**WEB**

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**“Wildflowers Q&A”**

**Q. We want to mow our vacant lot, but we still have wildflowers blooming. If we mow now, will that mean there will be no seed for wildflowers next spring?**

A. Not necessarily. Most species of wildflowers have bloomed and matured and dropped their seed. My guess is that you have coreopsis, firewheel and bee balm still blooming. The coreopsis and firewheel have been blooming for a long period and have dropped considerable seed. The early wildflowers have dropped their seed as well. You could mow, but leave as many bee balm clumps in place as possible to give it a little more time to drop seed.

**Q. Is there any reasonable way to control webworms?**

A. Webworms are tough to control, because they are often high in the tree. A Bt product sprayed on the foliage where they are feeding will kill them, but it takes a powerful sprayer to get the pesticide into the tree. If you aren’t worried about a pecan crop, you can ignore the infestation. I use a cane pole to reach as many webs as possible and open them up so wasps, birds and the sun can reduce the webworm population.

**Q. My neighbors are harvesting bushels of tomatoes, and we are barely getting any fruit set. Did we plant the right varieties? We like heirlooms and Beefmaster.**

A. Most heirlooms and Beefmaster are indeterminate varieties. They keep producing foliage as long as growing conditions are good and only get around to setting fruit later in the summer when it is often too hot. In our climate, it is best to plant determinate varieties that grow to a relatively small height quickly, and then concentrate on fruit production. At the end of July or early in August, we can replant tomatoes. This time plant determinate heat-setters like Tycoon, Tigress, 602, Phoenix, 444, Solar Fire, Cherry Surprise (BHN 968) or Valley Cat.

**Q. Why would our tomatoes have a yellow, swirly pattern in the orange skin? Can we prevent it?**

A. Viruses sometimes cause the pattern you describe, but it is more likely stinkbugs. The pests inject their digestive juice in the fruit and feed on the soup that is produced. In either case, you can eat the fruit. Control stinkbugs with Sevin sprayed at the first sign of the insects. Control viruses by selecting virus-resistant tomato varieties and/or covering the cages with agricultural fabric when the tomato plants are young. This will prevent thrips from injecting the disease in the plants.