



**April 2022**

## **Walker County Agriculture Update**

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

**It is Walker County Fair time... *come out and support the youth of Walker County!***

***March 25<sup>th</sup> through April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022***

All our 4-H youngsters and FFA students have worked extra hard with their projects leading up to fair season. The spring Texas Major Shows are behind us now and as exciting as those are, there is always something special about every county show. Check out the fair website for the calendar of events, pick your favorite activities and watch all these kids showcase their effort and dedication:

<https://www.walkercountyfair.com/p/getconnected/visitors-guide/schedule>

### **Garden Checklist for April:**

Spring is PRIME garden time! If you would like a little guidance on all the potential activities for April gardening...we, have you covered!

- Prune spring-flowering shrubs soon after flowering. Keep the natural shape of the plant in mind as you prune and avoid excessive cutting except where necessary to control size.
- Roses have high fertilizer requirements. For most soils, use a complete fertilizer for the first application just as new growth starts, then use ammonium sulfate, or other high nitrogen source, every 4 to 6 weeks, usually just as the new growth cycle starts following a flowering cycle. For organic sources use cottonseed, rotted manures, or alfalfa meal.
- Continue to spray rose varieties susceptible to black spot, using a spray recommended for fungus control every 7 to 10 days. Many of the Old Garden Roses and some of the newer ones have considerable resistance to black spot. Be sure to check out the Texas Superstars website for highly adaptable selections/look at the woody shrub section:  
<https://texassuperstar.com/plants/>
- Climbing hybrid tea roses may be pruned as soon as they complete flowering.
- Removing spent flowers, trimming back excessive growth, and applying fertilizer to an established annual bed can do wonders towards rejuvenating and extending the life of the planting.
- As soon as azaleas have finished flowering, apply an acid type fertilizer at the rate recommended. Don't over fertilize, as azalea roots are near the surface and damage can occur. Water thoroughly after fertilizing.
- Seeds of amaranthus, celosia, cosmos, marigold, portulaca, zinnia, and other warm-season annuals can be sown directly in the beds where they are to grow. Keep seeded areas moist until seeds germinate. Thin out as soon as they are large enough to transplant. Surplus plants can be transplanted to other areas.
- It will soon be time for bagworms to attack junipers and other narrow-leaved evergreens. Control measures, such as Sevin dust or spray, should be applied while the insects and the bags are about one-half inch in length.
- On the subject of any insecticide application which may be needed: Remember with all blooming plants attractive to bees, keep any dust or liquid spray AWAY from blooms to help

protect honeybees – ALSO recommendations are to spray in the evening when bees are much less active. ALWAYS follow label directions for rates, and application requirements.

- When caterpillars attack live oak trees en masse, it is very alarming, but usually nothing can be done. A healthy live oak will usually regrow its leaves and resume normal activities.
- For instant color, purchase started annual plants. Select short, compact plants. With newly transferred plants any flowers or flower buds should be pinched to give plants an opportunity to become established.
- Check new tender growth for aphids. A few can be tolerated, but large numbers should be controlled. Always follow label instructions on approved pesticides for control. Washing them off with a strong spray of water may be all that is necessary for adequate control if you catch the issue early.
- Many flower or vegetable seeds left over after planting the garden can be saved for the next season by closing the packets with tape or paper clips and storing in a sealed glass jar in your refrigerator.
- Start weeding early in the flower garden. Early competition with small plants can delay flowering. A mulch will discourage weed growth and make those that do come through easier to pull.
- Soil purchased for use in beds, low areas, and containers should be examined closely. Often, nut grass and other weeds, nematodes, and soilborne disease are brought into the yard through contaminated soil sources.

#### **Vegetable garden planting options:**

Although early vegetable planting time is slipping past, there are still options for planting your own garden. Here is our Walker County Vegetable Planting Guide (calendar). \*Note, each blue colored plant species listed is a link to the Aggie Horticulture, “How to” or more info related per species:

<http://counties.agrilife.org/walker/files/2011/05/WC-Vegetable-Planting-Chart1.pdf>

#### **Featured Upcoming Events:**

##### **Walker County Plant Identification Field Day Workshop**

**April 15, 2022 (Friday)**

**Sam Houston State University- Gibbs Ranch (Hwy 75 N, Huntsville TX, 77320)**

**4:00 PM to 7:00 PM**

**\$10.00 per participant**

**CEUs: 3 Hours General per approval**

**Registration online at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/walker-county-plant-identification-field-day-workshop-tickets-307113483697>**

This event is scheduled to encourage landowners with in-town jobs and absentee landowners’ participation-Take Friday afternoon off and come out for this “Hands-On/Feet-in-The Field” training. This field-based activity will examine numerous common plants (desirable AND otherwise) found in the Walker County area. Join us for this walk through the pastures & wood lines of East Texas with Dr. Barron Rector. Learn common names and useful knowledge about plants YOU see each time YOU interact with YOUR land. Participants will learn to “see” and understand many plants important to East Texas agriculture and land conservation. Participants with a specific curiosity about something growing on their land are encouraged to bring a quality & complete sample for expert review.

##### **Homemade Huntsville (“Hands On” Workshops)**

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

**Remaining Events April through November 2022**

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

**Registration Fee includes ALL supplies, refreshments, and take-home items: \$30.00 per person for any one session (or) 3 or more sessions (for) \$25.00 per person.**

**Registration Link: [April 2022 Food Preservation Workshops- REGISTER TODAY! \(mailchi.mp\)](#)**

Walker County, Family & Consumer Health Agent, Meredith Cryer has a scheduled educational series active and “on the front burner” with eight additional upcoming workshops scheduled April through November in our **Homemade Huntsville** series. These events are posted under the preceding link providing specific subjects, dates, times, registration, and other information. Be sure to scroll down the page to **Homemade Huntsville** (*the Preserving the Harvest sessions at the top of page are SOLD OUT*).

- April 7 – Pressure Canning
- May 5 – Salsas
- June 2 - Pickles & Relish
- July 7 – Fermentation
- August 4 – Pressure Cooking
- September 1 – Breads
- October 6 – Pies & Fillings
- November 17 – Holiday Treats

### **Rainwater Harvesting 101**

**May 3, 2022 (Tuesday)**

**1:00 PM to 4:00 PM**

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

**Cost: FREE!!**

**Registration online at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/rainwater-harvesting-101-tickets-307174094987>**

**Event presented by Bluebonnet Groundwater Conservation District (&) Texas Water Resources Institute of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension**



Join us to learn the basics of rainwater harvesting! Field experts will provide you with the information and hands-on experience needed to design and implement a rainwater collection system of your own.

Attendees will learn the basics of Rainwater Harvesting including a brief overview of how to design a system, components of a collection system, different applications for use, calculating storage needs, benefits of rainwater for use as an alternative water source, and conservation tips to make every drop count.

Rainwater Harvesting 101 is sponsored by Bluebonnet Groundwater Conservation District in conjunction with Texas Water Resources Institute of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The program speaker will be Specialist John Smith, out of the Texas A&M Dept. of Soil and Crop Sciences. This program is free to attend, with refreshments and all materials provided.

### **Area and/or Online Upcoming Events:**

#### **Plant Party “What’s That? Plant ID for Everyone!”**

**Date: March 30, 2022**

**Time: 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM CST**

**Location: Online (Hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, TXP&W, USDA/NRCS, TX RREA)**

**Cost: FREE for virtual conference**

**Registration:** Preregistration required prior to program [Plant Party #6 Registration Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](#)

**For additional information contact:** Dr. Megan Clayton, Extension Range Specialist [Megan.Clayton@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:Megan.Clayton@ag.tamu.edu)

- Major Clumping: How to look smart with common characteristics
- Perennial vs. Annual Forbs: How to know the difference
- The Family Breakdown: Taking an unknown plant down to family
- Genus Paspalum in Texas
- Using Seek and iNaturalist for Plant ID

FYI: I highly recommend the Plant Party Series– really good material for land managers! Last years sessions are archived online for viewing: Plant Party #1 / All About Brush, and Plant Party #2 / Talking Ecology. Check these out at <https://southtexasrangelands.tamu.edu/plant-party/> if the general topics may be of interest.

## **Integrated Wildlife Damage Management**

**Date:** April 07, 2022

**Time:** 12:00 PM (Noon) to 1:00 PM CST

**Location:** Online (Hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, RWFM Stewardship Webinar Series)

**Registration:** online at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3583>

**Cost:** \$35.00

**CEUs:** 1 Hour IPM pending TDA approval

**For additional information contact:** Morgan Treadwell [morgan.treadwell@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:morgan.treadwell@ag.tamu.edu)

Join the Rangeland, Wildlife, Fisheries Management - Stewardship Webinar Series for this presentation addressing methods by which damage is managed on native wildlife species. This is to present an integrated approach, choosing the appropriate tool for the problem, and how to apply multiple tools achieving your management goals. Discussion of lethal and non-lethal approaches plus inclusion of a special session on proper use and application of toxicants.

This will offer 1 IPM CEU pending TDA approval.

As mentioned above, this is a series of webinars. If you are interested in the other topics or CEU options, there is a bundle pricing option.

### ***Bundle pricing:***

Producers can purchase the **5 CEU webinars for \$125** and can register for all CEU webinars at: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3637>. **\*LAST CHANCE TO PURCHASE CEU**

**BUNDLE\***Remaining webinars are scheduled as follows:

- Stewardship & Stockmanship - May 5
- Challenges & Opportunities in Stewarding Texas Working Lands - June 2
- Ten Common Grazing Management Misconceptions - Aug. 4
- Drift Management: Wind, Weather & Whether or Not to Spray - Sept. 1
- Pesticide Recordkeeping & Complaints - Oct. 6
- Grow More Grass with Prescribed Fire - Nov. 3
- Good Cow Management is Good Carbon Management - Dec. 1

## **Lady Landowner Program Series**

**Date:** April 28, through May 26, 2022, online with final session on site June 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Time:** 5:30 PM CST log in with (event presentations 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM)

**Location:** Online (Hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Cass County)

**Registration:** online at [AgriLife Register: Lady Landowner Program Series \(tamu.edu\)](#)

**Cost: \$15.00 online with final on-site event \$25.00 per participant**

**CEUs: 1 Hour at the final on-site event**

**For additional information contact: Jessica Rymel** [jessica.rymel@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:jessica.rymel@ag.tamu.edu)

Join Cass County AgriLife for a program designed to empower female landowners. Registration includes the 5 digital programs. Programs will start at 6 pm and end by 8 pm.

**Session 1** April 28 - Legalities of Landownership

**Session 2** May 5 - Land Use and Landowner Resources

**Session 3** May 12 - Beef Cattle for Beginners and Sheep and Goat Management

**Session 4** May 19 - Backyard Chickens and So You Think You Want Horses

**Session 5** May 26 - Bee Keeping 101 and Managing Home Orchards and Gardens

**Session 6 (on-site)** \$25.00 per person June 4 -Tractor Maintenance, Hooking up Implements, Hooking up Trailers, Trailer Tire Maintenance, Backing Trailers, Spray Rig Maintenance & Calibration.

### **Fish Management Strategies for Ponds**

**Date: May 17, 2022**

**Time: 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM CST**

**Location: Online (Hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Fisheries Management)**

**Registration: online at** <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3483>

**Cost: \$35.00**

**For additional information contact: Brittany Chesser** [brittany.chesser@tamu.edu](mailto:brittany.chesser@tamu.edu)

Join us for a how-to educational program on fish management strategies for ponds and lakes as we cover the pond food chain, what it takes to grow abundant or large fish, fertilization programs, fish feeds and feeding fish, sampling the fish population, many common problems that can be found within a fish population, and how to determine if your pond is suffering from stunted fish. We will also cover the maximum fish production, trophy bass, trophy bluegill/sunfish, trophy catfish, and black crappie management strategies that can be employed in your pond or lake. Finally, we will conclude with the types of structure and fish attractors that can be added to a lake to improve fishing.

### **Additional Items and Information of Note:**

Poultry owners -READ THIS!

#### **TAHC Recommends Enhanced Poultry Biosecurity as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza Continues to Impact the United States**

AUSTIN, TX – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) strongly encourages Texas poultry owners and producers to take steps to protect their flocks from highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI), as cases rise across the United States.

In January 2022, HPAI was first detected in a wild bird in South Carolina. Since that time, the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed HPAI in commercial poultry, backyard fowl or wild bird populations in 22 states.

HPAI is a highly contagious viral disease that can infect chickens, turkeys, and other birds and can cause severe illness and/or sudden death.

"While avian influenza has not been detected in Texas, we see the disease as a potential and real threat to Texas poultry," said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Executive Director and State Veterinarian. "Our best

defense is for all poultry owners to join together in the effort to prevent disease by following strict biosecurity practices.”

Biosecurity refers to practices that prevent possible contamination or disease spread. For poultry, biosecurity practices include:

- Preventing contact with wild birds, especially wild waterfowl;
- Restricting unauthorized people and vehicles;
- Covering and enclosing outdoor feeding areas, and covering stored feed;
- Cleaning and disinfecting any vehicle tires or equipment that has been on other farms or other locations where there is poultry or wild birds;
- Wearing clean clothing, boots, and shoes when in contact with your flock; and
- Isolating new birds.

“Protecting domestic birds from wild birds is a key practice in mitigating the spread of this disease,” said Dr. Schwartz. “Throughout the current HPAI outbreak, many states have detected HPAI in wild migratory fowl. Because these birds follow migratory patterns, it is important for Texas poultry owners and producers to be aware of recent confirmations in states located in the Central Flyway, such as South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas, and vigilantly monitoring birds for any signs of illness.”

Symptoms of HPAI include coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge, and other signs of respiratory distress; lack of energy and appetite; decreased water consumption; decreased egg production and/or soft-shelled, misshapen eggs; incoordination; and diarrhea. Avian influenza can also cause sudden death in birds even if they are not showing other symptoms.

If symptoms are observed in your birds, immediately contact your veterinarian. If you do not have a regular veterinarian, contact the TAHC at 1-800-550-8242.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the recent HPAI detections do not present an immediate public health concern. No human cases of these avian influenza viruses have been detected in the United States. Avian influenza does not present a food safety risk. Poultry and eggs are safe to eat when handled and cooked properly.

As part of existing avian influenza response plans, federal and state partners are working jointly on additional surveillance and testing in areas around the affected flock. The United States has the strongest avian influenza surveillance program in the world, and USDA is working with its partners to actively look for the disease in commercial poultry operations, live bird markets and in migratory wild bird populations.

For more information about HPAI, including status of the confirmed cases in other states as well as more information about biosecurity for your flock, go to the TAHC’s poultry health webpage at [https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal\\_health/poultry/](https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/poultry/).

**Here is a MEAN one for everyone to take a close look at... don’t grab it!**

#### **Heartleaf Nettle (AKA: Fireweed)**

You have all seen this one in Walker County and possibly even touched -it if you were unaware of its capabilities to sting. I have been seeing more, and more of this plant over the past 8-10 years. This plant randomly shows up spring through mid summer, but is



very common around livestock areas, ditches and occasionally some flower beds. Read about the specifics of this plant at: <https://rangeplants.tamu.edu/plant/heartleaf-nettle/> As with all challenging plants (pretty much) this species does have some natural world benefit although most of us will need to overlook the downside to fully appreciate how much some butterflies can utilize it.

Our friends in Florida have worked with it long enough to have some good thoughts and data on control options for this plant: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/AG/AG25200.pdf>

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