

Plant propagation adds new dimension to gardening

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office

Growing many of your own plants by propagation will add a new dimension to your gardening life. Plant propagation is easy and just plain fun. It can be cost-effective as well.

The fun, fascination and fulfillment derived from starting your own plants can provide the home gardener with the skills and techniques to keep their homes and landscapes well stocked with new plants.

There are a variety of plant propagation methods from taking cuttings to layering to dividing and more. The technique you select will depend on the type of plant you wish to propagate and the amount of time and effort you want to put into it.

Propagating new plants is both a science and an art. Plant propagation is the multiplication of plants by both sexual and asexual means. From the home gardener starting a few tomato plants from seed on the kitchen windowsill, to the naturalist growing endangered species of wetland grasses, to the nurseryman who grows thousands of Knock Out roses sold annually, a working knowledge of plant propagation makes all of these endeavors possible.

For the home gardener, plant propagation is an economical means to fill flower beds and herbal containers while prices continue to climb.

There probably are as many



PHOTO BY Dr. William M. Johnson

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methods of propagating plants as there are reasons for wanting to do so, but there are basically two types of propagation — sexual and asexual.

Methods of propagation range from seed sowing to grafting, and all require varying degrees of skill.

To become successful at plant propagation, you do not need to enroll in a graduate level course, but you will benefit from some guidance provided by someone already skilled in the practice.

Whether you're a novice at propagation or wish to enhance your propagation skills, take advantage of the following opportunities on plant propagation techniques as follows:

- The Spring Pecan Field Day will be from 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. today at the North Pavilion in Carbide Park off FM 519 (Main Street) in La Marque.

Grafting is a form of plant propagation and pecan growers know well the advantages of grafting pecans. There will be ongoing grafting demonstrations. Several varieties of pecan graftwood will be available. A \$1-per-stick donation is requested.

Bring your insects, disease or other pest problems in a plastic bag for free diagnosis and control recommendations.

Preregistration is not necessary for this program.

- The ABCs of Propagation



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will be from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. April 14 at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office, 4102 Main Street, in La Marque.

Master Gardener propagation specialists Anna Wygrys and Ann Lyon will present a program on various propagation techniques including rooting rose cuttings, bulb propagation by chipping, seed starting, begonia leaf cuttings and air layering.

Preregistration is requested. Emailgalv3(at)wt.net or call 281-534-3413, Ext. 12.

• How to Graft Your Own Fruit and Nut Trees will be from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. April 14 at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office.

Galveston County Master Gardener Herman Auer, propagation specialist, will present a program and hands-on workshop on grafting. Attendees will leave the class ready to begin their own grafting projects with confidence.

The two grafting methods presented will be T-bud grafting, used on many types of fruit and citrus trees about the size of a pencil, and the more commonly used wedge grafting. Additional grafting specialists will be on hand to provide one-on-one assistance.

Preregistration is required. Emailgalv3(at)wt.net or call 281-534-3413, Ext. 12. The class is limited to the first 32 preregistered participants.

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Garden Q&A

Q: I have a schefflera in a well-lighted indoor location.

There is very little leaf drop, but the tree has a great deal of sap running off the leaves onto the carpet, which has become sticky as result. Can you tell me the cause and how to treat it?

A: Based on the information provided, the

most likely problem is an infestation by scale insects, which produce honeydew (the clear, syrupy, sap-like substance described).

While aphids and certain other sucking insects also can produce honeydew, scheffleras are more likely to be infested with scale insects.

These will appear as brown bumps on the twigs and leaves, which can be scraped off with a fingernail.

Scale insects are difficult to control, especially if they have spread to other plants in the area.

However, there are insecticides that can be used to treat scale insects.

You should be sure to select one that is labeled for use on interior houseplants. Insecticidal oils and soaps might be your best option if the plants must be kept indoors during treatment.

