

# **Horticulture Tips**

## **February 2005**

Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service  
Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources  
Oklahoma State University

### **New! *Landscaping with Trees, Shrubs, and Vines in Oklahoma* CD**

*David Hillock*

We would like to announce the release of a new CD from Oklahoma State University, E-972 *Landscaping with Trees, Shrubs, and Vines in Oklahoma*. This comprehensive publication covers benefits, design concepts, recommended methods for planting, care and maintenance, and pest control. There are also lists of suggested plant species for each region of Oklahoma as well as lists of plant material for specific purposes like dry locations, shade, plants with showy flowers, fruits, fall color, and native plant species. Each chapter is filled with colorful pictures and detailed diagrams and there are additional features of helpful internet links and several video clips from Oklahoma Gardening to watch on your computer.

E-972 *Landscaping with Trees, Shrubs, and Vines in Oklahoma* is a helpful tool for all gardeners and makes a wonderful gift. For only ten dollars each, you can order one for every gardener you know.

To place your order send \$10 per CD with a request and make check payable to:

The Horticulture and Landscape Architecture Dept.  
Attn: Stephanie Larimer  
360 AG Hall  
Stillwater, OK 74078-6027  
phone: 405-744-5404

### **Pecan Graftwood Sources and Nursery Listing for Recommended Pecan Varieties for 2005**

*Becky Carroll*

The updated version of the Pecan Graftwood Sources and the Nursery Listing for Recommended Pecan Varieties is attached to the February Horticulture Tips email. Please save or print out both resources for your files.

## GARDEN TIPS FOR FEBRUARY!

*David Hillock*

### General

- Base any plant fertilization on a soil test. For directions, contact your county Extension Educator.
- Provide feed and unfrozen water for your feathered friends.
- Clean up birdhouses before spring tenants arrive during the middle of this month.
- Avoid salting sidewalks for damage can occur to plant material. Use alternative commercial products, sand or kitty litter for traction.
- Join *Oklahoma Gardening* on your OETA station for the start of its 24<sup>th</sup> season beginning on February 26. Saturdays at 11:00 a.m. and Sundays at 3:30 p.m.

### Trees & Shrubs

- Fertilize trees, including fruit and nut trees and shrubs, annually. (F-6412)
- Most bare-rooted trees and shrubs should be planted in February or March. (F-6414)
- Finish pruning shade trees, summer flowering shrubs and hedges. Spring blooming shrubs such as forsythia may be pruned immediately after flowering. **Do not** top trees or prune just for the sake of pruning.(F-6409)
- Look for arborvitae aphids on many evergreen shrubs during the warmer days of early spring.
- Gall-producing insects on oaks, pecans, hackberries, etc. need to be sprayed prior to bud break of foliage.
- Dormant oil can still be applied to control mites, galls, overwintering aphids, etc. (F-7306)

### Fruit & Nuts

- Spray peaches and nectarines with a fungicide for prevention of peach leaf curl before bud swell. (F-6235)
- Mid-February is a good time to begin pruning and fertilizing trees and small fruits.
- Collect and store graftwood for grafting pecans later this spring.
- Begin planting blackberries, raspberries, strawberries, grapes, asparagus and other perennial garden crops later this month.
- Choose fruit varieties that have a proven track record for Oklahoma's conditions. Fact Sheet 6222 has a recommended list.

### Turf

- A product containing glyphosate plus a broadleaf herbicide can be used on **dormant** bermuda in January or February when temperatures are above 50°F for winter weed control. (F-6421)

### Vegetables

- Cool season vegetable transplants can still be started for late spring garden planting.
- By February 15 many cool season vegetables like cabbage, carrots, lettuce, peas and potatoes can be planted.

## **Flowers**

- Force spring flowering branches like forsythia, quince, peach, apple, and weigela for early bloom indoors.
- Forced spring bulbs should begin to bloom indoors. Many need 10-12 weeks of cold, dark conditions prior to blooming.
- Feed tulips in early February.
- Wait to prune roses in March.

## **FRESH SPRING VEGETABLES**

*David Hillock*

Well-planned, properly managed home gardens can furnish Oklahoma families with flavorful, high quality, fresh vegetables from spring through fall, as well as for processing or storing for winter. The amount of money invested in seeds, fertilizer, pesticides, and a few tools is more than offset by the enjoyment, healthful outdoor exercise, and fresh “homegrown” flavor.

### **Choosing the Site**

The selection and preparation of the garden site is an important key to growing a home garden successfully. An area exposed to full or near full sunlight with deep, well-drained, fertile soil is ideal. The site should also be located near a water supply and, if possible, away from trees and shrubs that would compete with the garden for light, water, and nutrients.

While these conditions are ideal, many urban gardeners have a small area with a less than optimal site on which to grow vegetables. Yet, it is still possible to grow a vegetable garden by modifying certain cultural practices and types of crops grown.

Areas with light or thin shade can be used, such as those under young trees, under mature trees with high lacy canopies, or in bright, airy places which receive only one to two hours of direct sun per day. There are several vegetables which will grow under these conditions, including beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, chard, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, peas, potatoes, radishes, rhubarb, spinach, and turnips. Unfortunately, few vegetables will grow well under full, dense shade. If the site is not well drained or if the soil is thin, the use of raised beds can help with this problem.

### **Planning the Garden**

The accompanying chart should be of help in determining family requirements of the different vegetables.

Perennial vegetables (asparagus, rhubarb, winter onions, etc.) should be planted at one side or end of the garden for efficient operation. The hardy vegetables planted early in the season should be planted together, so they may be followed with late season plantings of the same or other vegetables. Vegetables requiring similar cultural practices should be grouped together for ease of care.

The chart below shows cool season vegetables. Cool season crops thrive best under cool conditions (average daily temperatures of 70°F or less). Based on the temperature that the plants will withstand, vegetables are hardy, semi-hardy, tender, or very tender. Hardy types may be planted before the last killing frost. The semi-hardy ones will be injured by a hard frost, but will grow in cool weather and not be harmed by a light frost. Tender plants are injured or may be killed by a light frost but can withstand cool weather, while the very tender are injured by cool weather.

Differences in suggested planting dates range from the earliest for southeast Oklahoma to the latest for the northwest part of the state.

### Garden Planting Guide for Cool Season Vegetables

<u>Vegetable</u>	<u>Time to Plant*</u>	<u>Days to Harvest</u>	<u>Method of Planting</u>	<u>Hardiness</u>
Asparagus	Fall or Spring	-	Crowns	Hardy
Beet	March	50-70	Seed	Semi-hardy
Broccoli	March	80-90	Plants	Hardy
Cabbage	Feb. 15 to March 10	60-90	Plants	Hardy
Carrot	Feb. 15 to March 10	70-90	Seed	Semi-hardy
Cauliflower	Feb. 15 to March 10	70-90	Plants	Semi-hardy
Chard, Swiss	Feb. 15 to March 10	40-60	Seed	Semi-tender
Kohlrabi	Feb. 15 to March 10	50-70	Seed	Hardy
Lettuce, Head	Feb. 15 to March 10	60-90	Seed or Plant	Semi-hardy
Lettuce, Leaf	Feb. 15 to March 10	40-70	Seed or Plant	Semi-hardy
Onion	Feb. 15 to March 10	60-120	Sets	Hardy
Onion	Feb. 15 to March 10	60-120	Plants	Hardy
Peas, green	Feb. 15 to March 10	60-90	Seed	Hardy
Potato, Irish	Feb. 15 to March 10	90-120	Tuber pieces 2-3 oz.	Semi-hardy
Radish	March 1 to April 15	25-40	Seed	Hardy
Rhubarb	Fall or Spring	-	Crowns	Hardy
Spinach	Feb. 15 to March 10	50-70	Seed	Hardy
Turnip	Feb. 15 to March 10	50-60	Seed	Hardy

\*These dates indicate planting times from southeast to northwest Oklahoma. Specific climate and weather may influence planting dates. For Cool Season Vegetables, the soil temperature at the depth where the seeds are planted should be at least 40°F.

### Gardening Tips

In order to have a successful garden, the gardener must follow a few rules. The following tips may help to prevent some common garden problems from occurring, or help overcome those that do arise:

- Sample soil and have it tested every three to four years.
- Apply fertilizers in the recommended manner and amount.
- Make use of organic materials such as compost where available.
- Use recommended varieties.
- Thin plants when small.
- Use mulches to conserve moisture, control weeds, and reduce fruit rots.
- Avoid excessive walking and working in the garden when foliage and soil are wet.
- Examine the garden often to keep ahead of potential problems.

- Keep the garden free of weeds, insects, and diseases.
- Wash and clean tools and sprayers after use.
- Rotate specific crop family locations each year to avoid insect and disease buildup.
- When possible, harvest vegetables during the cool hours of the day.

**Avoid the Following Mistakes:**

- Planting too closely, which prevents walking or working in the garden.
- Placing fertilizer directly in contact with plant roots or seeds.
- Cultivating deeply, resulting in injury to plant roots.
- Depending on varieties not recommended for your area; however, do try new releases.
- Watering frequently or excessively so that the soil is always wet and soggy.
- Allowing weeds to grow large before elimination.
- Applying chemicals or pesticides in a haphazard manner, without reading label directions or proper mixing.
- Using chemicals not specifically recommended for garden crops.
- Storing leftover diluted spray.

**OKLAHOMA PROVEN! SELECTIONS FOR 2005**

*David Hillock*

***Angelonia angustifolia*, Summer Snapdragon**

Summer Snapdragon is a tropical sub-shrub that can be used as an annual in Oklahoma and will bloom from summer until the first frost. Orchid-like flowers are produced on 2' tall spikes and, depending on cultivar, flower color ranges from blue to purple, pink, or white with bicolor forms also available. Summer snapdragon may be used as a bedding plant, to add color to a mixed border, or in a container. It is drought tolerant and loves full sun and summer heat.

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Soil: Well-drained

Hardiness: Use as an annual

***Ceratostigma plumbaginoides*, Perennial Plumbago**

Perennial Plumbago is a neat, well-behaved plant that grows 8" to 12" high and spreads to 18" making it welcome at the front of a mixed border or massed as a ground cover. The terminal clusters of blue flowers appear from summer through fall when the foliage turns a bronze-red before going dormant for the winter. It is best to use perennial plumbago in a well-drained soil and to cut old stems to the ground each spring for vigorous re-growth.

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Soil: Well-drained

Hardiness: USDA Zone 5

***Bignonia capreolata* ‘Tangerine Beauty’, Crossvine**

A true beauty, especially in the spring when ‘Tangerine Beauty’ is covered in orange, trumpet-shaped flowers. This semi-evergreen vine can climb by twining its branches around a structure or can use its adhesive tendrils to cling to a wall, easily reaching heights of 30' or more. As temperatures cool in the fall, the leaves have a purple cast and are evergreen during a mild winter

or in a protected spot. Beauty is not the only reason for using crossvine; it is also a tough plant, tolerant of heat and drought once established.

Sun Exposure: Full sun to part shade

Soil: Tolerates a wide range of conditions

Hardiness: USDA Zone 6

### ***Ulmus crassifolia*, Cedar Elm**

Cedar elm can thrive in almost any soil type, including the alkaline and heavy soils common in Oklahoma. As one of the more disease resistant native elms, it produces glossy, green leaves in early spring that turn a muted yellow in the fall. Its form can vary from upright-oval to broadly horizontal and it generally matures around 60' tall. It can be distinguished from other elms by its rough-textured leaves, corky projections on young stems, and flowers and fruit produced in the fall.

Sun Exposure: Full Sun

Soil: Tolerates a wide range of conditions

Hardiness: USDA Zone 6

## **ALL AMERICA SELECTIONS WINNERS for 2005**

**David Hillock**

### **Flowers**

#### ***Gaillardia aristata* 'Arizona Sun'**

This 'Arizona Sun' is red and yellow. Each three-inch single flower is mahogany red with bright yellow petal edges. The bright colors are similar to the desert sun in Arizona. Like many annuals, plants produce flowers continuously. Even the spent blooms are attractive as tufts of seed. When grown in a full-sun garden, 'Arizona Sun' is a compact plant reaching only 8 to 10 inches tall, spreading about 10 to 12 inches. *Gaillardia aristata* a.k.a. blanket flower, is native to the Great Plains and usually considered a perennial. 'Arizona Sun' performed as an exceptional plant the first year grown from seed. This AAS Winner may over-winter, depending upon the severity of winter. 'Arizona Sun' flowers can be cut and used for summer bouquets. They may attract butterflies to the garden in search of nectar.

#### ***Vinca* 'First Kiss Blueberry'**

The first blue-flowered *Catharanthus rosea* is an AAS Winner named 'First Kiss Blueberry.' The large 2-inch single blooms have a darker eye which accentuates the violet blue color. For decades breeders have been diligently working towards a blue Vinca. Now 'First Kiss Blueberry' fills the color void. Gardeners will look for 'First Kiss Blueberry' plants to add to their collection. Proven to be heat and drought tolerant, mature plants will be about 11 inches tall and spread 16 inches, given adequate growing conditions. Easy to grow from plants, 'First Kiss Blueberry' can be grown in patio containers or combination planters.

#### ***Zinnia* F1 'Magellan Coral'**

'Magellan Coral' blooms are radiant. They illuminate the garden. The fully double, dahlia

flowered 5- to 6-inch blooms gleam with brilliant coral petals. The flower quality and color are superior to other *Zinnia elegans*. In addition to the color, ‘Magellan Coral’ plants are brimming with luminous blooms. Consistent flower production is an improved quality. Earliness to bloom is another exceptional trait. From sowing seed to first bloom requires only 6 to 9 weeks. Mature zinnia plants will reach about 15 to 17 inches tall and spread 15 to 19 inches, depending upon growing conditions. Like all zinnias, ‘Magellan Coral’ will perform best in a full-sun growing location. This AAS Winner is adaptable to container culture. In the garden, ‘Magellan Coral’ is undemanding, needing little maintenance.

## **Vegetables**

### **Eggplant F1 ‘Fairy Tale’**

‘Fairy Tale’ is a petite plant with decorative miniature eggplants. The fruit appearance is as luscious as the taste. ‘Fairy Tale’ eggplants are white with violet/purple stripes. The fruit are sweet, non-bitter, with a tender skin and few seeds. Another superior quality is the window for harvest. The elongated oval eggplants can be picked when quite small at 1 to 2 ounces or they can be left on the plant until double the weight, and the flavor and tenderness remain. ‘Fairy Tale’ eggplants are recommended for marinating and grilling whole. The harvest can begin in just 49 to 51 days from transplanting. The petite plant reaches only 2½ feet tall and wide, perfect for container gardening. An eggplant has not won an AAS award since 1939, so ‘Fairy Tale’ is truly an exceptional new variety.

### **Winter Squash F1 ‘Bonbon’**

‘Bonbon’ is a *Cucurbita maxima* with three improved traits. They are restricted habit, earliness and superior eating qualities. ‘Bonbon’ has an upright, semi-bush habit needing less garden space. Mature vines spread about 8 feet. When ‘Bonbon’ plants are transplanted into a full-sun garden, look for ripe fruit within 81 days; a full week earlier than other varieties. ‘Bonbon’ squash has thick orange flesh and when cooked delivers sweet flavor (hence the name ‘Bonbon’) and creamy texture loaded with vitamin A. The “boxy” shaped dark green squash is painted with silver stripes and weighs about four pounds. Easy to grow, ‘Bonbon’ is not highly susceptible to diseases and is adaptable to any location where squash is grown.

### **Tomato F1 ‘Sugary’**

‘Sugary.’ The name says it all. Judges raved about the sweet tomato flavor. The half-ounce dark pink fruit has a sugar content of 9.5%, higher than most others. The fruit is produced in clusters like grapes and can be eaten like them. ‘Sugary’ tomatoes have a distinct shape; they are oval with a pointed blossom end. In addition to the flavor, ‘Sugary’ plants produced a high yield with a noticeable lack of cracked fruit. Look for ripe fruit on the strong semi-indeterminate vines within 60 days from transplanting into warm, prepared garden soil or large containers. Plants are vigorous and may need pruning to contain growth. ‘Sugary’ should set a new standard for “cherry” size tomatoes with sweet flavor.

To learn more about these and other AAS winners go to <http://www.all-americanselections.org/>.

## **AMERICA IN BLOOM KICKS OFF 2005 COMPETITION**

*David Hillock*

Revitalizing communities of all sizes from coast to coast, America In Bloom (AIB) is organizing its fourth national beautification competition. AIB is a campaign and contest that promotes enhancing communities through beautification. In the friendly competition, communities are matched by population and evaluated on their efforts related to floral displays, urban forestry, landscaped areas, turf and groundcover, tidiness, environmental awareness, heritage conservation and community involvement.

Judges will visit communities this spring and summer and the results will be announced at the awards symposium planned for September in Cleveland, Ohio. Past symposium hosts include Reston, Va., Chicago and Indianapolis. The AIB communities of Northeast Ohio will host the 2005 awards symposium. Within a 60-mile radius of Cleveland, there have been 14 AIB participants, including past population category winners – Akron, Brecksville, Berea, Sandusky and Westlake.

"The America In Bloom program is more than a competition but a showcase for municipal services, businesses and citizens to shout civic pride," says AIB's Contest and Symposium Chair Alex Pearl. "The umbrella of the eight criteria demonstrates the depth and sustainability of a community. Communities rediscover resources. Communities are people."

To date, AIB is blooming in about 90 communities in 30 states. New entrants already registered for 2005 include: St. Paul, Minn.; Meredith, N.H.; Ocala, Fla.; and Rockford and Dixon, Ill. Registration deadline for the 2005 contest is February 28.

America In Bloom is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization headquartered in Columbus, Ohio. It is dedicated to promoting nationwide beautification programs and both personal and community involvement through the use of flowers, plants, trees and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements, and to providing educational programs and resources to that end.

For more information, contact Laura Kunkle at 614-487-1117, fax 614-487-1216, e-mail [lkunkle@ofa.org](mailto:lkunkle@ofa.org) or Delilah Onofrey at 440-602-9189, fax 440-942-0662, e-mail [donofrey@meistermedia.com](mailto:donofrey@meistermedia.com).  
[www.americainbloom.org](http://www.americainbloom.org).

## **60th Annual Oklahoma Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show Set for November 16-18, 2005 in Stillwater**

*Dennis Martin*

"Stillwater, Where Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Turfgrass Conference began." The 60th Annual Oklahoma Turfgrass Conference & Trade Show will return to its origins in Stillwater, Oklahoma this fall. The conference is set for November 16-18, 2005 at the Wes Watkins Center for International Trade Development. The Center is located on the corner of Washington and Hall of Fame Avenue. The conference and show will provide a broad array of educational presentations.



Education is being planned for the sports turf, landscape, lawncare, sod production and golf course management industries. Pesticide Applicator CEUs will also be available. Unlike previous years, participants will choose from one of several designated hotels. Early booking of rooms will be required of attendees since the various sporting events in Stillwater results in competition for lodging. More information on the conference will be available shortly.

## **Spring Dead Spot of Bermudagrass Workshop Set for April 27 in Stillwater**

*Dennis Martin*

After taking a year off, the spring dead spot workshop resumes again in 2005. This year the event is scheduled for 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27 at the OSU Botanical Garden, 1 mile west of Stillwater. Lunch will be provided with registration. The workshop will be submitted for possible Pesticide Applicator Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and will have both indoor and outdoor presentations. A tour showing cultivar trials and variety response to the disease is planned. Spring dead spot is one of the most serious diseases of turf bermudagrass in the region. More information on the conference will be available shortly.

## **Date Set for 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Oklahoma/Arkansas Turf Short Course**

*Dennis Martin*

The 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Arkansas/ Oklahoma Turf Short Course was held on January 11 & 12 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Sixty-nine attendees, a record number, participated in the event which drew 8 Oklahomans (Cowboys and Sooners) deep into the heart of Razorback country. The program was hosted by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, with support from U of AR turf faculty from the Fayetteville campus as well as Oklahoma State University faculty from the Stillwater and Oklahoma City campuses. The program had been approved for 5 CEUs in category 3a – Outdoor Ornamentals & Turf and category 10 – Demonstration & Research.

The event is an introductory short course that targets those practitioners in the landscape and lawncare industries who have not had the opportunity to take an introductory turf course. However some attendees are those who are new to the AR/OK region or those simply wanting to brush up on regional turf recommendations. The course covers turf identification, selection, establishment and the maintenance practices common to the region. The focus of the short course is on the “why” behind the “how” turf is managed in the region. The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Oklahoma/Arkansas Turf Short Course is set for January 11 & 12, 2006 (Wed/Thur) at the OSU Botanical Garden, 1 mile west of Stillwater. More information on the conference will be available in October.

## **Turf Short Course Offered as In-Service for OSU Cooperative Extension Service Educators**

*Dennis Martin*

The 2005 Turf Short Course In-service for Extension Educators has been set for 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. on May 11 at the OSU Botanical Garden Education Center, 1 mile west of Stillwater. The training is offered to Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service Educators. The event covers, in a 1 day compressed format, the fundamentals of turfgrass selection, establishment, pest management and general maintenance pertinent to Oklahoma. Lunch and break refreshments will be provided. Instructors will be Nathan Walker (Turf IPM Scientist), Tom Royer (Extension Entomologist), Holly Compton (Turf Extension Assist) and Dennis Martin (Turfgrass Specialist). Attendees will gain insights and skills in assisting not only their consumer clientele but also information vital to working with professional lawn care applicators, sports field managers and golf course superintendents. Interested OCES extension educators can sign up for the in-service at the staff development site at <http://intranet.okstate.edu/OCES/index.htm>.

## **In the Greenhouse**

*Mike Schnelle*

### ***Oklahoma Greenhouse Growers' Association Greenhouse Short Course***

June 28-30, OSU-Oklahoma City

A greenhouse short course will be conducted with speakers addressing needs of both seasoned as well as new growers. For information contact Wendy Gerdes at 405-942-5276 or [OklahomaONLAOGGA@aol.com](mailto:OklahomaONLAOGGA@aol.com)

### ***Greenhouse Growers' Fall Update***

October 26, Holiday Inn, Stillwater

Contact Mike Schnelle at [mike.schnelle@okstate.edu](mailto:mike.schnelle@okstate.edu) or 405-744-7361

## **In the Nursery and Garden Center**

*Mike Schnelle*

### ***Nursery, Landscape and Greenhouse Trade Show and Convention***

September 30-October 1, Doubletree Downtown, Tulsa

Contact Wendy Gerdes – [OklahomaONLAOGGA@aol.com](mailto:OklahomaONLAOGGA@aol.com)

## **In the Landscape**

*Mike Schnelle*

### ***Integrated Pest Management for Landscape Professionals***

May 25, OSU, Stillwater

A one-day landscape IPM workshop will be offered with the focus on outdoor stops covering typical scenarios that a landscaper would encounter at his/her workplace. This event will be team taught by horticulturists, plant pathologists and entomologists.

Contact Mike Schnelle at [mike.schnelle@okstate.edu](mailto:mike.schnelle@okstate.edu) or 405-744-7361

## **Upcoming Horticulture Events**

### **State Master Gardener Conference**

June 10, Clinton

### ***Oklahoma Gardening Summer Gardenfest***

June 11, 2005, OSU Botanical Garden, Stillwater

For more information about upcoming events, please contact Stephanie Larimer at 405-744-5404 or [stephanie.larimer@okstate.edu](mailto:stephanie.larimer@okstate.edu).