

Bell County Master Gardener
Tip of the Week
By Mary Lew Quesinberry
"Here Comes Fall"

Finally, we can feel fall in the air. It has been a difficult summer. With the drop in nighttime temperatures our gardens are coming out of dormancy. Some plants did not survive the drought and heat. Even our hardy native plants struggled. Native grasses in the Muhly family, Mexican Wire Grass, Salvias, Zexmenia, Damianita, Thryalis, Bird of Paradise, Globe Mallow, Greg's Blue Mist, and Mealy Blue Sage all did well though the consistent triple digit temperatures and lack of moisture.

Now is the time to think about spring. You can distribute your Larkspur, Poppy, and Blue Bonnet seeds now. They will germinate over winter and be blooming by March and April. But wait until late November/early December to plant spring-blooming bulbs. Tulips are not a good choice in gardens visited by deer; instead daffodils are a safe choice and they do well in Texas.

Fall is also the optimal time to add trees and shrubs and roses to your landscape. Plants added to the garden now have all winter to grow and develop their root systems. That means they will have a head start on plants planted next spring. Remember, these plants will have to have adequate moisture even through the winter. That means watering!

The Bell County Master Gardener Association is hosting their annual fall plant sale September 26. Free seminars, one on the wildflowers of Texas and the other a how-to on vegetable gardening will be offered. Plants will be for sale and were selected for their suitability to the difficult growing conditions in Bell County. Perennials, trees, Herbs, vegetables, and EarthKind roses, and Knock Out roses will be available. If you are thinking of adding a rose to your garden, make sure it is designated as an EarthKind or a Knock Out Rose. These are known trouble free and prolific roses. Come and check us out on September 26 starting at 8AM!

Have any questions about gardening in Central Texas? Contact ask.bcmga@gmail.com

In the photo: You know it is fall if Sweet Autumn Clematis (*Clematis terniflora*) is blooming. This plant has nice green foliage all year and prolific, sweet, white, star-shaped blooms in the fall.

