Question and Answers

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Q. Our St Augustine has rounded brown areas that are growing. Is it from the cold weather? Could it be brown patch? We only water once per week.

A. The symptoms you describe make it sound like it is brown patch. We have not had enough cold weather to show dormancy due to cold weather in St Augustine grass. With all the rain we have had and cool weather there is no need to irrigate at all. Stop the irrigation and the brown spots should quit growing. Healing (green-up) will not occur until next spring. There are also several granular fungicides for the lawn that will stop the spread of the disease, consider Bayleton or F-Stop. If the disease is showing up in low areas apply a top dressing in February, to slightly raise the level of the area.

Q. My Katy Road roses are loaded with rose hips. Should I cut them off to get more blooms? Are they good for anything?

A. Usually the presence of hips on Katy Road does not reduce bloom, so cutting them off won’t increase the blooms this fall. Use rose hips in teas and other recipes. Google “rose hips” for ideas. Birds and squirrels will also eat them. Perhaps this year with the bountiful crop of acorns and pecans, they haven’t used the rose hips yet. I predict that they will be consumed after the first hard freeze softens them up.

Q. Is there still vegetables we can plant this winter in addition to the cole crops and greens? What about potatoes, spinach and onions?

A. Plant seed potatoes in early February. The plants are too sensitive too cold to plant them now. The nurseries have onion transplants available for planting now. Spinach transplants are also available. In addition consider English peas, carrots, beets, and turnips by seed.

Q. The wind blew down all my beautiful snapdragons. They are in a bit of a tangled mess but still seem alive and trying to bloom more. Will they perk-up or should we replant?

A. The snapdragons won’t look as orderly as they had before the wind damage but they will send up new bloom stalks. I recommend that you fertilize your current plants and let them stay in place.

Q. What do you think happened to my Swiss chard? The tops died back as if there was a severe freeze or fungal attack. The broccoli, cabbage, and kale planted in the same area were not affected at all.

A. The chard in my garden suffered the same fate. It appears that Swiss chard is more sensitive to drainage issues than the other greens. With all our rain they seem to be suffering root damage due to soggy soil. As an experiment place a few new transplants near the damaged plants, and also plant a few new transplants in an area with better drainage (work in compost). If the experiment verifies the drainage issue is the problem, you may want to incorporate compost throughout the garden.