

Add gardening activities to your August calendar

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office

Last year's and this year's summer seasons are a study in contrast. We were bone dry last year at this time, but this year's rainfall has been fairly generous in the total amount and most generous in its regular distribution, all this being relative comparisons.

July even graced gardeners with some pleasantly cooler-than-usual temperatures.

It's not a perfect world, though, as the humid and warm days of August are at hand. Enthusiasm for working in the garden might be tested at times, but there is plenty to be done. So, carry an extra large glass of tea or water and make sure to wear a hat for protection from the sun.

The gardeners' calendar of activities for August includes the following:

- **Fall vegetables:** Despite our warm summer temperatures, August is the time to plant many types of vegetables for a fall garden. Many gardeners miss this opportunity to have a successful fall garden because they wait until temperatures have moderated to plant. Vegetables that perform well in fall gardens include lima beans, snap beans, cantaloupes, southern peas, summer squash, winter squash and a variety of other vegetables.

- **Inspect trees before storm:** The Gulf of Mexico has been rather quiet thus far. How-



PHOTO BY Dr. William M. Johnson

Be sure to inspect landscape trees for girdling damage caused by staking wires. Staking systems must be periodically checked and adjusted to be certain that they are not causing tree damage.

ever, the peak season for tropical storm and hurricane formation occurs during August and September.

Inspect larger trees for broken, dead, damaged and weakly attached limbs as soon as possible when a tropical storm or hurricane threatens. Obtain the services of a qualified tree-care professional as needed. Strong winds can tear such limbs from trees and turn them into dangerous projectiles.

Large limbs are capable of causing damage to homes, vehicles and other property as well causing harm to people in the event of violent weather. It is wise to consider calling a professional for help with big jobs who have the know-how and equipment to avoid injury.

- **Staked trees:** If a landscape tree was staked after transplanting, be sure to inspect for girdling damage caused by prolonged staking. Staking systems must be periodically checked and adjusted to be certain that they are not causing tree damage. Staking will not damage trees if installed correctly and properly maintained.

Girdling or strangulation of a tree trunk can be caused when wire fencing, nylon or steel cable has been tied around the tree for anchorage.

Whatever tie material is used, it will eventually press or cut into the bark as the tree trunk increases in diameter and restricts the movement of water and nutrients within the tree. If a tree must be staked, all



August 01, 2012



Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

News column printed in the Galveston Daily News, The Post, and other Galveston County Newspapers.



stakes and support wires should be removed between 12 and 18 months after planting, provided the tree has a well-established root system. The most important point to remember is that the staking system must be removed as soon as it is no longer necessary for the support of the tree.

- **Gladiolus:** Gladiolus corms can be dug and cured as soon as the foliage turns brown. Store corms in dry peat moss or vermiculite within a paper bag or stocking.

- **Divide perennials:** It is time to divide spring-flowering perennials, such as iris, Shasta daisy, oxeye, gaillardia, cannas, day lilies, violets, liriope, and ajuga.

Dr. William Johnson is a horticulturist with the Galveston County Office of Texas AgriLife Extension Service, The Texas A&M System. Visit his website at <http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston>.

+++

Upcoming Programs

- **Fall Vegetable Gardening:** 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Aug. 11. Master Gardener Luke Stripling is a longtime home gardener and will provide guidelines to produce a successful fall vegetable garden. Topics will include soil preparation, drainage, raised beds, growing up with fence or other supports, seed planting dates, varieties, planting depth, fertilizer methods, water requirements, and harvesting.

- **Culture and Care of Palms:** 1 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Palm tree enthusiast and Galveston County Master Gardener O.J. Miller has more than 15 years experience with growing palms in the area. This program will include an introduction to palms, an overview of the exotics and commonly found palms at nurseries in the area, palm planting methods, palm fertilization, freeze preparation and proper care.

The program will include a discussion on the better varieties of palms for Galveston County and the surrounding area.

All programs are conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office in Carbide Park, 4102 Main St., in La Marque. No fee for either program but reservation required by email. [galv3\(at\)wt.net](mailto:galv3(at)wt.net), or phone, 281-534-3413, Ext. 12.

