**Planting Now Q’s & A’s**

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Q: What happens if we plant tomatoes now?

A: It is generally too late to expect the plants to bloom and mature tomatoes before cold weather arrives.

Q: Why does seaweed extract help control spider mites on our tomatoes? Or is it just another hollow claim by organic-control advocates?

A: I researched the topic a few years ago. There were several theories. Some sources expressed the idea that the seaweed extract toughened the cells on the leaves enough to resist easy penetration by spider mites. If I remember right, however, the seaweed extract had small quantities of a chemical that reduced spider mite breeding success. Google “seaweed extract and spider mites” to verify my memory.

Q: The acorns are falling in my neighborhood. Can I just plant them in a container and haven them grow a new tree?

A: Yes, as long as the acorn meat is intact, it will produce a tree. Put the acorns in a bucket of water. The acorns that sink have a full nut; plant them. Red oak acorns spend the first fall growing roots. A stem only emerges from the soil the second year. White oak and live oak acorns may sprout in the fall.

Q: Is it too late to plant Bermuda grass seed for the year?

A: Yes, the generally accepted deadline is September 30th. After that, the soil gets too cool for fall germination and growth. Wait until May 1st to plant Bermuda grass seed.

Q: What cool-weather annuals can we plant in the shade this winter? My caladiums are declining in the cool weather. I would expect the caladiums to perk up after declining in the hot weather.

A: Caladiums don’t like cold weather, but 65oF at night and 85oF in the day suites them fine. Use cyclamen and primula for winter color. Wait to plant them in late October or even November.

Q: Is it okay to plant carrot seed now? What else can we plant?

A: Plant lettuce, radish, turnip, rutabaga and beet seed now. It is also time for broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Chinese greens, Brussels’ sprouts, Swiss chard and mustard transplants.