

New master gardener classes start Feb. 22



Jasper Master Gardeners will offer their 6th training class; \$100 per person for class plus \$70 per book. This includes 5 months of classroom training, workshops, and most field trips.

Classes will be every Monday night, 6 to 9 pm, Feb. through June, at the new Courthouse Annex at 271 E. Lamar St. in Jasper. Class includes four Saturday field trips and many optional workshops and Ag programs.

To become a master gardener requires a minimum of 50 hours training and then another 50 hours internship doing service work before becoming a full-fledged master gardener.

Now accepting orders for books.

*see page 4 for more information*

 Pesticide  
Recertification Program  
Feb. 25, 8 am - 5 pm  
Jasper Courthouse Annex

TDA Private Applicator license holders need 15 CEUs every 5 years in order to renew their license without having to retake the test. This program gives you 8 CEUs for only \$30, lunch included, right here in Jasper.

You must pre-register by calling  
409-384-3721

**Coming up fast,  
sign up soon:**

- 1. Food Handlers class and 2-year state certificate**
- 2. Review: Cooking up a Cottage Food business in your own home kitchen**
- 3. Series of classes: Cooking with Friends, Tuesday night classes featuring freezer friendly recipes**

*see p. 6-7 for details*

**Brock Fry**

**CEA AG/NR agent**  
bafry@ag.tamu.edu

**Cindy VanDevender**

**Family & Consumer Sciences**  
cvandev@ag.tamu.edu

**Texas A&M AgriLife**  
Extension Service, Jasper County  
Jasper, TX 75951—409-384-3721

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

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

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*JASPER programs & workshops*



Pre-market training for  
Farmers Market vendors

Fridays, Feb. 12, 19 & 26  
10 am to noon at Courthouse Annex

Timed just right to help you plan and plant a garden or start a craft business and become a Jasper Farmers Market vendor. Learn more about the benefits of joining the association & make your hobby pay for itself, while enjoying the social aspects too.

\$25 for all 3 classes, call 409-384-3721

Field trip, anyone?

**We're curious** — how many of you would be interested in touring the SFASU soils lab in Nacogdoches? It would be on a Saturday morning in the spring.

Master gardeners take this tour for every class, but we're thinking of opening it up for the public as well. Let us know if you'd like to go. We can arrange a garden tour too.

Please email [sharonruthkerr@gmail.com](mailto:sharonruthkerr@gmail.com) if interested in a field trip.



Kevin Dean, Owner  
James Dean, Owner

4195 N. Wheeler  
Jasper, Texas 75951

409-384-7523

**JASPER COUNTY TRACTOR**

JOHN DEERE KAWASAKI KRONE RHINO



Become a  
Jasper County  
Program  
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409-384-3721

**THANKS to our sponsors:**

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*Jasper County  
Agriculture  
Programs  
Committee*

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Bermuda Hay            Angus Cattle

Gene Isabell      1332 CR 577  
(409) 381-0312      Call, TX 75933

JASPER happenings



Save the date!

Jasper County Junior Livestock Show & Sale March 18-19

Show your support for our 4-H kids!

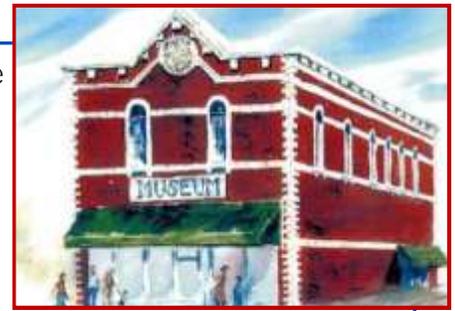
Open House at the Museum

Thursday

Feb. 4, 4 to 7 pm

Corner of Lamar & Main St. in Jasper, west side of courthouse square. This museum is rapidly gaining a reputation for the unusual. Their mission: We honor your legacy, we welcome your history.

Museum FUNDRAISER: Lunch on the Square, Food Truck fish baskets for \$7 Feb. 4, 11 am



Painting courtesy of Bill Wise

Chamber's Ribbon Cutting for The Texas Wine Shop 2055 S. Wheeler, Jasper TX 75951 1 mile south of Hwy 190/96 FRIDAY, Jan 8, 4 pm

If you've been to Farmers Market or the Taste of Jasper, you know that the Talcott family has the largest muscadine vineyard in Texas. Finally, they have muscadine wine, as well as other Texas-made ag products like infused oils and local crafts.

Come show your support for Jasper County's newest ag producer. Grown in Jasper County. Open Friday & Saturday afternoons.



Other Chamber of Commerce events:

Jan. 29—97th annual Chairman's Banquet & Awards

Jan. 30—First time ever Mardi Gras Parade and Gumbo Cook-off; prizes for best costume, float, trailer, golf cart/ATV, vehicle and horse/wagon.

March 19—28th annual Azalea Fest on the courthouse square plus Master Gardener plant sale at the Arboretum and Library Book Sale.



Jasper-Lake Sam Rayburn Area Chamber of Commerce jaspercoc.org 409 384-2762



## Now accepting applications for Jasper Master Gardeners

### Class of 2016

Feb. 22—June 27  
Monday nights, 6 to 9 pm  
plus 4 Saturday field trips



*Margie Saulsbury graduated with the first class of Jasper Master Gardeners in 2010 and will soon be moving to be closer to family. JMG appreciates her years of service to the club.*

It's not a club: you can't just join Master Gardeners, you have to earn it. The program began in the 70's and was quickly adopted by Extension Services all over the country. It's a volunteer organization that requires 50 hours of training (classroom, workshop and field trips). Then, interns must give back 50 hours service before they become full-fledged master gardeners. They still don't get to claim that title for life: every year a Jasper Master Gardener must get 12 CEUs (continuing education) and give back 12 hours service to continue to call themselves master gardener. It's not for the faint of heart.

**click here**  
<http://jasper.agrilife.org>

Save the DATE!  
March 5  
**Down & Dirty**  
Garden Seminar  
Cypress Bend Resort  
(Louisiana side of Lake  
Toledo Bend near Many)

This event is put on by the **Sabine Parish Master Gardeners** and is the inspiration for Jasper Master Gardeners' Sodbusters Symposium, held in August at Lake Sam Rayburn Country Club. They graciously supported our event so we want to be sure to return the favor. Many is about an hour's drive from Jasper.

They sell out fast so call them to pre-register:  
Cela Knippers, 318-256-3269  
Edith Palmer, 318-256-2036



### **Welcome Home!**

This is our new meeting room in the remodeled Courthouse Annex. We're looking forward to holding classes, master gardener meetings, cooking demonstrations and more in this facility. The kitchen is equally fine. If you haven't seen it, drop by and we'll give you the grand tour.

Jasper County Courthouse Annex  
271 E. Lamar St.  
Jasper, TX 75951

The Extension office is downstairs, Suite 101, north side. There is additional parking on Houston St. across from the bank.

East Texas Fruit & Vegetable Conference  
Tuesday, Feb. 16  
Expo Center, 3805 NW Stallings Dr.  
Nacogdoches, TX 75964

3 CEUs for Private Applicators

8 am — Registration

9 am — Pesticides; Dr. Karl Steddom fungicides;  
Erfan Vafaie, insects

10 am — Dr. Larry Stein, irrigation

11 am — Dr. Justin Schiner, grape diseases; Monte  
Nesbitt, olive problems

Noon — lunch provided

12:30 pm — Presentations by Gary Schwarzlose  
(Bayer) & David Steinbrunner (Wildroot Organics)

1 pm — Organic Production: Dr. Joseph Masabni,  
tomatoes; Dr. Juan Anciso, organic pesticides

2 pm — New Age Farm: Dr. Dave Creech, kiwis at  
SFA Gardens; Dr. Karl  
Steddom, technology at  
the connected farm

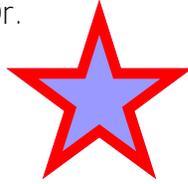
3 pm — SFA Garden Tour  
hosted by Dr. Dave  
Creech

PRE REGISTRATION  
saves you \$5

Fee: \$30, \$50 for couples — deadline Feb. 12

Mail checks to: Nacogdoches Master Garden-  
ers, 203 W. Main St., Nacogdoches, TX 75961

For more information contact Ricky Thompson at  
936-560-7711 or Dr. Joe Masabni at 903-834-6191



**TEXASINVASIVES.ORG**

**Texasinvasives.org Online Training**  
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/](http://www.texasinvasives.org/training/).

## Around the state

Longleaf Alliance Academy presents

### Longleaf 101

3-day shortcourse, classroom & field in-  
struction to prepare landowners and natural  
resource professionals to address specific  
management issues of longleaf forests.

Jan. 19—Jan. 21, 2016 at Rayburn Country

2376 Wingate Blvd., Jasper, TX 75951

Cost is \$300 and includes registration,  
materials, 2 nights lodging and meals.

**SAF-CFE's will be provided. Limited seating**  
available. Call Casey White at 334-427-  
1029 or email [office@longleafalliance.org](mailto:office@longleafalliance.org)

MC MG Fruit & Nut Tree Sale Jan. 23

9 am to noon, 9020 Airport Rd. Conroe

936-539-7824 [www.mcmga.com](http://www.mcmga.com)

Montgomery County Master Gardener plant  
sale is famous for having new and unusual  
varieties of fruit and nut trees. Just one  
caution for north Jasper County residents:  
their cold hardy avocados and citrus do well  
**in Houston's Zone 9 climate; but we are**  
Zone 8 (colder). North Jasper is borderline  
for fruit trees for lots of reasons: winters  
slightly too cold for most tropicals, but not  
cold enough (not enough chill hours) for  
most apples, cherries, etc.

## Forest Pest Seminar

Feb. 12 in Lufkin, Registration 8 am

Angelina County Extension Office, 2201 S.  
Medford Dr. Lufkin TX 75901 (east of 69 &  
loop as you come into Lufkin)

Cost: \$50 incl. meal. RSVP by Monday,  
Feb. 8, call 936-634-6414 x 100



5 CEUs for TDA pesticide license holders

5 SAF Cat-1 CF

5 Pro Logger

Eat.  
Real.  
Food.



*Happy New Year  
2016!*



## **Cooking up a Cottage Food Business & Food Handler's class**

***Earn your 2-year certificate***

2 separate classes, Saturday

January 16 — 8:30 am to 12:30 pm

Location: Jasper County Courthouse Annex

271 East Lamar Street, Jasper TX 75951

*additional parking in back on Houston St.*

**RSVP required: 409-384-3721**



***1. Cooking Up a Cottage Food Business, 8:30 - 9:30 am, \$5***

Review and discuss Texas Cottage Food Law that allows you to operate a business from your home kitchen. Learn label requirements, what foods are allowed (or not allowed) and why, and where you can sell your products; canning, baking and more.

***2. Texas Food Handlers Course: Food Safety is in your (clean) hands!***

***9:30 to 12:30 am, \$20 includes your Food Handler's state certificate, good for two years***

Texas Dept. of State Health Services accredited food handlers program to promote food safety; safe handling & storage, proper temperatures, how to avoid cross contamination, hygiene and more.

The 2-year certificate is accepted anywhere in Texas and required for operating a cottage food business.

ONLINE TRAINING IS ALSO AN OPTION!

Go to: [https://extensiononline.tamu.edu/courses/food\\_safety.php](https://extensiononline.tamu.edu/courses/food_safety.php)  
scroll down to Food Handlers

**\$25 for both classes, pay at the door, but we require pre-registration so we know how many handouts to prepare!**

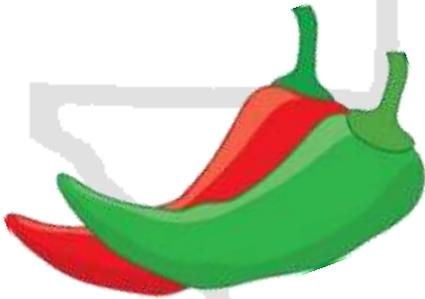
**Call 409-384-3721**

# Texas-style Lasagna

*This is one of four recipes that foodies will prepare in the Cooking with Friends classes on Tuesday nights in February.*

*Freezer-friendly recipe you can prepare ahead, then reheat when life is too hectic to cook from scratch.*

*This serves 8 but for a family of 4, you can use two 8x8 pans instead of a 9x13.*



## Ingredients to serve 8:

- 1 1/2 pounds lean ground beef
- 2 cups (16 ounces) small-curd cottage cheese
- 2 eggs
- 1 package taco seasoning mix
- 1 14.5-ounce can diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 15-ounce can tomato sauce
- 1 4-ounce can chopped green chiles
- 5 flour tortillas cut into 1-inch strips
- 4 cups (16 ounces) shredded Monterey Jack cheese

## Directions:

In large skillet, brown the meat and drain off any excess fat; add taco seasoning, tomatoes, tomato sauce, chiles. Simmer, uncovered, for 15 minutes.

In a bowl combine cottage cheese and eggs just until mixed well.

Spray a 9x13 baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Layer half the meat sauce, half the

tortilla strips, half the cottage cheese mix and half the Jack cheese. Repeat.

Cover with heavy-duty aluminum foil, label and freeze.

To serve, thaw in the refrigerator and then bake, uncovered, in a preheated 350 degree oven for 40 minutes or until bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

*Cooking with Friends* — hands-on cooking classes that take the guesswork out of your daily dinner dilemma. It is designed to provide you with read-to-cook freezer main dishes you can prepare in advance and then thaw and heat when needed.

This is a 4-part series to be held Tuesday Evenings, 6 to 8 pm, on Feb. 2, 9, 16 and 23 at the new Courthouse Annex kitchen, 271 E. Lamar St. in Jasper, taught by Cindy VanDevender.

Participants will prepare and take home freezer-ready main dishes, portioned for a family of 4, of the following recipes: marinated chicken breasts, Texas-style lasagna, chipotle burritos, and orange marmalade pork chops. Participants will also receive kitchen-tested recipes and handouts for more quick and nutritious family meals.

Limited to the first 12; call 409-384-3721. Cost: \$25 for all 4 classes. This helps cover cost of ingredients; you will take home a freezer meal from each class.

## AgriLife Today news

BUILDING BETTER TOMATOES FOR TEXAS  
excerpts from an article by Rod Santa Ana

The revival of the vegetable production industry in South Texas will begin with the development of new tomato varieties, according to Dr. Carlos Avila, a vegetable breeder at Texas A&M AgriLife Research Center at Weslaco.

To do that, they attempt to combine favorable traits from various tomato and spinach cultivars and germplasm, selecting for both taste & varieties adapted to harsh local growing conditions.

**"In the case of tomatoes, production was nearly wiped out in the Valley by insects and diseases that were not around in the 1960s and 70s when production was thriving here," Avila said.**

Production dropped from 36,000 acres to only about 800 acres today, he said. Texas is now a net importer of about 2.4 billion pounds of tomatoes annually. John Sharp, Texas A&M chancellor, said, **"Being a net importer of vegetables is not only unacceptable, it's un-Texan."**

The biggest complaints from consumers are **that imported tomatoes just don't taste as good as they used to.**

**"We just have more pests and diseases here than California and Florida where tomato production has not decreased. High temperatures here also decrease yields," Avila said.**

To develop new tomato varieties that taste better and are resistant to heat, insects and diseases, Avila is using both traditional breeding methods and molecular biology to combine favorable traits from several varieties into one.

**"We can produce better tomatoes, not just in taste but in nutritional value," Avila said. "We can introduce and select for tomatoes with high-content compounds like antioxidants, lycopenes and carotenoids that promote good health and help prevent human diseases."**

Those advantages are not found in imported tomatoes, Avila said, because tomatoes, not

necessarily intentionally, are selected for high yields and delayed ripening to extend shelf life.

When can growers and consumers expect improved varieties to be available?

**"I am starting a program basically from ground zero," Avila said. "It takes at least five years to develop advanced vegetable lines, and another three to test for yield and performance at different locations.**

**"However, in cooperation with other scientists at Texas A&M, we are starting to evaluate advanced breeding lines and cultivars," he said. "We expect to start seeing tomatoes produced locally in the supermarkets in a couple of years."**

read the entire story including new spinach varieties at: <http://today.agrilife.org/2015/12/14/new-tomato-spinach-varieties/>

### NEW winter hardy hibiscus colors

Have you ever been to Houston or Galveston and found yourself envying the huge and colorful hibiscus flowers? They are one climate zone warmer than Jasper.

Lots of hibiscus will grow in our area (*did you know that both mallow and okra are in that same family?*) But the bright, tropical colors

and especially difficult colors like **blue usually don't** tolerate the cold.



*That's about to change...*

View the entire story with pictures: <http://today.agrilife.org/2015/10/27/agrilife-researcher-develops-a-painters-palette-of-winter-hardy-hibiscus-colors/>