

## The week ahead

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|--|--|---|
| <p><b>TUESDAY</b><br/><b>HEALTHY LIVING</b><br/><b>BEHIND THE SCENES:</b><br/>A new monthly series shows us that it all starts with your brain</p> | <p><b>WEDNESDAY</b><br/><b>TASTE</b><br/><b>OATMEAL CAKE:</b><br/>Decadent broiled topping elevates this humble cake</p> | <p><b>NEXT WEEK</b><br/><b>HOME</b><br/><b>MARKET FLEDGLING:</b><br/>A young accessories line, born in Dallas, hits it big nationally</p> |
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## Today on dallasnews.com

- Chores checklists**  
 6<sup>th</sup> Online: We've made the list. You get to check it twice. Find out what to do around the house and garden this month.  
[dallasnews.com/home](http://dallasnews.com/home)
- Most-clicked recipes**  
 6<sup>th</sup> Online: Check out our 10 most popular recipes of 2007.  
[dallasnews.com/yearinreview](http://dallasnews.com/yearinreview)



◀ **How to make a soufflé**  
 ■ **Video:** Watch French Room chef Jason Weaver make a simple Grand Marnier soufflé.  
[dallasnews.com/lifestyles](http://dallasnews.com/lifestyles)

## HOME

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### 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 10 days before publication. Requests for items are not accepted.

### OFFERINGS

- 25-inch 1988 Zenith console TV.** Works. Also, a console radio-phonograph. Needs repair. Donna, Farmers Branch, 972-241-2257.
- Bonsai tree.** Ruby, Dallas, 972-613-1020.
- Coarse-shredded mulch** from tree limbs and leaves. Tree service has large amount. You haul. Andy, Dallas, 214-528-2266.

Sigrid Mureen

### BOOKISH



#### Lawnsapes

Mowing Patterns to Make Your Yard a Work of Art  
**David Parfitt**  
 (Quirk Books, \$14.95)

## The lawnmower as paintbrush

Where some of us might just see a depressing yard of too-high grass and too much work, landscape artist David Parfitt sees a flowing green canvas.

His delightful little book, *Lawnsapes* — cleverly outfitted in its own layer of AstroTurf — gives detailed instructions on transforming your Bermuda or St. Augustine into something ooh and aah worthy.

Mr. Parfitt gives info on tools, safety and “earning your stripes” — coming up with that perfect runway or checkerboard design. From those basics, he expands into more ambitious projects: waves! Bull’s-eyes! Plaid! He even shows you how to make a green, checkered Valentine’s heart (piercing arrow optional).

Joy Tipping



File photo

Have a good crop of tomatoes last year? Save the seeds for next year.

## Great tomatoes? Save those seeds

My neighbor grew wonderful cherry tomatoes last year. How should seeds be saved if one wants to plant them the next season?

R.M., Red Oak

When you raise a particularly delicious tomato, you can save some of the seeds and try to grow similar tomatoes. One of the best seed-saving methods involves fermentation.

Choose tomatoes from the healthiest plants. Slice the chosen tomato in half, scoop out the seeds along with the gelatinous tissue that surrounds them, and put them into a clean glass. Add a couple of tablespoons of water, and cover the glass with plastic wrap. Poke a small hole in the wrap for ventilation.

Put the container in a warm place such as a sunny windowsill or the top of the refrigerator. It takes two or three days for fermentation to begin. The top of the material in the glass will look scummy when fermentation has separated the gelatinous tissue from the seeds. This process also helps to destroy tomato diseases that could be present.

Carefully remove and discard the scum, then pour the remaining contents of the container through a fine kitchen sieve and rinse the seeds with water several times. Stir the seeds while they are in the sieve to be sure they are thoroughly rinsed.

Place the clean seeds onto wax paper or into a coffee filter and spread them in a single layer to dry. Stir the seeds a few times during the drying process to ensure even drying. Seeds can take up to a week to dry thoroughly, and humid weather can slow the process. Thoroughly dry seeds will move quickly and easily across a plate when disturbed.

Discard the smallest and thinnest seeds. Keep those that are large and plump, and store them in a tightly sealed glass container. If seeds are not bone-dry, moisture will foster mildew and rot.

Someone suggested that 1/2 cup of powdered milk be placed in the hole when planting

### ORGANIC ANSWERS



HOWARD GARRETT  
[home@dallasnews.com](mailto:home@dallasnews.com)

tomato transplants. What is your opinion?  
 P.G., Springtown

It won't hurt anything, and won't be much trouble.

Should a banana plant be cut to the ground during freezing weather?  
 D.F., Plano

Yes, after the plant has turned brown and wilted, you can cut it off a couple of inches above the ground. Cover the stump with shredded tree trimmings to protect it from cold weather. Throw the pruned foliage into the compost pile.

What should I do with Mexican petunias that are sprouting everywhere, which is OK, but some are tall and lanky. Should I just cut them off? Mexican petunias are great for drought-tolerant areas, but I wish they looked better.  
 S.M., Sherman

I, too, have a love-hate relationship with Mexican petunias (*Ruellia*).

I have a tall variety as well as a low-growing variety (*Ruellia brittoniana* 'Katie'). The tall variety should be cut back after the first freeze. Not much needs to be done to 'Katie.' Both plants, especially the tall ones, are invasive. If they grow where you don't want them, pull them out.

### 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

### CHORES

## Plants still need watering during the winter

By RICK ROSEN  
 Staff Writer  
[rosen@dallasnews.com](mailto:rosen@dallasnews.com)

Though plants aren't actively growing during winter, they still need water. In general, however, they don't need as much water as they do the rest of the year.

In fact, you'll save yourself money by watering less. Dallas Water Utilities notes that sewer rates for the year are based on how much water you use each month December through March.

The utility offers common-sense tips for saving water and money:

- Mulch around plants. It helps keep moisture levels consistent.

- Warm-season grasses, such as Bermuda and St. Augustine, need no more than an inch of water every four to five weeks (include any rainfall in that total).

- Don't overseed lawns with rye or other winter grasses. These grasses require water.

- Winterize outdoor spigots or exposed pipes so they won't be frozen or burst during subfreezing temperatures.

Though your lawn turns brown in winter, it is only dormant, not dead. The same goes for ornamental plants. Some homeowners may think

that a brown lawn or a tree whose leaves have fallen shouldn't need watering.

However, experts say that if plants do not receive water, they could be injured or the root system could be damaged, sometimes fatally — and not even show the effects of the damage immediately.

So, plants still require water, even though they aren't actively growing.

Colorado State Extension Service, in a publication on its Web site, offers tips that can be adapted for Texas:

- Water only when the temperature is well above freezing.

- Water at midday so moisture has time to soak in before possible freezing at night.

- Newly planted trees are most at risk of damage; mulch thoroughly.

- Roots of established large trees have a root spread at least as great as the height of the tree, so water accordingly.

- Perennial plants in windy spots may need more water than other plants.

SOURCES: Dallas Water Utilities and Colorado State Extension Service

READ MORE of the Colorado State Extension Service publication, with tips that can be adapted for Texas.  
[dallasnews.com/home](http://dallasnews.com/home)

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