If you would like to have a bouquet of bluebonnets blooming in your yard next spring, the words to remember are “plan ahead.” Seeds for Texas bluebonnets and many other wildflowers need to be planted during September or October this fall.

In nature, bluebonnet seeds may take many seasons for the right conditions to germinate. Seeds must be cracked or softened and then kept consistently moist for several weeks in order to germinate. Nature has patience, but most gardeners prefer more immediate results.

If you want to enjoy bluebonnets next spring and for years to come, purchase seeds at local nurseries or order by catalog or on-line. Then select a sunny, well-drained spot. Remember that these plants will be beautiful when they bloom, but become less than attractive as they produce seed. One solution is to add later-blooming border plants that will continue to bloom throughout the summer and hide the wildflowers as they go to seed.

Bluebonnet seeds do not require enriched soil, but they should be tamped into the soil or lightly covered with a quarter-inch of soil. Many gardeners also mix the seed with sand before planting. When he spoke at the state Master Gardener conference two years ago, John Thomas, the owner of Wildseed Farms in Kerrville, suggested that gardeners should also start a pot of bluebonnet seeds nearby when they plant their gardens. Unless it rains, they should water both pot and garden area daily for three weeks. When the young plants in the pot begin to grow, the gardener can stop watering, because the plants in the garden will also have germinated. The planted pot serves a second purpose; it shows what baby bluebonnets look like – so they won’t be mistaken for weeds! Plan ahead now, because the springtime display is definitely worth the effort.

Have any questions? Try ask bcmga@gmail.com