



May 2021

Walker County Agriculture Update

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

Walker County Farmers Market – Grand Opening Day Set May 29th!

Fresh vegetables equal early spring excitement this time of year. The Walker County Farmers Market will host their 2021 Grand Opening on May 29th. We have the largest number of market participants ever! Our vendors are planning to bring the freshest in local produce and agricultural products to you. Stop by the West Hill Mall parking lot (Hwy 30 side) to visit with our local vendors and see the diversity of products that has us all looking forward to the 2021 market year. Market days are Wednesdays and Saturdays, 8:00 AM until sell out.

Featured Upcoming Events:

Walker Co -Viticulture Tailgate Meeting

Date: May 14, 2021.

Time: 10:00 AM to Noon

Location: Tosca Winery (Hostetter Rd, New Waverly, TX 77358)

Cost of meeting participation: FREE!

For additional information: Fran Pontasch at fmPontasch@tamu.edu

2021 Spring tailgate meeting at Tosca Winery! Topic of discussion will be the 2021 Crop Estimation with Fran Pontasch, AgriLife Program Specialist and Fritz Westover.

Agriculture Management Series: Late Spring Plant & Weed Identification

Date: May 21, 2021 (FRIDAY)

Time: 2:00 PM until 4:30 PM

Location: (Huntsville, TX) Sam Houston State University – Gibbs Ranch

Cost: \$10.00 per participant

CEU's: TWO Hours TDA credit (General) available

Registration: Requested 3 days before program <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/late-spring-plant-weed-identification-tickets-150221054217>

For additional information contact: Reggie Lepley, CEA (936) 435-2426 or r-lepley@tamu.edu

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 socially distanced group walk through the pastures & wood lines of East Texas agricultural land 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. Participants with a specific curiosity about something growing on their land are encouraged to bring a quality & complete sample for expert review.

Agriculture Management Series: Timber Stand Management

Date: June 4, 2021 (FRIDAY)

Time: 2:00 PM until 4:30 PM

Location: (Huntsville, TX) Sam Houston State University – Gibbs Ranch

Cost: No Charge

CEU's: ONE Hour TDA credit (General) available

Registration: Requested 3 days before program <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/timber-stand-management-tickets-154041727955>

For additional information contact: Reggie Lepley, CEA (936) 435-2426 or r-lepley@tamu.edu or Ben Plunkett, District Forester -TFS (936) 295-5688 bplunkett@tfs.tamu.edu

This forestry related mini-field day event is scheduled to assist landowners with choosing options to manage their timber producing lands. Take Friday afternoon off and come out for this “Hands-On/Feet-in-The Field” training taught by the Huntsville staff of the Texas A&M Forest Service. This field-based activity will feature timber stand improvement items such as thinning harvests and options you may have as a landowner. Methods and tools/equipment utilized to make basic tree measurements will be demonstrated with a “hands-on” approach. In addition, we will discuss identification of common trees and woody plants found in our area. Participants with a specific curiosity about something growing on their land are encouraged to bring a quality & complete sample for expert review.

Area and/or Online Upcoming Events:

Talking Crawfish (Wellness Wednesdays)

Date: May 12, 2021

Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Online (Hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Harris Co) / in-person participation available

Registration: online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/brazoria-galveston-forage-management-series-tickets-141457590461>

Cost: FREE!!!

For additional information contact: Shannon Dietz, CEA-Ag/NR at 713-274-0950 shannon.dietz@ag.tamu.edu

This should be a FUN ONE! Join Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Harris County Ag & Natural Resources Agent Shannon Dietz as he shares tips and recipes to prep and serve a crawfish boil. FYI: There will be a follow up event on May 26 where Shannon’s subject will be Grilling 101.

Pond Management Webinars hosted by AgriLife Rangeland, Wildlife & Fisheries

Management: SERIES

Registration Links for each are below.

Cost: \$35.00 per participant

For additional information, contact: Todd Sink todd.sink@tamu.edu or Brittany Chesser Brittany.chesser@tamu.edu

May 18, 2021: Water Quality for Fisheries Management

We will cover what is water quality, how do you determine water quality, the link between water quality and chemistry, why you should worry about water quality for your fish. Most people are surprised to learn how critical water quality is for their fish, how many different water quality factors can impact their fish (often in unusual ways), that toxic organisms in their pond can kill their fish, livestock, or companion animals, and how minor amendments to water quality can drastically improve their fishery. We will also cover what is tested during a standard water quality test, how each parameter tested affects your fish, how to fix any issues found during the test, how to apply treatments, and how to have your water quality tested.

June 15, 2021: Aquatic Vegetation: Beneficial or Pest? by Brittany Chesser

Join us for an in-depth conversation on the pros and cons with having aquatic vegetation in your pond or lake. We will cover the top beneficial aquatic plants which may add aesthetic value or have wildlife value; along with covering the top nuisance species (native and non-native) which could pose a threat to your pond or lake. If you would like your aquatic vegetation identified and discussed during the presentation, please send high quality, up close photos, against a light background to brittany.chesser@tamu.edu before June 13, 2021.

Hay & Silage Production Webinar

Date: May 20, 2021

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service- Lamar & Cass Counties

Location: Online

Cost: \$15.00 per participant

Registration: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3395>

For additional information contact: Jessica Humphrey, Lamar County - jessica.humphrey@ag.tamu.edu
CEU available

Soil Health & Fertilizer 101 presented by Jessica Humphrey (Extension Agent, Lamar County) Common Weeds & Herbicide Use in Hay Meadows & Advantages of Baleage vs. Dry Hay presented by Dr. Vanessa Corriher-Olson (Extension Forage Specialist) All licensed pesticide applicators will receive 1 hour of continuing education in the general category (1 Gen CEU) for their participation in the entire webinar.

Texas Pecan Short Course

Date: June 7-10, 2021

Location: Brazos County Expo Center (5827 Leonard Rd. Bryan, TX 77807)

Cost: \$300.00 per participant

Registration: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3290>

For additional information contact: Monte Nesbitt, mlnesbitt@tamu.edu

The Texas Pecan Short Course is a comprehensive educational program designed to teach people how to establish and manage a commercial pecan orchard for profit. Course content ranges from basic pecan tree anatomy and physiology to grafting, tree training, irrigation, fertilization, farm budget preparation and more. Participants will receive a blend of classroom instruction and field experiences at the Texas A&M Pecan Orchard, located in the Brazos River Bottom on the Texas A&M University Farm.

Boxed lunches will be provided each day. Covid-19 Precautions With respect to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Short Course will be managed according to State of Texas, Brazos County and Texas A&M University mandates for personal safety. At present, a mask must be worn in the Brazos County Expo Center for the educational program except for eating and drinking. The program directors will make every effort to provide adequate social distancing and personal safety for this event, but participants assume responsibility for their own health outcomes as a result of participation.

Top 10 Most Threatening Brush & Weeds in Texas

Date: June 3, 2021

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

Cost: \$35.00 per participant

Registration: Preregistration required prior to program

<https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3345>

For additional information contact: Morgan Treadwell, Rangeland, Wildlife & Fisheries Management
morgan.treadwell@ag.tamu.edu

CEU Pending

If you asked rangeland managers what the worst plant is that people work with, you would hear a thousand different answers. But the word “threatening” is key. A threat can take on many different forms such as to the

water cycle and promotion of clean air and water, to the livestock industry with illness, mortality, and market fluctuations, opportunistic and potentially monoculture forming, uncontrollable by current knowledge and methodology, unaffected by prescribed burns or wildfires, or on the federal or state invasive and noxious plant lists. But, sometimes, the most threatening weed and brush species are those that you do not know the name of, thus you cannot look them up or prepare a plan of attack because you walk by them not knowing they are a threat. The worst threatening plant could also be the mis-identified plant on iNaturalist, and you select the wrong management tool and actually make the situation worse. During this webinar, participants will not only learn how invasive brush and weeds can threaten rangelands, but also tips and tricks to identifying the top weed and brush species in Texas. Presenter: Dr. Barron Rector. Pending TDA approval, this webinar will offer 1 Texas Department of Agriculture CEU.

Plant Party #3 Invasive Species

Date: June 23, 2021

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 <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PlantParty3>

For additional information contact: Dr. Megan Clayton, Extension Range Specialist Megan.Clayton@ag.tamu.edu

FYI: I have been watching the Plant Party Series the past couple of months – really good material for land managers! Previous 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.

Additional Items and Information of Note:

Oak Trees and Their Recovery from the Freeze

You may remember my comments in the previous newsletter regarding variations in how some of our oak trees seem to be leafing out (or not) following the freeze. Well, Walker Co people are not the only ones who noticed that situation. This seems to be a widespread mystery as to exactly why there is variations of emergence and progression within groups of trees. The Texas Forest Service has released a fairly comprehensive news article where they discuss the Oak tree situation and what is being done to help figure it out. If you are curious or have trees you are concerned about, it is well worth the time to read:

<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/content/article.aspx?id=31600>

BQA (Beef Quality Assurance) Tip for April

Dr. Jason Banta, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Beef Cattle Specialist, Overton

Stable flies can become a problem in the spring for cattle and horses on pasture and are found feeding on the lower legs. Severe stable fly infestations will cause cattle on pasture to bunch up in a circle. Spraying cattle can provide some short-term benefit but reducing breeding sites or spraying resting areas of the flies provide the most benefit. Stable flies like to lay eggs in decomposing vegetation like old hay feeding sites. If possible, spread old hay piles out so they can dry out or spray the piles with diflubenzuron or another insecticide labeled for suppression of emerging flies.

Garden Checklist for May

Dr. Bill Welch, Extension Horticultural Specialist (retired)

- 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, especially the 'KnockOut' series, have considerable resistance to black spot.
- 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-leafed 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.
- 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. 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.
- 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 soil-borne disease are brought into the yard through contaminated soil sources.
- Watch newspaper and other publicity for information regarding wildflower trails, and open garden days. Plan to take a trip to enjoy beautiful gardens and trails that are abundant in many areas of Texas.

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



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