



E-Gardening Newsletter

What's Inside:

May To-Do List
[Page 2](#)

Pets & Plants
[Page 3](#) (cont. on pg 4)

Pets and Plants (cont.)
[page 4](#)

Farmers' Market / Wildflower of the Month
[Page 5](#)

Naturalizing Holiday
Gift Plants [Page 6](#)

Waxahachie Farmers' Market
Opening Day—May 7th, 8am-1pm
See Page 5 for details!

Mark Your Calendars!
Grill Fest will be May 21st



Fun options for grilled vegetables
and fruits to taste-test, as well as a
pop-up horticulture
tent featuring
culinary herbs and
rub recipes for
grilling.



What to Do in *May*

PLANTING

- Plant heat-loving annuals including copper plant, firebush, gomphrena, lantana, pentas, purple fountain grass and ornamental sweet potato in sunny areas.
- In shady spots, plant caladiums, begonias, coleus, impatiens (mildew-resistant types).
- Seeds of celosia, cosmos, marigold, morning glory, portulaca, and zinnia can be sown directly in the beds. Keep the seeded area moist until seeds germinate.
- Achimenes, cannas, dahlias and other summer flowering bulbs can be planted now.
- Establish new lawns before summer heat sets in. Sow seeded varieties of Bermuda grass early in the month, or sod Bermuda or St. Augustine grass. Water daily for the first few weeks to develop a good root system.

FERTILIZING AND PRUNING

- Feed fruit trees, perennials, annuals, ground covers and vines with a lawn fertilizer (3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio).
- Fertilize tomatoes and most other vegetables every other week for productive and vigorous plants.
- Manually thin the fruit on peaches, pears, plums, and apples to 5-6 inches apart early in the month.
- Prune spring-flowering shrubs and vines soon after flowering. Keep the natural shape of the plant in mind as you prune and avoid excessive cutting except where necessary to control size. Deadhead roses and other reblooming plants.
- Allow foliage of daffodils and other spring-flowering bulbs to mature and yellow before removing.



GARDEN WATCH

- Allow bluebonnets and other reseeding annual wildflowers to die and the seeds to dry before mowing the stubble. Delay mowing until the end of the growing season if other wildflowers are growing in the area.
- Check tomatoes for signs of early blight (yellow blotches on lower leaves). Apply a labeled fungicide if needed. Keep soil adequately moist to prevent blossom-end-rot (browned tissue on the bloom end of fruit).
- Look for squash bugs in early morning. Destroy eggs found on underside of leaves by hand. Vegetable pests can often be controlled by mechanical, biological, or organic means rather than by synthetic pesticides.
- Watch for bagworms on junipers and other narrow-leaved evergreens. Apply Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) or general insecticide at first sign of larval feeding. Remember that once the bag has formed, your only option is to manually pull them off.
- Make initial application of Image® or SledgeHammer® to control nutsedge in established warm-season lawns.

Pets And Plants May Not Mix

The Good and the Bad on Plants with our Pets

Prepared by MG
Mary Ann Mezzapelle

Landscaping and gardening are trending hobbies, especially for many people during the pandemic. But, do you realize that many plants and pets may not mix? On our property, I'm focusing on native plants and mostly fighting back nature. But, a bad experience with a pet has left me more aware of how many plants may be toxic to our pets.

I'm new to gardening in Ellis County and am also a boomerang –I grew up in the county, moved away and am now back living the country life with my husband and two block-headed Labrador Retriever puppies. So, identifying toxic plants has become my priority. Your situation may be different. You may have an older pet that is reliable but our pups' business is to find and chew everything in sight.

The veterinary experts at Texas A&M suggest using the ASPCA Toxic Plant list to determine toxicity of plants for pets. Plants sources were ranked as the fifth most common cause of incidents on the ASPCA annual 2021 toxin list.

If you have pets, you may already know to avoid sago palms, elephant ears, azaleas, lilies and bulb plants like amaryllis, tulip and daffodil. But did you also know the following are toxic?



Toxic plants –

Aloe vera - (Aloe barbadensis) - toxic to dogs, cats

Buttercup – (Ranunculus spp.) – toxic to dogs, cats, horses

Flag, Iris – (Iris species) – toxic to dogs, cats

Foxglove – (Digitalis purpurea) – toxic to dogs, cats, horses

Hemlock – (Conium maculatum) – highly toxic to dogs, cats, horses.

Look-alikes are Hedge parsley (*Torilis arvensis*) and Queen Anne's Lace (*Daucus carota*) – which are not toxic.

Lantana – (Lantana camara) – toxic to dogs, cats, horses

Milkweed – (Asclepias spp.), Butterfly weed – (Asclepias tuberosa) - toxic to dogs, cats, horses

Butterfly Bush – (*Buddleia davidii*) – not toxic

Primrose – (Primula vulgaris) – toxic to dogs, cats, horses

Pink ladies, Evening primrose –(*Oenothera speciosa*) – not toxic

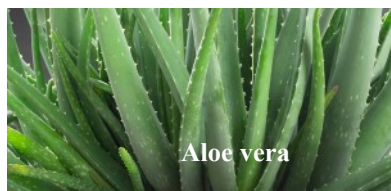
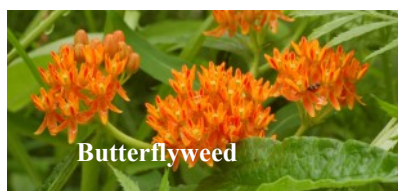
Tomato plant – (Lycopersicon spp.) - toxic to dogs, cats, horses.

Ripe fruit is not toxic.

This is a small sampling of plants. You may use the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) plant list online or download the mobile app (Apple - Animal Poison by ASPCA) for more extensive information.

Make sure you use the scientific name and confirm by a picture. I use internet apps like “Google Lens”, “iNaturalist” or “PictureThis”.

Also, remember to keep gardening products, fertilizers and chemicals out of reach.



Continued on
page 4

Pets And Plants May Not Mix

The Good and the Bad on Plants with our Pets

Continued from
page 3

Lastly, if you are managing small acreage, farms or ranchlands, contact Mark Arnold at the AgriLife Extension office for advice.

I suggest you classify plants before buying, look out for new plants each year in your yard, research the specific plant toxicity, know your pet's behaviors and then decide how to respond.

Happy and safe fur-parenting.

<https://vetmed.tamu.edu/news/pet-talk/toxic-plants-could-harm-pets/>
<https://www.aspcapro.org/resource/top-10-pet-toxins-2021>
<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants>
<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/dogs-plant-list>
<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/cats-plant-list>
<https://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/horse-plant-list>
<https://agrilifecdn.tamu.edu/water/files/2014/01/central-texas-landscaping-plants-guide.pdf>

Other Nuisance Plants for Pet Owners:

Although not toxic, these grassy weeds and forbs can be a big nuisance to people and pets:

Burweed or sticker weed (*Soliva pterosperma*)

Foxtail barley (*Hordeum jubatum*),

Goathead or puncture vine (*Tribulus terrestris*)

Hedge parsley (*Torilis arvensis*)

Southern Sandspur/ Southern Sandbur (*Cenchrus echinatus* L.)

Sandbur, stickers, Field sandbur, Grassbur (*Cenchrus spinifex*, *Cenchrus incertus*),

Beggar's Lice (*Hackelia virginiana*)

<https://today.tamu.edu/2021/06/09/how-to-win-the-fight-against-stickers/>
<https://www.texasmonthly.com/being-texas/texas-primer-the-sticker-bur/>
<https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/parsons/search.php?category=Stickers>
<https://lubbock.tamu.edu/programs/disciplines/weeds/identifying-weeds/tribulus-terrestris-puncturevine-goathead/>





Join Master Gardeners as the Improved Farmers' Market Opens May 7

May 7th marks the opening of the renovated Waxahachie Farmers' Market at 701 Howard Road. Ellis County Master Gardeners will be back in the building that is newly insulated with new fans. Outside are wide sidewalks, paved parking, restrooms and a garden area marking the improved dog park and path. The Master Gardeners' Butterfly Garden on the path behind the Farmers' Market is refreshed also with many new plants joining the pollinator favorites already there.

Our Ask a Master Gardener booth will have or find answers to your gardening questions. We will also have literature available every Saturday from May 7th through October 22nd. For the opening, and at times throughout the summer, we will also have plants for sale.

The third Saturday of each month, starting May 21st, Master Gardeners will have a Pop-Up Horticulture tent outside teaching gardening education topics. May 21st is Grill Fest to start the grilling season off with ideas for grilling vegetables and several grills fired up to give you a taste test. The Pop-Up tent will feature Culinary Herbs that work well with grilling (tomato with mozzarella and sweet basil, YUM), including recipes for meat rubs.



Wildflower of the Month

Small Coast Germander – Mint Family (Labiatae)

Teucrium cubense Jacq.

Region: 2 - 4, 6, 10 (Ellis County is Region 4)

Size: 2 feet

Blooms: March through December, Annual/Perennial



Melinda Kocian



Germander is represented in Texas by three species with several subspecies. Germander has square stems and opposite leaves. All species form colonies. Small coast germander has lobed, cleft or scalloped leaves. Stalked white flowers are three-fourths of an inch long. *T. laciniatum*, cutleaf germander, flowers in the leaf axils. It has half-inch white flowers and the broadly lobed leaves are incised nearly to the midrib. *T. canadense*, American germander, or wood sage, has flower spikes up to eight inches long, with individual flowers reaching a length of one-half to three-quarters of an inch. They may be creamy white, pale pink or pale lavender.

Can I Plant and Grow My Holiday Plant?



Winter Paperwhite Narcissus: Paperwhites (*N. tazetta papyracus*) produce clusters of small, fragrant white flowers. These are often “forced” into bloom in pots. Those grown in soil save better than those grown in water. Let the foliage die back naturally. Sugars produced by the leaves are stored in the bulbs for next year’s flowers. Once planted, these bulbs bloom very early. Keep an eye on the weather and cut the flowers to bring in before a cold front freezes them. Forced bulbs may not bloom outside the first year.

Christmas Poinsettias: These plants like to be watered but will rot if watered too frequently. Test weekly and water as soon as the soil feels dry. By April, the Christmas poinsettia is losing its attractiveness. This is the time to prune it back to about 8 inches. By May it should be putting out new growth. If you are going to transplant it, put it in highly organic soil in June. Our winters are often too cold to plant outside. Keep it in indirect but bright natural light. Starting in September, it will start putting out flower buds. Start putting the plant in absolute darkness for about 14 hours each evening and night. Then bring it out into light each day. In about two months, the bracts will start showing color. Bracts are modified leaves; the actual flowers are the yellow parts in the center. Once the bracts are grown and colored, you can once again leave the plant out as a decoration.



Valentine's Day Amaryllis: After blooming, let the foliage grow and die back. These do very well outside when planted in loose soil with good drainage and full to partial sun. They are likely to bloom within a year of planting, but will bloom in early Spring, not late winter.

Easter Lily: Madonna lilies (*Lilium candidum*) should be planted only one to two inches deep in a sunny location. They will bloom in early spring. The foliage soon dies down and they remain dormant until winter when they produce rosettes of foliage. Easter lilies (*L. longiflorum*) also make a good perennial for zones 8 -9. They usually bloom by early to mid-May.



Spring Hyacinth: Dutch hyacinths can be planted in the flower bed. These bulbs will divide and grow but will be smaller and have fewer flowers than the original plant. They bloom in early Spring and smell as sweet as they did straight from the florist. Roman hyacinths (native to southern France) will do even better. They make a dependable perennial for zones 7-9. Hothouse hyacinths planted outside may not bloom the first year after planting.

Mother's Day Azalea: Ellis County soil is too alkaline to suit azaleas. To keep an azalea, pot it up in a container and fertilize with acidic products marked for azaleas. In a container, they may not be winter hardy, so you will need to shelter them in a greenhouse in winter.



Mother's Day Rose: Roses don't make good houseplants. They need more light. Admire your rose for the month of May, then plant it in a sunny area. Roses need six hours sunlight to keep blooming.