**Q’s & A’s**

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Q: We have a Chinese pistache with 50 plus holes the size of a small nail. We think they are tree borers; I guess that’s the right name. We went to the nursery and they sold us a Malathion-type insecticide and said to inject the syringe in each hole but that will take forever.

1. Will the borers kill the tree?
2. Is there another way to combat the borers?
3. Will they spread to other trees? We have a great drake elm, and we are worried about that tree. Should we cut down and burn the pistache?

 A: Are you sure they are borers? Are the holes random? If they are in a pattern, they are sapsuckers. Is the tree old and starting to die? If not, the “borers” may not be a factor in its length of life. Borers generally attack dying and dead trees. They should not be a threat to any of your other trees. Drake elms are susceptible to cotton root rot rather than borers. I also would not bother with the syringe tactic.

Q: Why don’t we use pomegranates more as a landscape plant? Mine seem to be drought-tolerant, deer-proof and attractive. Right now they have bright orange blooms that have been showy for five or six weeks. This fall the tasty nutritious fruit will ripen. It is a spectacular plant.

A: I agree. The good news is that many area nurseries are now offering a wide selection of pomegranates for the landscape.

Q: We have been fighting with our compost pile all spring. We understand that it should get hot during the decomposition process. What does it take to make the pile turn hot?

A: The main requirement is the right mix of green and brown ingredients. It takes about three parts green material like grass clippings, weeds, vegetable scraps or manure mixed with one part brown material such as leaves or shredded brush. Mix the greens and brown material together and keep the pile moist but not soggy. If you vary much from that formula, it is hard to have an active pile.

Even if your compost is not perfectly mixed and active, it will eventually decompose. The process is just slower.

Q: I just put in an Emerald zoysia lawn. It is beautiful but now I am told that I need to mow it with a reel mower. Is that true?

A: I had an Emerald zoysia lawn. It is easiest to mow with a reel mower but if you keep your rotary mower sharp and you mow every week, a rotary mower does fine. Mow at 2 inches tall.

For questions about horticulture, water conservation and the environment, email Calvin Finch at Calvin.finch@tamu.edu.