

# The week ahead

- SUNDAY**  
**SUNDAY LIFE**  
**HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING:** Get tips from Heloise, dress up your table and find budget wines
- TUESDAY**  
**HEALTHY LIVING**  
**MONTHLY SERIES:** A very grateful 11th Healthy Virtue
- WEDNESDAY**  
**TASTE**  
**LIKE MOM MADE, PART 2:** More local chefs and cooks share their favorite family recipes for Thanksgiving

# Today on dallasnews.com

- How to fry a turkey**  
**Video:** Watch Robert Ramm of Barbeques Galore season and fry a Thanksgiving turkey.  
[dallasnews.com/lifestyles](http://dallasnews.com/lifestyles)
- Pomegranate tips**  
**Video:** See Canary Café chef-owner Mansour Gorji make easy work of peeling and juicing a pomegranate.  
[dallasnews.com/lifestyles](http://dallasnews.com/lifestyles)

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## HOME

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### CHORES

# Bring plants inside before the frost warning

By **RICK ROSEN**  
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Waiting for a freeze warning before bringing in houseplants from the outdoors is like playing Texas hold 'em in Las Vegas: Your plants might survive, but the odds are not good.

While houseplants that have been sunning outside obviously can't stand freezes, gardening experts say you should avoid subjecting houseplants to temperatures below 45 F. If you haven't brought your plants inside yet, move them now. Before you bring a plant indoors, examine it for pests such as scale, mealybugs and spider mites. If you find any, you can use one of the chemicals that any garden center carries to eradicate them.

Organic gardeners learn to live with a few pests, as only major infestations damage the plants. Non-toxic methods you can try include picking off the insects or pinching off any shoot tips that have pests; dabbing pests with isopropyl alcohol on a cotton swab; applying commercial soap sprays, neem oil and other horticultural oils; spraying the affected plant with a strong stream of water; hanging fly traps; or dusting or spraying the plant with pyrethrin.

Proper light is one of the most important requirements for a thriving indoor plant. Because the plants have been soaking up brighter natural light, try to give them a transition period to the lower light levels indoors. If temperatures allow, move plants that have been in bright sun to shade outdoors for a week or so before bringing them inside. This lets them ease into the lower-light conditions.

Because of the position of the sun in winter, south-facing windows get the most light. East- and west-facing windows get the next-most light. North-facing windows usually get only low levels of light. But experts say because light intensity is less in winter, you usually don't have to worry about plants getting too much light.

Some plants may need a boost from artificial light, generally a combination of cool-white and warm-white fluorescent tubes, or fluorescent light for half the time followed by incandescent light. If your formerly healthy plant looks puny, and you aren't overwatering (the major killer of houseplants), try placing it in a sunnier spot.



EVANS CAGLAGE/  
Staff Photographer

**Geraniums** like a sunny south window after spending the summer outside.



NATALIE CAUDILL/  
Staff Photographer

**Place begonias** in an east window when you bring them inside.

### BEST LIGHT FOR DIFFERENT PLANTS

**East window:** achimenes, African violet, begonia, gloxinia, zebra plant

**Sunny south window:** crown of thorns, bougainvillea, geranium, herbs, cacti, succulents, aloe vera

**West window:** amaryllis, asparagus fern, Christmas cactus, jade plant, ficus, Norfolk pine

**North window:** coleus, English ivy, ferns, peperomia, spider plant, spathiphyllum, pothos, peace lily

**Existing light** (indirect daylight and artificial lamp light at night): Chinese evergreen, bromeliad, dracaena, dieffenbachia, palms, philodendron, sansevieria, wandering jew

SOURCES: Texas Cooperative Extension/ Month-by-Month Gardening in Texas by Dale Groom and Dan Gill (Cool Springs Press, \$19.99).

Expert gardeners say indoor plants need relatively little fertilizer because growth slows in winter. As a general rule, feed indoor plants at half-strength and double the time between feedings.

### HELP PLANT 1,000 TREES

The Dallas Park and Recreation Department, neighborhood associations and volunteers from Citigroup Corp. will conduct a marathon tree-planting in five locations from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday.

The sites are Preston Ridge Trail between Arapaho and Campbell Roads, near Meandering Way; Timberglen Park at 3810 Timberglen Road, just west of Midway Road;

White Rock Lake Park on Winfrey Point on East Lawther Drive, just off Garland Road; Fair Park; and Kiest Park at 3080 S. Hampton Road. At noon, the planting will culminate in a ceremony and picnic at the Cotton Bowl. For more information, see the Web site of the city of Dallas' arborist office, [dallascityhall.com/arborist/index.html](http://dallascityhall.com/arborist/index.html).

Rick Rosen

### PASS IT ON

Pass It On is a free service for readers who want to donate unwanted items. To submit, e-mail [home@dallasnews.com](mailto:home@dallasnews.com). Offerings are accepted up to one week before publication. Requests for items are not accepted.

### OFFERINGS

Swingset with three swings. Excellent condition. You haul. Marilyn, Dallas, 214-826-2216.

Sigrid Mureen

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November 16, 17 & 18  
Friday & Saturday  
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sunday  
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Inwood & Northwest Highway  
Lovers Lane United Methodist Church

# Lake silt isn't good for gardens

We drained our neighborhood lake, and I was wondering whether the dirt from it would be good for a new azalea bed.

M.F., Fort Worth

Silt from ponds and lakes does not make good garden soil because it drains poorly. It would be especially bad for raised planters and azaleas. Azaleas need beds of 100-percent-organic materials that are light, fluffy and drain well. I use a mixture of compost, coconut fiber and fine-textured cedar as the base, with organic amendments added.

### ORGANIC ANSWERS



HOWARD GARRETT  
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shrubs. A foundation company that I think understands tree roots is Perma-Pier ([permapier.com](http://permapier.com) or 214-637-1444).

I have a fig tree that is producing figs, but the leaves are starting to turn brown. What can be done?

D.J., Sherman

Nothing. My fig trees look the same way, and the fruit is gone. Hot weather started the foliage damage, and cool weather has started the annual defoliation process.



FILE 2006/Staff photo

If your pecans don't look good, it may be due to the wet, hot summer.

Why am I finding lots of rotten pecans in my harvest? I don't see worm holes in them. I have not sprayed the trees, but I release trichogramma wasps each spring to control caterpillars. Also, I have 150 peach trees in my orchard. Late this summer, the trees lost a lot of leaves on the lower limbs. Should I be concerned? I spray every two

R.L., Irving

The only reasonable confidence comes from using organically grown corn, and it is hard to find. I'm afraid the genetically engineered genie is out of the bottle. I don't think any farmers or cornmeal producers can guarantee their products to be free of genetically engineered ingredients.

What are your thoughts on root barriers? I have a 30-foot-tall red oak that is about 15 feet from the house. I want to remove wax-leaf ligustrums that are close to the house and replace them with junipers. I'm thinking of adding a root barrier in front of the house as part of this shrub project.

A.P., Bellaire

I'm not a fan of root barriers. They often cause more problems than they solve. A sound foundation normally works well as a root barrier for trees and

weeks during the growing season with Garrett Juice.

D.W., Weatherford

Unusually heavy rains in the early part of the year followed by summer heat are the culprits. Many pecan trees experienced a shuck fungus, and foliage damage was common to many fruit and ornamental trees.

Apply a 1/2-inch layer of compost beneath the trees now, and continue your organic program.

How can I get rid of sprouts that grow from the root systems of trees such as possumhaws and wax myrtles? I have dug them out for years, but the sprouts have become too big and numerous. Did you once recommend spraying the sprouts with strong vinegar so they would die without harming the mother tree?

D.D., Plano

To be honest, some root and basal sprouts are impossible to eliminate. On the other hand, two things will help. First, expose the tree's root flare. Trees and shrubs that are planted too deep have a greater tendency to produce sprouts. My Sick Tree Treatment also will help, especially if a lot of compost is applied to the tree's root zone. A vinegar mixture can be used to burn back young sprouts.

### RESOURCES

**ONLINE:** [www.dirtdoctor.com](http://www.dirtdoctor.com) for free organic-program handouts  
**RADIO:** KSKY-AM (660), Saturday 11 a.m.-noon and Sunday 8-11 a.m. [www.ksky.com](http://www.ksky.com)  
**MAIL:** P.O. Box 140650, Dallas, TX 75214

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