

FOODIE GROUP starts new class series
Summer peaches, green beans, blueberries, cucumbers...

More good stuff at Farmer's Market than you can sit down & eat all at once, so the answer of course, is canning.

Cooking with Friends is a 5-part cooking series that begins June 30 with a canning class. Classes will be on Tuesday or Thursday nights, 5:30 to 8:30 pm at the courthouse annex.



Read more on page 8, and sign up soon; class is limited to 20 participants.

2016 Cooking with Friends

Kitchen-tested recipes for delicious summer peaches are on page 9, and information about this Tropic Snow *low-chill* variety of peach is on page 4.

Watch for Bermudagrass Stem Maggots

This is a new pest in Texas and affecting forage crops from Jasper, Comanche, Rusk, Denton, Lee, Lavaca and Waller Counties. *Atherigona reversura* is an Asian native that was first reported in the United State in Georgia in 2010. It only infests bermudagrass and stargrass. The fly is yellow with a black head, and it lays its eggs within the stems of bermudagrass plants. Once it hatches, the larva (maggot) is white with a black head and consumes the plant from within the stem. Read about control methods at foragefax.

<http://foragefax.tamu.edu/2015/07/08/bermudagrass-stem-maggot/>



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County website:
<http://jasper.agrilife.org>

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Become a Certified Texas Master Naturalist; classes start Aug. 9, 2016 - Jan. 24, 2017. See p. 3

Keep up with County news & please LIKE our agents' Facebook pages

Agriculture: [facebook.com/Jasperagriculture](https://www.facebook.com/Jasperagriculture) Health & Wellness: [facebook.com/jaspercountyfcs](https://www.facebook.com/jaspercountyfcs)



JASPER & nearby counties

Summer Horsemanship School Program

June 24—25, 8 am to 5 pm
Jasper County Junior Livestock Arena

Youth & adults, \$100, REGISTRATION DEADLINE June 20

Participants receive instruction on basic, intermediate and advanced horsemanship skills and maneuvers, and have the opportunity to practice them with guided instruction.



Summer Horsemanship 2016-
Flyer to Families

For more information contact:
Brock Fry 409-384-3721 /
bafry@ag.tamu.edu

PLAN AHEAD:

DEER EXPO
Friday, Sept. 9, 4 to 9 pm
Jasper Courthouse Annex

HAY SHOW
Date to be announced in the fall,
but as you begin to cut your hay
this summer, plan now to call Ag
Agent Brock Fry to come take
samples for the show.
409-384-3721

Beef Quality Assurance Training in Center

When: June 21, 5 to 8:30 pm
Where: Windham Civic Center, 146 Express Blvd. Center TX

This training is a collaborative effort between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association and the Texas Beef Council.

Lane Dunn, Ag agent for Shelby County says the training is for those who have never attended Beef Quality Assurance trainings as well as those who need renewal credits. The goal is to teach best management practices and improve productivity and profitability.

Topics include cattle and beef quality, animal handling and well-being, needle and syringe selection, vaccine handling, proper injection technique, environmental stewardship and how to avoid antibiotic residue in the meat, according to Dr. Jason Banta, beef cattle specialist.

There is no cost to attend the event, which includes a steak dinner, but organizers request RSVPs to the AgriLife office in Shelby County at 936-598-7744 for a meal count.

For more information on Texas Beef Quality programs, visit
<http://www.texasbeefquality.com>

Thanks to Jasper County Agriculture Programs Committee and Sponsors:

Texas Farm Bureau—Kirbyville
409-423-2291

Kirbyville Auction Barn
Jeff (409) 423-0197
"Bull" (409) 423-2390

Jasper County Tractor
James Dean & Kevin Dean
409-384-7523

Jackson Packing Company
Jaybo Jackson 409-385-4573

Isabell Farms, Angus Cattle
Gene Isabell
409-423-1466 or 381-0312

Cypress Creek Farm & Ranch Supply
Buna, 409-994-9420

Richard Vaughan Ranch, Bahia grass
409-423-0676



East Texas happenings

Master Naturalist classes start Aug. 9

The Longleaf Ridge Chapter of Texas Master Naturalists is taking applications for new training sessions to run through January, 2017.

If you are interested in nature, resource conservation, preservation of wildlife, native plants and Texas ecosystem, this program is for you. Texas Master Naturalist offers in-depth training taught by experts and customized to focus on the native plants and animals of our area.

To become a Certified Texas Master Naturalist, you take 3-hour training classes from August to January, twice a month on Tuesdays from 6 to 9 pm at Martin Dies Jr. State Park near Jasper. Each class features an expert in an ecosystem of Texas and topics ranging from archaeology to zoology.

There will also be several weekend field trips where volunteers observe nature and get hands-on experience in field work.

Class costs \$140 per individual or \$180 per couple who share a book. For more information or to register, contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office at 409-384-3721.



Trash to Treasures Clean Up

June 25, 9 am to 2 pm

Martin Dies Jr. State Park

Come help clean up the park and enjoy hot dogs and fixin's. Free games for kids. Bad back? you can buy picker-uppers at Walmart fairly cheap. Hosted by the park and Master Naturalists.

TEXASINVASIVES.ORG

Texasinvasives.org Online Training

Help monitor and report the spread of invasive species like the Emerald Ash Borer described on page 6. Scientists all over the world access a database compiled by volunteers just like you. Would you like to become involved in this **citizen scientist** program? Take the online training and join the local **Longleaf Ridge Invaders** www.texasinvasives.org/training/.

SAVE the DATE

Saturday, Oct. 15,
Master Naturalists will host an all-day training session and field practice at Martin Dies Jr. State Park



First annual Rubber Ducky RACE

Saturday, July 2, 10 am until done!

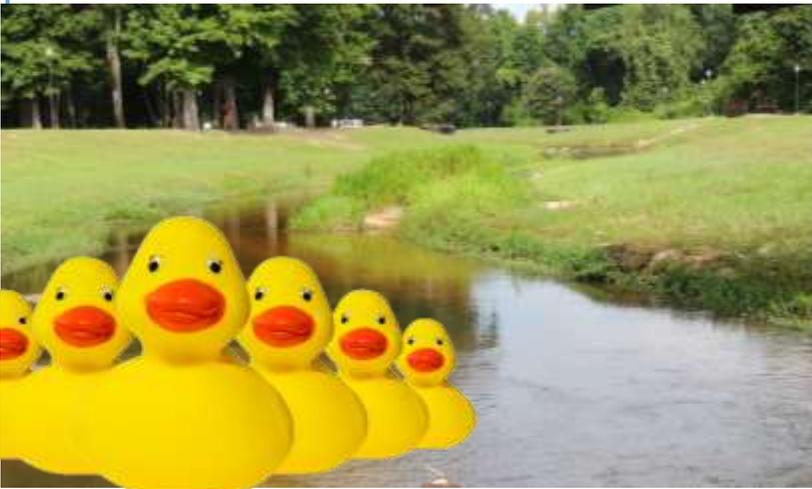
To benefit Keep Jasper Beautiful and the Great American Trash Off

1 duck rents for \$5 or 3 ducks for \$10

Ducks get dumped in Sandy Creek behind the Outdoor Learning Center on Water Street, and float to the pick up point near the gazebo & pond on Marvin Hancock Drive.

Tickets will be available at Farmers Market and at the event at the park. Each duck is numbered, door prizes drawn hourly, plus a Grand Prize for fastest duck in the flock.

(Oh, by the way, we're looking for door prize donors & sponsors! Call Sue Singletary at 409 423-0771)



Controlling mosquitoes to reduce the spread of Zika virus — “The Four D’s”



1. **Dusk/Dawn**—avoid being outside when mosquitoes are most likely searching for a blood meal, early morning and right around sunset.
2. **Drain**—empty standing water from any containers around your home and work areas, including dog bowls, water troughs, tires...
3. **Dress**—wear long sleeves and pants; avoid scented perfumes and aftershaves.
4. **Defend**—wear mosquito repellent. DEET provides up to 6 hours or try products that contain lemon oil, eucalyptus, or picaridin.

Tropic snow peach only needs 200 chill hours

Chill hours are the number of hours of temperatures between 45 and 32 F in winter. Without **enough chill hours, some trees won't set fruit, which is why you don't see apples, cherries or raspberries** grown much in Jasper County.

Peaches, on the other hand, come in a huge number of varieties, and some have been specially bred and adapted for low chill hours. Jasper County sometimes gets 800 chill hours (*not last year!*) but the further south you go, the less they get.

Master Gardeners recently commented on a peach tree growing at Shangri La Botanical Gardens in Orange. It was May 22 and the tree was loaded with beautiful peaches, even after our mild winter and all the rains.

Botanist Jennifer Bucker says the variety is Tropic Snow (*Prunus persica*) and it only needs 200 chill hours to produce white-fleshed free-stone peaches. It was developed for places like central Florida that rarely see a frost.

Peach facts: Peaches are in the family Rosaceae, which includes other stone fruits like plums and apricots, as well as almonds, roses and strawberries.

Tropic snow is tolerant of acidic soils but it **likes “dry feet.” It's suitable for growing in containers or raised beds to enhance drainage around the roots.**

The leaves of a peach tree are toxic. So are peach pits, which contain cyanide and arsenic.



Tropic Snow produces a white-fleshed free-stone peach. Tex-Star and Florida King produce the more traditional yellow-gold flesh but need 450 chill hours.

Most peach trees are grafted to nematode resistant root stock. Root-knot nematodes reduce production and can eventually kill a tree. When you have a grafted variety, you have to be vigilant and trim out any shoots that appear below the graft or they will take over and throw off the good fruit-producing graft.

Expect a new tree to take 3 to 5 years before it bears. Thin the crop when peaches are about



the size of an almond, keeping in mind how large the fruit will be when mature. No two peaches should touch, which may mean you are thinning 2/3 of the baby peaches. It helps avoid diseases and produces better quality fruit.



United States Department of Agriculture

Conservation Assistance Just a Click Away
TEMPLE, Texas, May 26, 2016 - The USDA now has an online web application, Conservation Client Gateway, that allows individual landowners and land users the secure ability to request conservation technical and financial assistance from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

"Conservation Client Gateway will save Texas producers time and money by not having to drive to our office to obtain a map or sign a document," says NRCS State Conservationist Salvador Salinas. "This information will now be available to them at their convenience and on their schedule."

Producers can log on to the website 24/7 from their home office computer or laptop. They can apply for conservation program assistance, manage applications, review and sign documents, access conservation plans, maps and other documents through Conservation Client Gateway.

Conservation Client Gateway is an additional way to work with NRCS via the Internet as a supplement to in-person support.

"It is a matter of being more responsive to producer's needs and providing the assistance that works best for that particular producer, their schedule, their operation and their natural resource goals," says Salinas.

Enrollment in Conservation Client Gateway is voluntary, and producers are encouraged to sign up and give it a try.

For more information, fact sheets, FAQs and a how-to video, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway. Producers can also contact their local USDA Service Center to get started. Service Center locations can be found at www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov

Kevin Isom, District Conservationist
409-384-3332 Ext. 3
Kevin.isom@tx.usda.gov

Natural Resources Conservation Service
714 West Gibson Suite 3
Jasper, TX 75951



What's in season now?

Summer is great for our local Farmers Market — tomatoes are red, melons are in, squash, green beans, onions, red new potatoes, blackberries and blueberries, **no kiddin' hot jalapenos. Plus craft vendors have been great this year, soapmakers and lotions, plant sales, and a baker who can't be beat. Not to mention jams, jellies, local honey, and often some surprise vendors.**

Come see what you've been missing Saturday mornings, 8 am to noon at the intersection of 190 & 96 in Jasper (Tractor Supply parking lot). Better come early, some vendors sell out the first hour.

Vendor packets and information are on our website:
<http://jasper.agrilife.org/vendor-forms-for-market/>

Father's Day is June 19 — Farmers Market is a great place to find something for the hard-to-buy-for man.

Emerald ash borer found in Texas

Texas A&M Forest Service

The invasive emerald ash borer (EAB) beetle that has killed millions of ash trees across the U.S. has been detected in Texas. State and federal agencies are preparing people and communities to fight the pest.

In May, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Texas A&M Forest Service (TFS) trapped four adult beetles in Harrison County; USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) laboratory confirmed the specimens were emerald ash borers.

Texas has placed beetle detection traps across the state in an effort to provide early warning when the invasive pest arrived.

"Early detection minimizes its spread and enables us to effectively work with those affected by providing information and science-based solutions to potential attacks," said Texas A&M Forest Service Forest Health Coordinator Shane Harrington.

EAB is a destructive, wood-boring pest and poses a significant threat to forests, killing both stressed and healthy ash trees. The trees typically die two or three years after becoming infested. Native to Asia, EAB was first discovered in Michigan in 2002. Since then, infestations have been found in 26 states.

"The Texas Department of Agriculture, through our biosecurity program, is committed to defending Texans from invasive species like EAB, which have the power to decimate our crops and landscapes," Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller said.

Texas A&M Forest Service is also working with the state's forest industry, rural landowners, urban communities and homeowners on detecting possible infestation and taking measures to slow the movement of the beetle. Measures include the use of insecticide tree injections, soil drenching, and bolstering the urban forests with species not susceptible to EAB.

"Proper planning can reduce the impact of EAB," said TFS Urban and Community Forestry Program Coordinator Paul Johnson. "Removal of poor quality ash, planting trees that aren't susceptible to EAB, and protecting high value ash by treating them will help us weather this attack."



To learn more about EAB,
www.emeraldashborer.info
and <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/eab/>.

TEXAS A&M
FOREST SERVICE



SODBUSTERS SYMPOSIUM Education Fundraiser

Saturday, Aug. 13, 2016

9 am to 3 pm at Rayburn Country Club

2376 Wingate Blvd. Brookeland TX 75931

Featuring Steven Chamblee, author, lecturer, **Native Son of Neil Sperry's Gardens;** and Kent Daniel of the American Orchid Society.

Your \$35 ticket includes morning refreshments, lectures, lunch, handouts, goodie bags and door prizes; only 130 tickets available.

For those who may not have time for lectures and lunch, please come and shop the vendors and bid on silent auction and raffle items and **don't miss the master gardener plant sale.**

Vendors include The Bird Crib, Wild Thymes **Herbs, the East Texas Art League, Sybil's Homemade Jams & Jellies, Bob Avery's Wood Creations, Kent Daniel's orchids, Burlap & Ruffles Yard Art, Dig It Organics, Lamoreaux's Naturals in Yard Art, Choctaw Slim's Wood turning, and Mike Lang's handmade jewelry and wire wrapped natural stones.**

Ticket order forms are on our website:

jasper.agrillife.org

Click on Sodbusters in the event column:

[Sodbusters 2016](#)

For more info:

email JasperSodbusters@gmail.com

or call 409 382-3096 or 409-384-3721

GMOs are weapon against global hunger

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine reviewed hundreds of studies and decades of disease data and reached the conclusion genetically modified organisms pose no increased risk to human health. For many, including scientists with Texas A&M AgriLife Research, this validates the need to keep GMOs as part of the global food supply as a means to help feed an ever-increasing world population.

“Genetic modifications to crops like corn, soybeans and cotton undergo rigorous testing and approval over a time period of anywhere from five to eight years by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and/or Food and Drug Administration,” said Dr. Bill McCutchen, executive associate director of AgriLife Research, College Station. “The development of genetically modified crops that are insect and disease tolerant has reduced the amount of chemical inputs needed and reduced the overall environmental impact associated with growing these crops.”

As an example of how biotechnology can improve crops, McCutchen cited a collaboration by AgriLife Research and Florida-based Southern Gardens Citrus to investigate introducing spinach proteins into citrus trees to provide them a genetic defense against citrus greening, a disease responsible for millions of dollars in citrus crop losses annually.

Research by Dr. Erik Mirkov, an AgriLife Research plant pathologist, resulted in the production of proteins that appear to provide effective control of citrus greening, as well as defending against diseases in other plants.

“These genetic modifications will have a positive impact on agriculture and the public should be aware of the rigorous testing that goes into their development,” McCutchen said.

McCutchen also noted while current regulations regarding GMO development are stringent, advances in DNA editing could allow for greater ease of approval in the future.

“Some individuals will dig in against technology for a variety of reasons, ethical or otherwise, no matter who speaks on its behalf or the weight of **the body of evidence,”** said Dr. Peter Murano in the department of nutrition and food science at Texas A&M.

However, genetic modification techniques and genetically modified crops and foods are already widespread and have been part of the diet of many millions worldwide for years, Murano said.

Murano noted the National Academies study was **“reportedly conducted free of any biotech industry money and all the scientists involved were put through a vetting process to be sure none of those writing the report could be charged with having financial conflicts of interests.”**

As former director of Texas A&M’s Institute for Obesity Research and Program Evaluation, Murano also said the report effectively rejects assertions by critics that GMOs have been responsible for increased instances of obesity and diabetes.

“Given the result of this study and the potential of GMOs to address crop diseases and pests and abate human hunger, suffering and death as the world population soars to 9 or 10 billion, a compelling case has been made for the continued use of GMOs in the world food supply,” he said.

Murano cited Dr. Norman Borlaug, Nobel Peace Prize laureate and father of the Green Revolution, saying it is **“arrogance”** for those in the affluent, developed world who can talk about buying more expensive organic foods produced without chemicals to expect people and nations with little or no wealth to do the same.

“Even if they did, those crops, being more expensive to grow, more expensive to purchase and providing lower yields, won’t meet the increased consumer demand of the future,” he said. **“No matter which side you may be on – it is significant that the world scientific community has validated the safety of GMOs and GM foods.”**

Read the rest of this story and Julie Borlaug’s comments at <http://today.agrilife.org>



*prep once,
cook 4 meals
(or more)*



Cooking with Friends is ba-aack

This popular cooking series is back for 2016 with some new twists, so pay attention:

Time: 5:30 - 8:30 pm, Tuesdays or Thursdays

Dates:

Thursday, June 30—Canning

Thursday, July 14— Grilling & Marinades

Thursday, Aug. 11—Breads

Tuesday, Sept. 20— Casseroles

Tuesday, Oct. 18— Slow Cookers

Cost: \$25 per person or \$35 per couple (couple shares the take-home portion)

Fee is for all 5 classes, do as many as you can.

Fee includes recipes, handouts and some ingredients to prepare meals for a family of four (or servings for two if you prefer)

For some classes, participants bring (and take home) their own main ingredients—for example, chicken meals for the freezer, BYOC—*bring your own chicken and we'll provide the spices or sauces.*

The goal is to take the guess work out of your daily dinner dilemma. You are more likely to have healthy, home-cooked meals when you have something prepared, ready to pop in the oven, grill or slow cooker.

And if you are going to take the time to prep fresh ingredients, why not do it once, have one clean up, and yet have FOUR meals (or 8!) ready to go when you need it?

Limited to 20 people; register by Monday, June 20.

RSVP 409-384-3721 now.

Heads Up on Headspace & Ascorbic acid

Canning is the process in which foods are placed in jars, heated to a temperature that kills microorganisms & inactivates enzymes. The process forms a vacuum seal that prevents outside contamination. *No seal, not safe!*

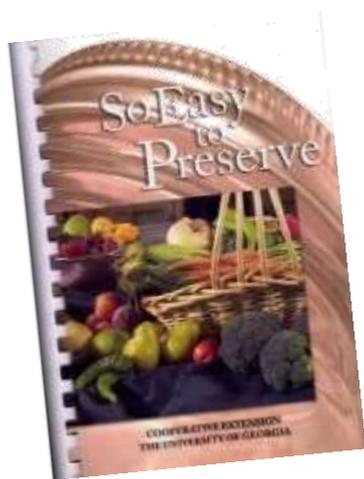
It's important to follow tested and approved recipes because times, temperatures & ingredients such as vinegar or lemon are important to insure the right balance of acid and natural preservatives keep your food safe to consume.

Headspace is how full you can safely fill your jars, and each recipe is different. It is the unfilled space left above the contents in a sealed container to allow for expansion and contraction during processing. Too much or too little can **mean the jars break or you don't get a good vacuum seal.**

Headspace is important for freezing as well, and again is different for different recipes. Foods with more natural liquid need room to expand during freezing or the bag may pop. Too much air, however, allows more ice crystals to form and you get freezer burn.

Ascorbic acid is a vitamin naturally occurring in citrus and some vegetables. It helps preserve flavor and color and can be purchased as a powder in the canning row at the store. Some recipes will call for lemon juice or vinegar, and **this is not just for flavor. Don't think you can skip this step.** Use the amount and the ingredient specified in each recipe. This is an important preservative that should not be left out.

Our office sells **"So Easy to Preserve"** cookbooks for \$15 from the Cooperative Extension of the University of Georgia. Recipes include canning, pickling, sweet spreads and syrups, freezing and drying for all types of fruits and vegetables. Their recipes have all been scientifically tested and all the peach recipes on this page are from that book.



*Celebrate
summer peaches
grown in Texas!*

Old-Fashioned Peach Preserves
 2 quarts sliced, peeled peaches (about 10 large)
 6 cups sugar
 About 7 half-pint jars and lids
 Combine fruit and sugar; let stand 12 to 18 hours in refrigerator. Sterilize canning jars. Bring fruit and sugar mixture slowly to boiling, stirring frequently. Boil gently until fruit becomes clear and syrup thick, about 40 minutes. As mixture thickens, stir often to prevent sticking. Skim, if necessary to remove foam. Pout hot preserve into hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath.

Freezing Peaches — sugar pack
 Select well-ripened fruit, sort, wash, peel and slice. To each quart (1.5 lbs) of prepared fruit add 2/3 cup sugar and mix well. Stir gently until sugar is dissolved or let stand 15 minutes. To retard darkening, sprinkle ascorbic acid dissolved in water over peaches before adding sugar (1/4 tsp. ascorbic acid plus 3 Tbsp. cold water for each quart of fruit). Pack in containers leaving headspace. Seal and freeze.

PEACH HONEY
 Use clean washed peels to make flavorful syrup as thick as you like.



Place peels in a pot and barely cover with water; cook slowly in a covered saucepot until soft.
 Put peels & liquid in a cheesecloth bag; press to save all juice. Drip juice through a jelly bag to clarify; measure. To each cup of liquid, add 1/2 cup sugar. Boil juice-sugar rapidly until the consistency of honey. Pout in hot half-pint jars, leaving 1/4 inch headspace. Wipe jar rims and adjust lids. Process 5 minutes in a boiling water bath.

Oscar Relish (aka peach salsa)
 8 cups peeled chopped peaches (about 12 large)
 8 cups chopped ripe tomatoes (about 12 large)
 2 large green sweet bell peppers, diced
 1 or 2 hot jalapeno peppers, or to taste
 2 cups diced onions
 4 cups light brown sugar (firmly packed)
 2 cups cider vinegar
 1/2 Tablespoon canning salt
 1/2 box (4 Tbsp.) pickling spices tied in cheesecloth bag
 6 pint jars and lids, sterilized & hot
 Combine all ingredients in 10-quart saucepan. Cook and stir about 1.5 to 2 hours, until it reaches desired thickness. Pack in hot jars., leaving 1/2 inch of headspace. Remove air bubbles & wipe jar rims. Adjust lids. Process 10 minutes in a boiling water bath.

AgriLife Today & other news

Overton Horticultural Field Day

500 varieties of ornamental plants & vegetables, tested to be East Texas tough.

Thursday, June 23, rain or shine!

These trials began in 1993 and have grown to be one of the largest demonstration gardens of its kind, designed to meet the needs of commercial seed companies, local nursery managers and gardening enthusiasts.

The day begins with registration at 8:30 am at **the center's North Farm, 10746 FM 3053**. The event is free and includes a barbecue lunch, as long as you register in advance. Field trials include flowers, vegetables, annuals, perennials, old favorites and brand new varieties developed to perform in heat, drought and all the adverse conditions of East Texas.

At 10:30 to 11:45 am the field day moves from the farm to the Overton center headquarters for Dr. Joe Masabni, vegetable specialist.

Lunch is provided courtesy of seed companies



and other sponsors, 11:45 to 1 pm.

Afternoon speakers programs will be indoors at **the Overton Center's Bruce McMillan Jr. Auditorium** and will cover outstanding performers at the Overton Trials plus a report on the Dallas Arboretum trials.

The event is FREE but pre-registration is requested for meal-planning purposes. To RSVP or for driving directions & more information: <http://flowers.tamu.edu/field-day/> or 903-834-6191. Overton is about 2 hours north of Jasper.

New Turfgrass publication free online — or purchase a hardcopy

Homeowners and professional turfgrass managers now have a new Texas A&M publication available to help them when selecting herbicides, insecticides and fungicides to control common turfgrass pests:

Weed, insect and Disease Control in Turfgrass, a 120-page guide with full-color pictures. The document can be found in the publications section of AggieTurf, the Texas A&M **turfgrass program's website:** <https://aggieturf.tamu.edu/publications/>.

For more information on this publication or other AgriLife Extension turfgrass programs, contact Reynolds at casey.reynolds@tamu.edu.

Congratulations to Paul Smith, La Paz BnB



Recently appointed to replace retired executive director Liz Street of the Jasper-Lake Sam Rayburn Area Chamber of Commerce.

Local Master Gardeners & Master Naturalists are available for educational programs for schools, clubs and civic organizations, as well as tours and programs at the Outdoor Learning Center, Butterfly Gardens and Arboretum. Call our office, 409-384-3721

To find CEU classes go to ceusearch.texasagriculture.gov/
Check the expiration date on your Private Applicator license. You need 15 CEUs in a 5-year period to renew without re-taking the test. ***Don't wait until the last minute.***