

South Plains

horticulture

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PLANT OF THE MONTH: *PUMPKIN*

For anyone with garden space to spare, growing pumpkins can be fun, especially with children! Pumpkin seeds are large and easy to handle, germinate quickly, and make monster plants fast! The end result of having pumpkins to carve/paint/craft is the best part!

Try these Aggie Horticulture recommended varieties next year: (6-10 lbs category) Small Sugar, Spookie (10-16lbs category) Jack-O-Lantern, Funny Face (16-30 lbs category) Happy Jack, Ghost Rider (50-200 lbs category) Atlantic Giant, and Big Max.



2019 South Plains Fair Giant Pumpkin Contest Winner Dee Culbert



Winter Squash Varieties

<https://www.epicurious.com/ingredients/a-visual-guide-to-winter-squash-varieties-article>

PUMPKIN VS SQUASH WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Since pumpkins, squash and the ever-confusing gourds are all so closely related, how do you know the difference? Tradition tells us that pumpkins are something you carve, squash is something you cook, and a gourd is something you look at. But it is not that easy, or really that hard either. The answer is in the stem. All of these fall favorites belong to the same genetic family, *Cucurbita*. Within that that family are several species- *Cucurbita pepo*, *Cucurbita maxima* and *Cucurbita moschata*. The pepo species is the true pumpkins - varieties within this group have bright orange skin and hard, woody, distinctly furrowed stems. The maxima species also contains varieties that produce pumpkin-like fruit, but the skin is usually more yellow, and the stems are soft and spongy or corky, without ridges. They do not really make good handles for jack-o-lanterns.

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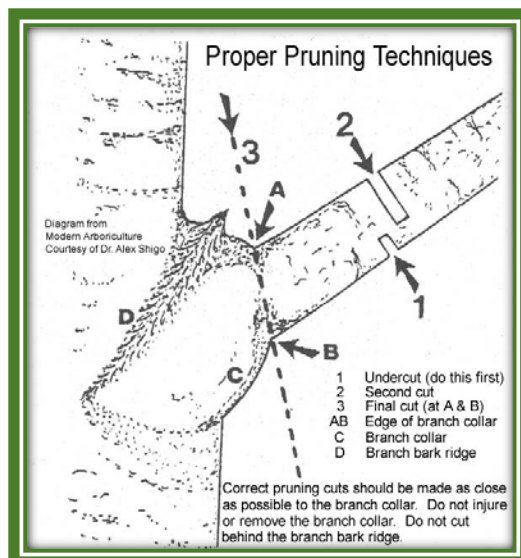
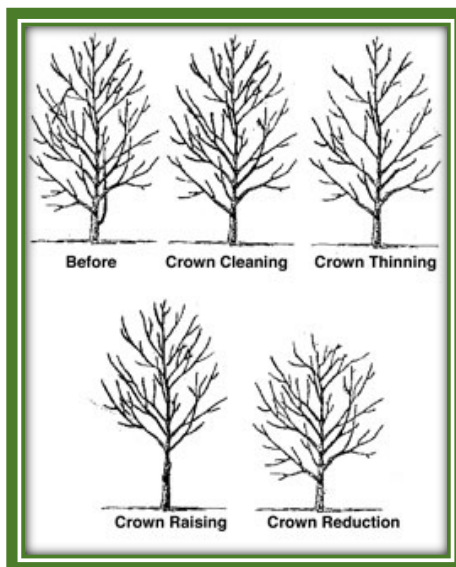
Tree Pruning Season

Photo courtesy of: canopy.org

Late winter, after deciduous trees have lost all its leaves and become dormant, is the perfect time to prune! Pruning is the removal or reduction of certain plant parts that are not required, that are no longer effective, or that are of no use to the plant. Proper pruning enhances the beauty of almost any landscape tree, while improper pruning can ruin or greatly reduce its landscape potential. By using improper pruning methods, healthy plants are often weakened or deformed.

Pruning, like any other skill, requires a plan and knowledge of what you are doing to achieve success. In order to formulate a plan, you must first know why you are pruning and what goals you are trying to achieve. Are you wanting to maintain tree health by removing diseased, broken, or touching branches? Are some interior branches being shaded out? Do you need to thin the canopy to allow better air circulation and some sun to penetrate through to the ground? Do you have branches touching and scraping your roof or siding? Think through your goals before ever picking up the blade!

Once your pruning reasons are well thought out, you need a plan. By making the pruning cuts in a certain order, the total number of cuts is greatly reduced. The skilled pruner



first removes all dead, broken, diseased or problem limbs by cutting them at the point of origin or back to a strong lateral branch. Often, removing this material opens the canopy sufficiently so that no further pruning is necessary.

The next step in pruning is to make any training cuts needed. By cutting back lateral branches, the tree is trained to develop a desired shape, to fill in an open area caused by storm or wind damage or to keep it in bounds to fit a given area. To properly train a tree, one should understand its natural growth habit. Always avoid destroying the natural shape or growth habit when pruning.

After these cuts have been made make sure to paint all new wounds with black spray paint, especially on oak trees. Stand back and take a look at your work. If the amount of wood removed is considerable, more than 1/3 the original canopy, further pruning needs to be delayed at least a year. If more than 1/3 of the original canopy is removed, the tree will start to stress, send up water sprouts/suckers, and may even decline the next season. Finish up by disinfecting all pruning equipment.

Pumpkin VS Squash what's the difference? Continued from page 1

Varities such as Atlantic Giant or Big Max are often listed as pumpkins but are more properly called pumpkin-squash. Other members of the maxima group are Hubbard squashes, banana squashes, and turban squashes- in short, most autumn and winter squash. Finally, there is the moschata species- they are usually long or oblong instead of round and have a tan skin. The stems are deeply ridged and enlarged next to the fruit. Members of this group include cushaw squash, winter crookneck squash, and butternut squash.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Hobby Greenhouses

On A Budget

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19 10:00 AM

Lubbock Garden and Arts Center 4215 University

Lubbock Master Gardener Association is hosting this open to the public program presented by Dennis Howard. \$10.00 fee at the door.



South Plains Conservation

Workshop #2

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24 5:00PM

Lubbock Lake Landmark 2401 Landmark Drive

Connect with local conservation professionals and learn about enhancing backyard wildlife, small acreage livestock, and improving soil health. Join us for a free meal and workshop! RSVP by 10/18/19 to Alisa Dollar (806)283-9726.



Never go trick-or-treating at a gardener's house.



Joseph Tyehonievich



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ASK AN AGENT...

Q: My summer annuals were damaged by our early freeze this year. What can I plant now to replace them?

A: It is time to plant cold hardy annuals if you wish to have color now through the spring! Viola, Panola, Pansy, Trailing Pansy, Cabbage, Kale, Swiss Chard, and Snap Dragon will make it through our cold winters!

Have a question you would like to see answered in a future issue? Email christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu today!

OPEN CROP EXHIBIT

Congratulations

To all Participants



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

For more information on any of the topics, or to ask questions please contact:

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