Texas Agricultural Extension Service
The Texas A&M University System

Horticultural Update

Plant of the Month . . . November and December

Dr. William C. Welch, Landscape Horticulturist
Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas

Larkspur, *Delphinium grandiflorum*
Family: Ranunculaceae

Larkspurs have naturalized in nearly all areas of Texas and are known for their tall spikes of blue or purple flowers. Pink, white, and double forms are also available, but the seed seems to revert to the dark blue or purple single form after a few years.

Larkspurs are fall-seeded annuals that prefer to be left in place after germination. They are spectacular and easily grown. A sunny location and well-drained soil of moderate fertility are the major requirements. Thinning the seedlings in mid winter to about 8 to 10 inches apart will usually result in an impressive display of individual plants that can reach 3 to 4 feet tall. Like poppies and other fall-planted annuals, larkspurs usually need little supplemental irrigation, since they complete their life cycle during our naturally cool, moist seasons.

Whether seed is collected or allowed to fall and naturally germinate in the garden, it is important to remember that modern hybrid varieties often do not come true from open, pollinated seed. Seed saved from many of these modern types may have little resemblance to the original flower. Large and double flowers may return as smaller single types, and bright colors may tend to be more muted.

Annuals that reseed and return year after year can be as valuable as perennials to the garden. There is something special about these plants that like your garden so well that they choose to come back each year for another visit. In addition to convenience and economy, reseeding annuals such as larkspurs often add charm and special character,

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November / December 1995

In this issue . . .

Fall and Winter Color with Fruiting Plants

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Soon after cold weather arrives and many of our native trees and shrubs lose their leaves, we begin to notice the color provided by plants having attractive fruit. Yaupon, parsley hawthorn, and deciduous holly are three of the most outstanding native plants we have for brightly colored fruit. These plants also play a significant role in providing wildlife food during the winter months. Deciduous yaupon, *Ilex decidua*, sometimes called possum-haw holly, grows abundantly over much of Texas. The bright red to orange fruit on bare gray stems is very showy. Select a plant with at least a few fruit, since only the female plants will bear. Male pollen is usually near to insure a crop of berry-like fruit. Like many other members of the holly family, possum-haws tolerate a wide variety of soil, drainage, and moisture conditions. They really deserve much wider use in the landscape.

Yaupon, *Ilex vomitoria*, is one of our most popular native evergreens. It, too, is found over much of the state and is relatively easily grown. The shiny, berry-like fruit is a traditional favorite for Christmas decorations in Texas, as is the American holly that is grown in the eastern third of the state. Yaupon and American holly can usually be found in nurseries in several sizes.

Imported hollies such as the Burford and Chinese species, as well as pyracantha, are planted for their fall show of color. Like many plants not native to our state, they have some insect and disease problems, but most people consider them worth the trouble.

Some of the showiest of all fruiting plants in the landscape are persimmons. Both native and Japanese types thrive in much of Texas. The bright orange fruit hanging on bare limbs is quite a spectacle. Contrary to public belief, the fruit of many persimmon varieties is very sweet and palatable when fully ripe. The native species provides food for a wide variety of wildlife.

By incorporating some of the attractive, fall-fruiting plants in the home landscape, one can have plentiful amounts of color during most of the winter. In addition, the many birds that seek the plants for food and shelter will add beauty and interest to the landscape.

A GUIDE FOR EVALUATING PECAN PROBLEMS

Dr. George Ray McEachern, Extension Horticulturist
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Poorly Filled, Wafer Kernels ..... Soil, Irrigation, Heavy Crop, Management
Kernels with Air Centers & Fuzz ..... Drought Without Irrigation or Other Stress
Green or Black Sticktight Pecans in November ..... No Late Season Irrigation or Other Stress
Pecans Sprouting (Vivipary) While on the Tree ..... No Late Season Irrigation or Other Stress
Rapid Tree Death in August or Early September ..... Cotton Root Rot
Blue, Green and Grey Moss (Lichens) on Limbs or Trunks ..... Shallow Soil, No Management
Little Leaves, Short Shoots ..... Zinc, Soil, Irrigation, Nitrogen, Weeds
Little Yellow Leaves on Young Trees ... No New Root Growth, Too Much or Too Little Water
Young Tree New Growth Dies Repeatedly ... Root Desiccation or Freeze Damage at Nursery
Small Leaves Which Curve ..... Zinc Deficiency
Leaf Edges Wavy ..... Zinc Deficiency
Leaves With Dark Intervenal Discoloration ..... Zinc Deficiency
Shoots Growing Thick in Bunches, Some Dead, Some Alive ..... Zinc Deficiency
Zinc Deficiency Symptoms with Frequent Sprays & Other Good Conditions ..... Nematodes
Zinc Deficiency Symptoms with Frequent Sprays & Other Good Conditions ... Sheep Manure
Very Rapid Twisting & Turning Shoots on Young Trees ..... Barnyard Manure Effect
Very Twisted & Distorted New Shoots on Old Trees ..... 2,4-D Herbicide Damage
Spring Buds & Leaves Wild & Irregular Shaped ..... Last Year Roundup Herbicide Damage
Shoots Growing Thick in Bunches, on Trunk, All Alive ..... Bunch Disease
Nuts Shedding in May with No Hole ..... Natural or Pollination Drop
Nuts Shedding With Small Hole at Base of Nut ..... Pecan Nut Casebearer
Nuts Shedding in August During Waterstage ..... Any Stress or Insect Feeding
Nuts Shedding in August with Black Shucks & Half Filled Kernel ..... Shuck Dieback
Bark Peeling Off ..... No Problem, Rapid Growth
Vertical Splits in the Bark with Yellow Moist Wood Exposed ..... No Problem, Rapid Growth
Vertical Splits in the Bark & Wood Which Is Dried Out & Grey ..... Freeze
Perfect Ring(s) of Small Holes Around the Trunk ..... No Problem, Sapsucker Woodpecker
Large Patches of Young Green Bark Missing on New Growth ..... Squirrel Feeding
Pecans on the Ground With Holes Punched in the Shuck or Shell ..... Bluejay or Crow Feeding
Dead Limbs or Trees, April to June with Sprouts at Ground Line ..... Freeze
Dead Trunk on South or Southwest Side with Ground Suckers in Spring ..... Freeze
Limbs Die Suddenly Followed By Regrowth Which Also Dies ..... Freeze
Black Spots on Leaves or Leaf Midrib, Black Lesions on Shucks ..... Pecan Scab Disease
Brown Dead Tissue Around the Edge of the Leaflet ..... Chloride, Salt Burn
Sticky Sap or Honeydew Dripping from Shiny Leaves ..... Yellow Aphid Feeding
Black and Yellow Areas on Leaflets in August or September ..... Black Pecan Aphid Feeding
Leaves Dull Color with Many Small Brown Spots & Defoliation ..... Spider Mites
Black Spots on Kernel ..... Stink Bug Damage
White Fuzz on Green Shucks ..... Powdery Mildew
White Weblike Growth on Clusters ..... Spittlebug
Galls on Nuts, Cluster, Leaves ..... Pecan Phylloxera
Young Tree Dead, Small Holes in Trunk with Sawdust Tube Sticking Out ... Ambrosia Beetle
Small Fat White Grub with Red Head in Pecan ..... Pecan Weevil
Small, 1/8" Hole in Shell with Kernel Eaten ..... Pecan Weevil
Small White Grub Tunneling in the Shuck ..... Hickory Shuckworm
Small Limbs Drop in Late Summer or Fall with Perfect Circle Cut in Bark ..... Twig Girdler
Mass of Dark Grey Caterpillars Eating Foliage ..... Walnut Caterpillar
Mass of Thick Grey Webbing Filled with Caterpillars in Late Summer ..... Fall Webworm

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THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Horticultural Update

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Special Edition

You can now access a variety of Extension Horticulture Fact Sheets, Production Guides, Newsletters, and much more via the TAEX HORTICULTURE HOME PAGE on the **WORLD WIDE WEB (WWW)**. The WWW is an international computer network that contains information on a vast number of topics. The computers are linked physically through the INTERNET, a system of fiber optic cables, routers, and computer servers collectively referred to as the **INFORMATION SUPERHIGHWAY**. The Web links over 100,000 computers throughout the world, and it is estimated that this number doubles every 53 days.

The **TAEX HORTICULTURE HOME PAGE** is just one of several WWW sites throughout the Texas A&M University System. It provides a variety of information on the following topics:

Extension Horticulture, Faculty and Staff
Horticultural Update Newsletter(s)
Master Gardener Programs
Home Gardening Guides
EarthKind Gardening
Landscape & Home Gardening Fact Sheets
Commercial Nursery/Floral Crops
Commercial Vegetable Crops
Commercial Fruit Crops
Food Technology & Processing
Insect & Mite Management for Horticultural Crops
Disease Control for Horticultural Crops
AND much more . . .

Advantages of the World Wide Web . . .

One of the major advantages of this information delivery system is that the on-line publications can be updated immediately. This enables subject matter specialists to change variety recommendations, control tactics, production technologies, etc., at a moment's notice.

Economics is another major advantage of the WWW delivery system. In the past, the number of TAEX Horticulture publications available to Extension professionals has been limited by the $ resources necessary for development, production, and reproduction. Since the cost for electronic publications is significantly reduced, Extension Horticulture will be able to provide even more quality newsletters, fact sheets, guides, etc.

What's the Down Side ?

With any new technology, there's bound to be a down side. Electronic publications and the WWW delivery system have specific computing requirements, and not all equipment may be capable of accessing the TAEX HORTICULTURE HOME PAGE at this time.

Although the software used to access the TAEX HORTICULTURE HOME PAGE is relatively "user friendly," there will be a ***learning curve*** associated with the various available options. However, once familiar with the means of accessing information, most users find the system easy to use.

Software Requirements:

The software that displays information on your computer is referred to as a Web "browser." Browsers use an operating system capable of multimedia-type displays (i.e., Windows, Macintosh, UNIX, etc.). These browsers are truly multimedia, meaning that within the same document, one can display formatted text, high-resolution color images, sounds, and even motion video. The text and images can then be printed, resulting in high quality documents with the same fonts, etc., specified by you; OR, the text and images can be saved to disk and incorporated into other computer files like WordPerfect, PageMaker, etc.

Browser software approximates the "look and feel" of using a CD-ROM. However, instead of being limited to the data on the CD-ROM, you are simultaneously connected to any other computer on the World Wide Web. Moving from page to page, from computer to computer, is as easy as clicking the mouse on any text that is **highlighted** or, in some cases, on a given spot or special image that contains hidden links to other files.

MOSAIC, a product developed and updated frequently by the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA) at the University of Illinois, is available in versions compatible with most computer operating systems. Mosaic is free, and can be downloaded using Telnet, or a similar application with ftp (file transfer protocol) capability, from the server at the following Internet address:

ftp.ncsa.uiuc.edu

The application is in the directory: /Mosaic

The image viewer, sound-enabling helper applications, and instructions for installing and configuring the software are also available from the same site. The **readme** files that accompany the software are important for the initial setup of the program.

NETSCAPE Navigator 1.0 has all the same compatibility features of Mosaic and operates quite similarly to it. Netscape is a bit faster, has many image-viewing capabilities built in, and has more advanced text-formatting features than does Mosaic. Netscape represents the second stage in the rapid evolution in the quality, versatility, and ease of use of Internet browsers. Netscape Navigator 1.0 is available by ftp file transfer from the server at:

www.mcom.com

Windows 95 has Internet browsing software built in, so that the user connected to the Internet via Ethernet connection or high-speed modem has "one button" access to the World Wide Web. The IBM operating system OS2-Warp incorporates an Internet interface and file exchange protocols as well.

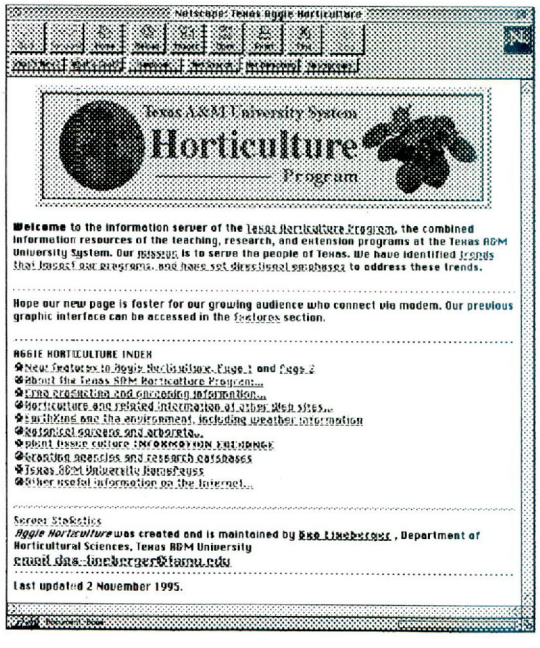
Now you can access the
TAEX HORTICULTURE HOME PAGE
for a wide range of information . . .

Our address is

http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu

For more information, please contact us at

(409) 845-7341



☑ Garden Checklist for November & December

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- ☑ Place orders for seeds this month so you will have them available when you are ready to plant. By ordering early, you will be more certain of getting the varieties you want.
- ☑ Don't get in a hurry to prune woody plants. Late December through February is usually the best time to prune them.
- ☑ Reduce the fertilization of indoor plants from late October to mid-March. An exception would be plants in an atrium or a well lighted window.
- ☑ Drain gasoline from power tools and run the engine until fuel in the carburetor is used.
- ☑ Protect your lawn and plants from excessive winter damage by providing irrigation during winter dry periods. Evergreen plants frequently suffer from lack of moisture during these periods. Adequate soil moisture provides the best protection you can give your plants against cold injury. Drain and store garden hoses and watering equipment in a readily accessible location.
- ☑ November through February is a good time to plant trees and shrubs. In the Panhandle, planting is often delayed until February or early March.
- ☑ Continue to set out hardy bedding plants such as pansies, violas, stock, snapdragons, and dianthus.
- ☑ Prepare beds and individual holes for rose planting in January and February. Use composted manure, pine needles, bark, and similar materials mixed with existing soil.
- ☑ Use good pruning practices when selecting Christmas greenery from landscape plants. Don't destroy the natural form and beauty of the plant.
- ☑ Plant spring-flowering bulbs if you haven't already done so.
- ☑ Prolong the life of Christmas gift plants by providing proper care. Check to see if the pot wrap has plugged up the bottom drainage. Don't over water. Keep out of drafts from heating vents and opening doorways. Fertilizer is seldom needed the first few months.
- ☑ Take advantage of good weather to prepare garden beds for spring planting. Work in any needed organic matter and have beds ready to plant when needed.
- ☑ Don't forget tulip and hyacinth bulbs in the refrigerator. They can be planted any time this month if they have received 60 or more days of chilling.
- ☑ Want to start cuttings of your favorite Christmas cactus? As soon as it has finished blooming, select a cutting with four or five joints, break or cut it off, and insert the basal end into a pot of moderately moist soil. Place it on a window sill or other brightly lit area. The cuttings should be rooted within three to four weeks.
- ☑ Don't spare the pruning shears when transplanting bare-rooted wood plants. Cut the top back at least one-third to one-half to compensate for the roots lost when digging the plant.
- ☑ Take advantage of bad weather and holiday time to study seed and nursery catalogs as well as good gardening books.
- ☑ Protect tender plants by covering with structures made of wood frames covered with clear plastic film. If a severe freeze is predicted, use an outdoor-type extension cord and a light bulb placed under the cover. It will usually provide sufficient heat to protect the plants if the cover is well constructed.

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Larkspur . . . (Continued from Page 1)

since they frequently come up in places where we may not have planted them, adding informality and spontaneity to the garden.

Since larkspurs respond well to cultivation and fertilization, it may be necessary to work the soil and add organic material and fertilizer after the seed has fallen. This cultivation process may destroy some of the seeds by planting them too deeply, but there is usually a sufficient number remaining to provide plenty of plants for the next season.

A frequent problem with reseeding annuals is over-germination and, therefore, crowding, to the point that plants cannot grow and produce properly. This requires careful observation in the garden to check on young seedlings so that when they reach a size large enough, they may be transplanted or thinned. Most young seedlings may be successfully transplanted when they put on their second set of leaves. Some annuals, such as poppies and larkspurs, are somewhat difficult to transplant and do best when thinned and allowed to mature where they germinated.

Young seedlings of flowering annuals may show little resemblance to the mature plants and be very difficult to distinguish from weeds. This requires practice and patience until the young seedlings of desired annuals become familiar. It also implies that most preemergent herbicides and heavy mulches cannot be used in areas where reseeding annuals are desired. The mulches and herbicides are just as effective in controlling the desirable annuals as they are the weeds.

After larkspurs have completed their flowering season in late spring, they may be replaced with hot-season annuals, such as Globe Amaranth (Bachelor Buttons), periwinkles, celosias, or purslanes.

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EDITOR NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 1995

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