**Q’s & A’s**

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Q. My neighbors and I have an argument about feeding the deer. I wont tell you who is on which side but is it true that feeding deer corn reduces pressure on the landscape?

A. Feeding deer corn will not reduce consumption of landscape plants. In the short term corn may replace calories that would normally be provided by landscape plants. In the long term, however, corn feeding will contribute to population increase and the increased deer herd will consume more landscape plants. Corn does not provide protein and other essential nutrients that are available in the plants they are eating.

Q. Tell us again the name of the superior cherry tomato that you and Jerry Parsons keep bragging about on your weekend radio show?

A. The tomato is BHN 968 but it is also called Dwarf Cherry Surprise and/or the Rodeo Cherry. It is superior because it has a marvelous taste that scores high in every taste competition. It is also disease resistant and heat tolerant. The plant only grows to about 5-6 feet tall and is compact so it makes a good container plant.

Q. Does zoysia grass have as much shade tolerance as St. Augustine grass? How about drought tolerance?

A. Zoysia has some shade tolerance but not as much as St. Augustine grass. Zoysia has better traffic tolerance, disease resistance and tolerates alkaline soil better. Zoysia grass requires as much water as St. Augustine to stay green but it can go dormant and recover when the rains return. Brown St. Augustine is usually dead St. Augustine.

Q. Is there any way to prevent the flower drop from live oaks? They make such a mess.

A. The good news is that the flowers are high in moisture and nitrogen so they decompose quickly on the lawn. Sweep up the blooms on the driveway and put them in the compost pile.

Q. What should we spray on our roses to prevent thrip damage this year? Last year they deformed almost every bloom.

A. The traditional insecticide is acephate. It is a systemic and does a good job of controlling thrips. Organic gardeners can try Spinosad. It seems to work as well.

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