**WEB**

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**EarthKind Classes and Audubon Hoot and Harvest Festival**

Beginning in early September and continuing in October, a number of programs and events are planned where you can receive gardening and landscaping information that will make you more successful in dealing with our landscape conditions.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is offering three sessions in the Earth-Kind series to make you a more environmentally conscious and horticulturally successful manager of your home landscape. The sessions will be from 8:30 a.m.-noon Sept. 20, Oct. 4, and Oct. 18 at the Bexar County Extension office, 3355 Cherry Ridge, Suite 208. There is a $20 fee for each class. Space is limited so quickly call 467-6575 to reserve a spot.

The classes will cover tree selection, tree care, rainwater harvesting, plant nutrition, pest management, wildscaping, rain gardens and yard waste reduction.

AgriLife Extension along with the Stone Oak Property Owners Association, San Antonio Water System and the Trinity Glen Rose Groundwater Conservation District will co-host “A Rain Barrel Workshop” from 9 a.m.-noon Sept. 27 at the Stone Oak Property Owner’s offices, 19210 Huebner Road. Registration is $25 and attendance is limited to 40. RSVP to Angel Torres at the AgriLife Extension office for Bexar County at 210-467-6575. All attendees will take home a rain barrel.

One of my favorite events each year is the Mitchell Lake Audubon Fall Festival, set for Oct. 25. Mitchell Lake Audubon Center, 10705 Pleasanton Road, features the best native plant garden in the region and over 1,200 acres of birding habitat including ponds and the lake.

The festival features wildlife and environmental activities including guided tours, hayrides, “Last Chance Forever Raptor Show,” a graywater presentation, butterfly and birding exhibits and plant sales. For youth, Home Depot sponsors a bird house building activity and there is a pumpkin painting session.

Even though the festival is free, it is a major fundraiser for the nonprofit center because of sponsor support and the Hummingbird and Butterfly Raffle. For 10 years the raffle has offered a top prize of a custom-built hummingbird/butterfly garden on the winner’s choice of sites. There are 30 other prizes such as garden furniture, binoculars and gift certificates.

Tickets are $2 for each or six for $10. They can be purchased at the festival or at Milberger, Fanicks and Rainbow Gardens in Bandera nurseries prior to the event.

Other sponsors include HEB, SAWS, Wild Birds Unlimited, Keller Material, Landscape Architect Terry Lewis, Gardening Volunteers of South Texas, REI, CitiBank, Green Haven Industries, San Antonio River Authority, R&R Tractor, Coopers Nursery, Fertile Garden Supply, Quality Organic, Schulz Nursery, Burns Nursery and New Earth Technology.

For more information, call the center at 210-628-1639.

**“Garden Tasks”**

* Apply a pre-emergent herbicide to the lawn to prevent winter weeds. Amaze works well for grassy weeds and “portrait” and “gallery” work well for broadleaf weeds.
* Don’t panic if your bur oaks and cedar elms are dropping their leaves early in response to the dry weather. No treatment is required. It is a common survival mechanism. They will recover in the spring.
* To bring hummingbirds onto the patio for observation, plant firebush or zinnias in containers in a sunny site and firespike or penta in the shade.
* Plant your wildflower seeds now for spring blooms. Select a sunny location where the seed makes soil contact.