**Q&A**

**Calvin Finch, PhD**

**Director, Water Conservation and Technology Center**

Q. I see that my favorite nursery has a new shipment of fruit trees. Can we grow apples, peaches, plums and pears here? How about apricots and cherries?

A. It is possible to grow in descending order of difficulty apricots, apples, peaches, plums and pears in our area. Cherries do not survive in our climate or soils. Visit plantanswers.com for a list of the recommended varieties. Just a note of caution—Red Delicious apples, Bartlett pears, and Elberta peaches do not produce fruit in our climate.

Q. Is it too late to plant carrots, beets, lettuce and radish by seed?

A. No, but the earlier in February that you plant them, the more success you will have.

Q. What are some good nectar-producing plants that I can plant to attract the hummingbirds?

A. The best strategy is to include one of more nectar-producing plants at all times from now until December. Here is a representative list.

A. For March grow Cross-Vine and Texas Gold Columbine. Salvia Greggii is a good producer for early spring including April. Plant Zinnias in May for summer blooms. Turk’s Cap and Shrimp Plant are also good. Firebush, Esperanza, and Poinciana all produce nectar in the hottest part of the summer. The blue salvias attract hummingbirds in late summer. Cape Honeysuckle is the best late fall hummingbird plant.

Q. Our live oak tree dropped its leaves. It frightened us because we though they were evergreen but now is already putting on more leaves. Is this a problem?

A. No our “evergreen” live oaks drop their leaves for two weeks every year. Use the leaves as mulch; they are great mulch for the vegetable and flower garden.

Q. When can we plant tomatoes? It is early but they are already in the nursery.

A. Yes, we usually plant them in the garden about April 1. To consider the idea of “potting up” tomatoes to produce the fresh tomatoes of the season, visit plantanswers.com