

Growing Blueberries

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



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Dr. William M. 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.

PHOTO CREDIT: Herman Auer

Pictured is Dr. David Cohen harvesting blueberries grown in his home landscape. Dr. Cohen will provide a seminar on Growing Blueberries on Saturday, January 11, at the Galveston County Extension Office.

Blueberries are truly an American fruit, with several species native to the United States. Blueberries are ideal for edible landscaping. They're neat, attractive shrubs that can serve as hedges, privacy screens or background plantings for beds.

Blueberries also can be used in masses or as focal

points in the landscape. They're adaptable to growing in containers, making it possible for people without a yard to grow blueberries on balconies, decks, porches and patios.

Dr. David Cohen, an accomplished home grower of blueberries by avocation and a practicing physician by profession, will provide

a seminar on Growing Blueberries.

Dr. Cohen has an impressive "blueberry patch" as part of his edible home landscape and has gained considerable hands-on experience with successfully growing blueberries in our growing region. He will share his knowledge and





experiences with growing blueberries at his seminar that will be offered on Saturday, January 11, at 9:00 - 10:30 a.m., at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main Street) in La Marque.

The program is sponsored free-of-charge by The Master Gardener volunteers but pre-registration is requested (phone: 281-309-5065; e-mail: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com) to ensure availability of handouts.

Gardening Q&As

Q: Do avocado trees shed their leaves during the winter season?

A: A home gardener asked me this question during a break at last weekend's seminar on growing avocados. Mature avocado trees will shed a portion of their aging leaves (which can stay on a tree for 2-to-3 years) each spring during the flowering period. Avocados are tropical evergreen trees.

Q: I purchased and set up a Christmas tree in early December. Soon after Christmas, I was amazed to see an extensive flush of new growth on the tree. I've never had a Christmas tree do this. Can I replant the tree in my landscape?

A: Christmas trees occasionally add decorations on their own, like producing fresh buds and darling pine cones. When a cut Christmas tree produces such new growth, it's a sure indication that the homeowner has provided excellent care of the tree after purchasing and

setting it up. Such care included cutting the trunk back about one inch and placing the trunk into a water reservoir soon after making the cut. Just as important is the necessity of replacing water in the water reservoir to ensure the water level remains above the cut section.

When a cut Christmas tree puts on new growth in your home, it can feel a lot like a Christmas miracle. Although it may seem like magic, it's all about the science of how trees react in the dormant season. Trees need to go through a period of cold weather before they get the signal in spring to grow again. For pine trees and other conifers, the typical cold period is several weeks.

Once trees clock in all their dormant hours, they're just waiting for temperatures to heat up (whether it's growing in your living room or in a field in North Carolina or Oregon), so they can start growing again. If Christmas trees were inactive for long enough outside, the heat inside a home could prompt them to begin growing as if it's springtime.

Does that mean you can replant the tree with high hopes of keeping the holiday bliss going? Unfortunately, the answer is no. If my answer sounds too much like Charles Dickens' Ebenezer Scrooge character, allow me to be more precise and a bit gentler: you can plant the tree but you should not have any hope of it taking root.

Sorry to say but trees without roots will not re-establish themselves.

Upcoming Programs

Growing Blueberries: 9:00 - 10:30 a.m., Saturday, January 11.

Planting Fruit Trees: 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m., Saturday, January 11.

Growing Great Tomatoes: 9:00 - 11:30 a.m., Saturday, January 18.

Growing Peaches in Galveston County: 1:00 - 3:30 p.m., Saturday, January 18.

All programs conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located at 4102-B Main Street (Carbide Park) in La Marque. No fee but pre-registration is requested (phone: 281-309-5065; e-mail: galvcountrymgs@gmail.com).

