**Carrots and Broccoli Q’s & A’s**

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Q. When can we plant carrots? How about broccoli?

A. Plant carrots by seed in September and plant broccoli transplants in late September and October. For a list of all the right times to plant vegetables in the autumn, visit [plantanswers.com](http://plantanswers.com).

Q. We understand fall is one of the best times to feed hummingbirds. Tell us about hummingbird feeders.

A. The feeders can resemble works of art with elaborate shapes and colors of glass but they also need to be functional. You want your feeder to hold a week’s supply of sugar water (about one quart) and you need to be able to clean it easily. Sugar water in our heat is prone to grow mold and/or evaporate so you need to rinse and refill the feeder every week.

Every month the feeder should be cleaned more thoroughly with a brush. Bottle brushes are usually for sale at the same retailers as feeders.

Whatever feeder you choose, mix the sugar water at four parts water to one part sugar. Boiling the water in the microwave makes the sugar dissolve easily and some sources claim it contributes to protecting hummingbird health but I am not aware of any research results that justify the effort.

Hang the feeder on a trellis or the eaves of your house at a location that is easy to view from the window or from your patio chairs.

Q. My favorite nursery is having a great sale on shade trees. Do we dare buy one and plant it now?

A. Yes, autumn is the best time to plant a shade tree. The tree has time to develop a root system before it has to face a Central Texas summer.

Dig the hole as deep as the root ball and two to three times as wide. Cover the ground over the root ball with mulch and water every time the soil under the mulch dries out.

If you are planting in sand, incorporate compost into as large an area as possible around the planting area.

Q. Is it too late to apply a pre-emergent herbicide to my lawn? We were overrun with bedstraw last year.

A. Now is a good time to apply a pre-emergent herbicide. Find one that mentions bedstraw in the label. The product Portrait is one of the products labeled for broad-leaf plants like bedstraw, dandelions and thistles. Amaze or XL do well for grassy weeds.

Q. When can we plant snapdragons and stocks for the winter?

A. I like to wait until late September or October.