

West Texas Gardening

"It is difficult to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a homegrown tomato."

-Lewis Grizzard

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HOWDY!



Dear Readers,

We are quickly approaching Fall, my favorite time of the year!. Vegetables will look a bit different around this time, but depending on the variety, you can still add different colors to your garden and your meals. This newsletter will provide options for what you can plant for a beautiful Fall Garden!

Happy Gardening,

Sara Moran

Horticulture County Extension Agent
Ector & Midland Counties

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

FALL GARDENING

JOHN CAPPADONNA, PERMIAN BASIN MASTER GARDENER, TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

September 22nd at 7:05 PM is the Fall Equinox! Even though summer seems to hang on. Look for cooler nights in the latter half of September. Nothing drastic but you should wake to temperatures in the low 70s rather than near 80°F. Days will still be hot in the afternoon but the cooler mornings will persist longer in the mornings.

I look forward to fall gardening every year after being so weary of the dog day heat! The cooler weather is a relief to plants as well as people. A fall garden takes less water, it's a great time to plant native perennials in your landscape, and vegetables and herbs in your garden. Vegetables are things like greens and root crops that we eat the plant rather than fruits like tomatoes and squash.

Popular fall crops are Swiss chard, lettuce, collards, kale, broccoli, and Bok Choy. These plants all transplant very well so keep an eye out for them at your local nurseries, garden centers, a grocery stores.

The Permian Basin Master Gardeners will have a fall plant sale on Saturday, September 12, from 9:00AM until 2:00PM, at 3011 North County Road 1160 (Todd Road), Midland, TX. The Master Gardeners will have a great selection of native perennials and fall vegetable starts all at the perfect time to plant!



Vegetables like kale, collards, broccoli, and Swiss chard seeds germinate best in warm soil of 85°F or more so if you are planting from seed now is the time but if you are planting from transplants Mid-September is just right. As it continues to cool in late September it is a good time to plant carrots, turnips, and green onion seeds when the soil is about 77°F. When October arrives and soil cools to 68°F it is time to plant spinach, cilantro and most culinary herbs like parsley, sage, chives, oregano, thyme, and dill. Often, we can find herb plants, and I recommend using transplants if you can find the starts. Thyme, and oregano seeds are tiny and harder to germinate so transplants work best.

Using shade cloth is a good idea to help moderate the late summer early fall sun. It will reduce soil temperatures enough to encourage those cool soil plants like spinach, cilantro and other herbs. Probably even more important is keeping the birds from eating your tender seedlings. Birds seem to really develop a taste for seedlings that time of year and they will ruin your garden if you don't take precautions!

As fall turns to winter you can use row cover to protect those vegetables when temperatures drop down to 20°F. Some of these vegetables and herbs are very cold hardy, but since the part we want is the leaves row cover will keep them in good shape.

With a little planning and work you can have some great vegetables during the cool months too!



Get your FREE Fall Gardening Guide



Know Your insect

Mealybugs are small, soft-bodied insects that commonly infest plants. They are covered with a white, waxy, cotton-like substance and feed by sucking sap from leaves, stems, and roots. Mealybugs can cause plants to become weak, yellow, wilted, and stunted.

Mealybugs produce a sticky substance called honeydew, which can lead to the growth of sooty mold. Mealybugs can be controlled by removing them manually. Natural predators can be encouraged. Insecticidal soap can be used as a last resource to control mealybugs.



Plant Spotlight



HOLLYHOCKS

Hollyhocks (*Alcea rosea*) are tall, flowering plants known for their colorful, large, cup-shaped flowers. They can grow several feet tall. Hollyhocks are biennial, they produce flowers the second year.

Hollyhocks come in many colors, including pink, red, yellow, white, and purple. They are popular ornamental plants because of their beautiful flowers and ability to attract bees and butterflies. Perfect to plant in front of fences or walls.

They produce lots of seeds that you can save, donate to your seed library and/or let it reseed in the garden for more plants next year!

I might have an Answer

Our knockouts are losing their blooms. What is happening? Denzil W.

A site visit will be worth it to look at the area where roses are growing. Information about irrigation, fertilization, and soil conditions is also relevant for a proper diagnosis.

However, here are some aspects to consider about why roses lose their blooms:

- **Temperature** can affect plants. Some plants are better adapted and tolerate high temperatures better. Others, like roses, have to conserve energy and water to survive. At temperatures above 85°F, roses may slow their growth and drop petals to save water and energy.
- **Drought conditions.** Lack of rain and improper irrigation will stress roses and cause different symptoms:
 - **Wilting and curling**, when leaves lose turgor pressure - cells become flaccid- causing leaves to roll inward, droop, or wilt.
 - **Disrupt growth.** Drought stress can cause symptoms such as stunted growth, fewer flowers, and smaller leaves. The plant needs to conserve energy and water and will compromise its growth to survive.
 - **Early senescence.** The plant sacrifices older leaves to conserve resources. Older leaves will turn yellow, 'crispy' around the edges, and drop prematurely.

Supporting the plant with proper irrigation is crucial, to minimize plant stress during hot and dry periods. Water deeply, not frequently, helps the plant develop a robust root system. Water at the base to ensure water is properly absorbed in the soil. Add mulch around the base to keep soil cool and moist.



UPCOMING EVENTS



TEXAS
MASTER GARDENER
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
Permian Basin

FALL Plant Sale

Beautiful. Resilient. Perfect for West Texas.

DATE:
Saturday,
September 12, 2026

TIME:
9:00 am - 2:00 pm

LOCATION:
3011 N County Rd 1160
(Todd Road),
Midland, TX 79705

! IMPORTANT: ALL SALES ARE FINAL.
Bring your own wagon!



[MORE](#)
[Classes & Events](#)



Gardening
— for —
Wellness

Herbs & Teas

Location: Midland County Extension Office

Date: Thurs. October 8th

Time: 6:00pm-7:30pm

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

WORD SEARCH

e	j	i	n	s	e	c	t	a	m
s	b	o	k	c	h	o	y	k	w
o	c	m	l	l	p	m	c	a	a
r	l	x	a	j	e	o	r	a	x
i	i	y	f	i	h	w	z	r	o
n	a	r	i	y	r	p	l	m	r
g	a	c	l	r	e	i	i	o	p
l	v	l	t	i	o	n	g	t	s
m	o	d	f	s	x	u	x	h	s
h	a	p	k	a	l	e	r	j	r

**Fall
Kale**

**Hollyhock
Soil**

**Rose
Bok Choy**

EDITOR

Sara A. Moran serves as the County Horticulture Extension Agent in Midland and Ector counties in Texas. She graduated from New Mexico State University with a Master's Degree in Horticulture. Her main focus is Urban Gardens.
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