



February 2022

## Walker County Agriculture Update

Greetings from the Walker  
County, Texas A&M AgriLife  
Extension office!

**Cold again... *warning it will be a "theme" this month.***

Any bets on what happened with that weather predicting rodent up in the north country? I purposefully haven't watched the news because I can guess the results.

### **Freeze protection of plants:**

If you have been watching the weather reports, you know we need to prep some cold weather protection for our sensitive plant species this week. There are effective and correct ways to protect plants. I will again refer you to Skip Richter's excellent Frost & Freezes publication for real details and a refresher on how to protect plants properly:

<http://counties.agrilife.org/walker/files/2011/05/FrostsandFreezes-Skip-Richter.pdf>

### **Homeowner landscape maintenance:**

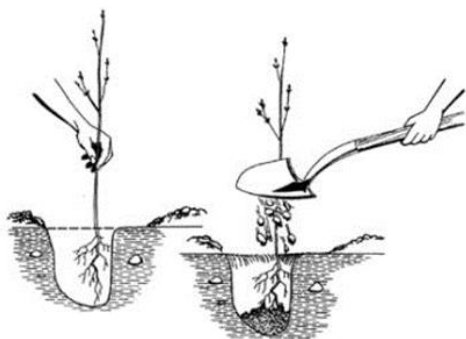
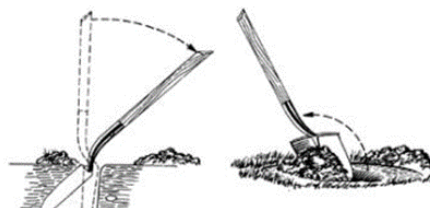
We are getting into prime pruning season: fruit trees, rose bushes, and general tree pruning. Although pruning can be done any time of year – we are at the optimum time for reducing unintended damage or problems. <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/landscape/proper-pruning-techniques/>

### **Planting Bareroot Trees:**

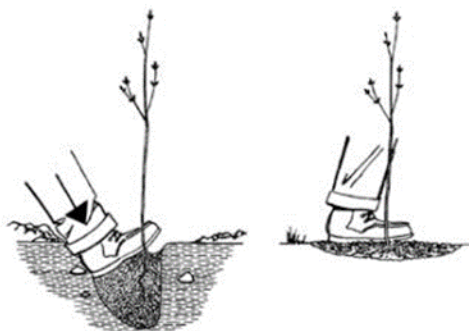
Since we have the featured TREE Event coming up soon...



Scrape dry soil from surface. Reverse shovel and push into soil.



Place seedling in hole and fill in.



Pack down tightly

### **Tree Care after planting:**

Regular watering is critical during establishment of your tree. This is essential the first year and possibly for a year or more later depending on the soil type you are working with. Avoid pruning newly planted trees for the first 2-3 years. Resist removing additional trunk branches (sucker growth) during this time; however, you do want to encourage growth of a central leader for shade trees. FYI fruit trees typically fare better with open centers (but that is really another topic). Avoid over fertilization. Trees require established root systems to process fertilizer adequately. If you have a lower quality productive type soil you may need to supplement with 2 tbsp. of 12-16% nitrogen fertilizer per 10 sq. feet of root area. Too much fertilizer is a BAD thing during the establishment time period.

### **Covid impacts on educational trainings/meeting attendance & what comes next:**

No real surprise – educational meeting attendance patterns have shifted “a bit” over the past two years. As we all adjust to the new normal, I am very interested in asking what in-person and topic-based classes you would be interested enough to attend. We have a fancy QR code link to a very quick & extremely painless survey for you to let me know what to schedule in the next few months. **I need to know what is of interest to you.** Scan the QR’s with your smart phone under the topic area of your interest to help give me some guidance. Thank you!

#### **Agricultural topics:**



#### **Horticultural/Gardening topics:**



*When you scan the QR codes you will be asked for your name and email address in addition to the subject matter areas of interest (4 total questions/with 1 being simple click what interests you / the fourth question is already done if you are receiving this newsletter). This will allow me to contact you directly when we schedule something of direct interest to you. Again, Thanks for your help!*

### **Featured Upcoming Events:**

#### **The TREE Event – 2022!**

**February 12, 2022 (Saturday)**

**Walker County AgriLife Extension Office (102 Tam Road, Huntsville TX, 77320)**

**8:00 AM to 12:00 Noon**

**\$1.00 donation per tree appreciated**

**Event sponsored by Walker County Master Gardeners with the Texas A&M Texas Forest Service**

Back by popular demand! The annual TREE Event is your opportunity to pick up a variety of trees suited to our environment – AND at the optimum time of year for planting. Get here early for best selection!! Trees will be bareroot and ready for planting. We expect to have a variety of native hardwood and

softwood trees which may include Black Oak, Nuttall Oak, Sawtooth Oak, Shumard Oak, Water Oak, Bald Cypress, and limited amounts of Silky Dogwood and Mayhaw. Varieties and quantities available are subject to vary and or change...

If you have questions, please contact the Walker County, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Office (936) 435-2426.

### **Homemade Huntsville (10 “Hands On” Workshops for 2022)**

**Texas A&M AgriLife, Walker County**

**February through November**

**Workshops will be held at the Walker Co Storm Shelter**

**Registration Fee includes ALL supplies, refreshments, and take-home items: Entire Series/\$200.00 per person (or) \$25.00 per person/3 workshops (or) \$30.00 per person for 1-2 workshops.**

**Registration Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/walker-county-texas-aampm-agrilife-extension-38074648853>**

Interested in learning how to can foods, make breads, jams, and jellies or even sauerkraut? Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Walker County is creating a hands-on food workshop starting the first Thursday of the month in February to the first Thursday of the month in October 2022 plus a special holiday session November 17, 2022. Time is 10am-1pm. Cost is \$200 to attend all sessions, \$25 for 3+ classes or \$30 for 1-2 classes. Cost covers refreshments and ALL supplies. Contact the Walker County Extension Office to RSVP at 936-435-2426. Register in person with cash or check, or online with Eventbrite!

- Class 1 Cookie Decorating
- Class 2 Jams and Jellies
- Class 3 Pressure Canning
- Class 4 Salsas
- Class 5 Pickles and Relish
- Class 6 Fermentation
- Class 7 Pressure Cooking
- Class 8 Breads
- Class 9 Pies & Fillings
- Class 10 Holiday Treats

For more information, contact Walker County AgriLife at (936) 435-2425.

### **Walker County Master Gardener Spring Plant Sale**

**March 12, 2022 (Saturday)**

**8:00 AM to 12 Noon**

**Walker County AgriLife Extension Service / LEAF-PRO Demonstration Gardens (102 Tam Road, Huntsville, TX 77320)**

Look for additional details in the next newsletter; however, go ahead and place March 12<sup>th</sup> on your calendar so you will be ready. Our Master Gardeners will have a wide variety of adapted vegetable, fruit, and landscape plants available. Contact the Walker Co AgriLife office (936) 435-2426 for more information.

## Additional Items and Information of Note:

### Cattle & Cold Weather Stress

Thankfully our friends from the north country have much more experience with this item than we typically do. Mary Drewnosk, Nebraska Extension Beef Systems Specialist and Karla Wilke, UNL Cow/Calf Systems and Stocker Management have a document detailing special considerations in *Helping Cows Cope with Cold Stress*: <https://beef.unl.edu/beefwatch/helping-cows-cope-cold-stress>

Pay attention to the body condition score comments linked above and how that translates to nutritional (specifically energy) needs of cattle. Factors that come quickly into play include whether the animals coat is wet or dry. Wet animals need higher energy sources much more quickly than do dry animals, as do lactating animals. If you can provide shelter, you are ahead of the game (wind &/or rain protection).

### Fall & Winter Health Problems in Cow-Calf Herds

I last shared the following link in our November/December 2020 newsletter - the information is still valuable and timely. If you have livestock be sure to review this prior to our next weather front arrival. Dr. Fairies did a great job writing this and I really miss being able to call him up to ask questions. His info set discusses health issues with stressed cattle in dry years (part of why I started reading it again-then and now..even with some recent rain) being susceptible to various ailments plus the added bonus of some good information on treating acorn poisoning. **If you have cattle and oak trees PRINT that information** from the following link and keep it where you can find it later.

<https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/library/ranching/fall-and-winter-health-problems-in-cow-calf-herds/>

### Calf Management Tips for Spring

Joe Paschal, Extension Livestock Specialist

Texas is one of the few states that can go from the dead of winter to the beginning of summer in five days. Now is the time to consider a few economically beneficial few calf management tips.

First, when possible, your calves should be identified. A good ear tag will help you remember the birthdate and dam of the calf, and later at weaning and marketing, his growth rate and market value. Calves born early in the season weigh more at weaning (about 2-2.5 lbs. more per day of age) and calves that are born earlier are generally out of more adapted (and fertile) cows. Calf weight at weaning and marketing will assist you in deciding which cows are more productive and produce more valuable calves. Second, as soon after birth as possible, castrate bull calves that you are not intending to raise and dehorn all calves. Doing these practices at a very young age reduces the pain of the procedure and increases the speed of recovery. Castrated calves are more desired by the feeding industry and they bring more dollars per pound when marketed as their carcasses will quality grade higher and be more valuable. The downside to castration is the steer calves will weigh less at weaning than bull calves but using a calf growth implant when castrating will offset the loss of gain. Dehorning or disbudding will improve the appearance and uniformity of the calves and reduce the potential for injury to you and other animals. If genetically homozygous polled bulls or cows are used, dehorning will not be necessary.

Finally, vaccinate your calves for the Blackleg or Clostridial diseases, especially if their dams have not been vaccinated and the calves are over a month old. This vaccination will protect calves from these “sudden death” diseases. All the commercial vaccines provide excellent immunity from these diseases and all calves should be vaccinated and boosted according to the label.

**If you have it, you need to be watching for this plant:**

### **Grassbur (Field sandbur)**

With sandy, acidic, low nitrogen type soils you can expect to encounter this annual grass plant sooner or later...

Here is a good, quick read on identification and control of Grassbur/Field sandbur in pastures.

<https://aggieturf.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/Grassbur-in-pasture-SCS-2019-10.pdf>

Keep in mind that chemical control options for pasture and turfgrass will not be the same products. If you noted my description of the environment where this plant is commonly found, you know what needs to change to ultimately solve the situation. Soil pH and nitrogen fertilizer will help greatly by encouraging the growth or establishment of desirable plants. The problem is that ~~can become~~ an expensive situation (2022 update: WILL BE expensive once you price the nitrogen fertilizer) depending on where you are working to modify those environmental conditions.

Pay attention to the soil temperature requirements for germination of this plant (see the link below). If you are monitoring your current situation, you have options of preemergent products vs. post emerge products and you know which one you need. For our lawn/turfgrass owners, be very sure you know the product you are buying at the store is appropriate to the growth stage of the target plant.

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2021/06/09/how-to-win-the-fight-against-sandburs/>

If you have questions or would like more information regarding Extension Educational Programs, call us at (936) 435-2426.



***Reggie Lepley***

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Provisions from the American Disability Act will be considered when planning educational programs and activities. Please notify the Walker County Extension Office if you plan on attending an Extension Educational program and need specialized services. Notification of at least three to five days in advance is needed, so that we may have ample time to acquire resources needed to meet your needs.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating