Question and Answer

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Q. What does it mean when my cucumbers are blooming but not setting fruit? How much sun is required? The blooms just drop off.

A. Full sun is the best. If you have at least 6 hours of sun the plants should produce something. If you have limited sun interacting with the rainy overcast days we have had that could delay fruit set. In such a situation you would only have male blooms. There would be no fruit behind the bloom. If pollination of the flowers is the issue, you would see small fruit that just dropped off. That could mean a lack of bees. Do not spray the entire plant with insecticide. If you are controlling vine borers with Sevin, only spray the growing point every week.

Q. Our lawn is dominated by a low-growing broadleaf plant with small yellow flowers. The deer seem to like it but we worry it is squeezing out the St Augustine grass. From my description do you know what it is? Is there something we should do to control it?

A. It sounds like you are describing horseherb. It is a persistent perennial weed that is prospering in the rainy weather we have had. If and when the weather dries out, the horseherb will disappear until fall. You can try a contact herbicide for broadleaf weeds but it is very difficult to eliminate. In my neighborhood we are keeping it mowed and enjoying the butterflies and deer that it attracts until the weather dries out and it disappears.

Q. I have never seen our live oaks put on so much growth and be so full of leaves. Last year the same thing happened until we had two months of dry weather in July and August when lots of the leaves dropped. Is there anything we can do to prevent that leaf drop?

A. Theoretically you could irrigate the trees during the period after the rains stopped but it is usually not practical. The limited leaf drop does not hurt the trees and the amount of water required to replace the rain would mean very large water bills. Live oaks and the other adapted trees evolved to survive erratic rainfall and will do fine in the long term.

Q. The tomato crop in our garden has been unbelievable. We planted Red Deuce, Tycoon, and Solar Fire. Is everyone having the same success or is it because we used superior varieties?

A. Your success is partly because you used proven selections but it has been generally a great year for tomato production because of the moderate temperatures and rain. On the negative side, some gardeners are experiencing early blight fungus as a result of the damp weather and others have had some trouble with stink bugs (leaf-footed bugs). The production season will be over by the end of June. Slow-down fungus with an application of Daconil. Stink bugs are tough to control but I have good results with Sevin. Follow label instructions.