

Plant of the Month

Stoke's Aster

Stokesia laevis

Stoke's aster is a showy drought tolerant adaptive perennial. Its foliage will remain evergreen during mild winters, and its medium height of 10 to 24 inches makes this perennial a perfect border plant.

The blooms of the Stoke's aster range in size and color, with choices of light blue, pink, and even some yellow varieties. Some varieties blooms can reach 4 inches across. The blooms of this versatile perennial attract many pollinators, especially butterflies.

Stoke's aster may begin blooming in mid summer, but fall is where it gives its best show, populating itself with its shaggy blooms that may last for several weeks.

Plant Stoke's aster in partial to full sun and enjoy this low maintenance perennial as an encore at the end of each blooming season.

by: Patrick Dickinson



With sprinkler system installation being part of the normal building practice, ask yourself, "Do sprinkler systems supplement rainfall or does rainfall supplement sprinkler systems?" In today's neighborhoods, sprinkler systems are no longer a luxury, but more of a standard item, like TV remotes and power locks on cars. We forget that sprinkler systems are meant to supplement for the lack of rainfall.

Most north Texas landscapes only need 1" of water or less per week. We tend to rely 100% on our sprinkler systems to give us this 1" of water. What if it rains 1/2" that week? Do you reduce your run time on your sprinkler system? You should. It will save everyone water and you money. To answer the question, sprinkler systems supplement rainfall, and rainfall does not supplement sprinkler systems.

Irrigation Essentials



"Protecting our roads, sidewalks and citizens"

Have you seen this before? With the cold weather in full force, it is time to check our rain and freeze sensors or time to install one. A properly functioning rain and freeze sensor can protect you and the citizens around you from a slippery accident.

Winter 2013

Attention Rainwater Harvesters!

The leaves and acorns are falling, which means gutters and downspouts may be getting full. Also, these same leaves and acorns may be accumulating on top of your barrels and cisterns. To ensure a successful rainwater harvesting winter, here are some tips!!

- Make sure your gutters and downspouts stay cleaned out.
- Dust them off from time to time to ensure maximum collection.

Remember your rainwater is only as clean coming out as it went in!



Please consider the following to insure that your equipment is most effective.

- Mount the rain sensor to a gutter or roof eave where it will be exposed to direct, unobstructed rainfall (but away from sprinkler spray).
- Mount as close as possible to the timer. This will cause the wire run to be shorter, which minimizes the possibility of wire breaks.
- Mount in the highest possible position where rain can fall directly upon the rain sensor.
- Refrain from mounting the rain sensor on a very sunny,

southeastern end of a building, as it may cause the rain sensor to dry out sooner than desired. Similarly, mounting on the northern end of a building with constant shade may keep the rain sensor from drying soon enough.

Rain/Freeze sensors prevent your automatic sprinkler system from watering during a rain or freeze and can potentially save more than 500 gallons a day during rainy conditions. **Install a rain and freeze sensor today. It will save you money, conserve our precious natural resource and prevent an accident.**



2014 Upcoming Courses

Demonstration Training

January 16, 2014 9:00 am –12:00 pm

112 Native & Adaptive Plants for North Texas

January 28, 2014 6:30 –8:30 pm

120 Rainwater Harvesting Large System

January 30, 2014 9:00 am –12:00 pm

Look for the classes to be posted on our website soon

Register at <http://dallas.tamu.edu/courses/>

News to Know

Proposition 6 Information

As reported from the Texas Water Development Board website, the 83rd Legislature approved three bills as part of a broad package to provide funding for projects within the State Water Plan. These bills include Senate Joint Resolution 1, House Bill 4, and House Bill 1025. Taken together, these bills comprise an amendment to the Texas Constitution creating the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (or SWIFT), appropriating \$2 billion from the economic stabilization fund to the SWIFT, and directing TWDB on how the newly created fund may be used.

Texas voters approved Proposition 6 on Nov. 5, 2013, enabling the state to implement the SWIFT. This implementation, based on the deadlines in House Bill 4, may not be complete

until March 2015. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) provide information about how the SWIFT will work. The table and timeline depict the steps and deadlines prescribed by legislation for the SWIFT's implementation.

Please contact [Ben Munguia](#) at 512-463-9637 or [Merry Klonower](#) at 512-463-8165 for more information.

• [Proposition 6 FAQs](#)

• [HB 4, Senate Joint Resolution 1, and HB 1025 Implementation Deadlines](#)

• [Proposition 6 Implementation Timeline – September 1, 2013 through March 1, 2015](#)

Texas Water Development Board
<http://www.twdb.state.tx.us/swift/index.asp>

Resources

Water My Yard

Contains:

- Weather information
- Current and average evapotranspiration data
- Irrigation watering recommendations

www.watermyyard.org

[Protecting Your Foundation in Dry Conditions](#)

Who We Are

The Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Dallas is a gateway to science, researchers and Extension educators across the U.S. The Center serves all of urban Texas, and the Dallas-Arlington-Fort Worth metropolitan area in particular.

We're on the web!!

<http://dallas.tamu.edu/>



<https://www.facebook.com/AgriLifeDallas>

Landscape Essentials

Freeze Protection

Although the first day of winter isn't until December 21st, it feels like winter has crept in early. This could mean some hard freezes this year, which could also mean freeze damage to some of your prized plants.

Tips to Protect Your Plants

Mulching

Mulch helps the plant's root zone hold moisture and acts as insulation against those damaging cold temperatures.

- Do not pile the mulch up against the plant, but rather mulch the bed like you would in the spring.
- Do not cover the plant with mulch or it can encourage decay and unwanted pests damaging it or could possibly kill it.

Freeze Fabric

Landscape freeze clothe, burlap, and

other products can be used to protect your plants.

- "Tent" over your plants that are planted in the ground.
- Do not tie the cloth at the trunk but stake it to the ground. This prevents the freeze cloth from acting like a parachute, and allows the radiant heat from the soil to be trapped inside the cloth and keep the plant warm.
- To protect pots, try to wrap the plant and the pot to achieve a similar result.

