees to cover the grass and hardscape. They are high in moisture and nitrogen so they will decompose quickly. Collect the ones in the driveway for the compost pile.

Insects of many kinds prey on peaches and other fruits. Spray them weekly with Sevin or Malathion to reduce the damage. Organic gardens can try Spinosad, rotenone and/or pyrethrum.