

Agriculture & Natural Resources
Family & Consumer Sciences

WINTER
2014

Soils Fertility and Soil Health is key to everything that grows or eats — including you. Whether you are talking about your lawn, flower beds, vegetable garden, hay field or grazing pasture, it all comes back to what does the soil need to be most productive and healthy.

This week kicks off the annual soil sample campaign. If you do a soil sample every year about the same time then you have a baseline to see how you are doing with your soil health plan. Pick up soil sample bags and instructions at our office or most feed stores in Jasper County and you can get your \$10 basic test done for only \$8 — plus you will save the cost of shipping it off to Stephen F. Austin State University soils lab, **if you turn it in to our office by this Friday, Dec. 5, at 4:30 pm.**

Come back in January when you have your results to compare notes and learn more at the soils clinic Jan. 15, 6 to 9 pm at Call Junction Baptist Church in Kirbyville, or schedule an appointment to go over SFASU's recommendations with our Ag Agent Brock Fry.

Now is the time of year you want to add soil amendments and get your yards and fields ready before spring planting and the 2015 growing season.

click for more: [Soil Sample Campaign](#)

Next up:
watch for the
**well water
campaign**

*to be
announced
for 2015*



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Texas A&M AgriLife

Extension Service, Jasper County
103 E. Houston St.
Jasper, TX 75951—409-384-3721

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

**NEW: Private Applicator
Pesticide Recertification
Program in Jasper —**

Last Chance videos
Thursday, Feb. 26, 8 am—5 pm

8 CEUs, 1.5 Laws & Regs, 2
IPM, Drift, General HRS

Cost: \$30 includes lunch

Place: Jasper County Ext. Office
103 E. Houston St.
Jasper, TX 75951

Please RSVP: 409-384-3721

NEW: Food Handler's class
announced for Jan. 31 — p. 9



Volunteer to help manage pesticide CEU programs in 2015 — by Brock Fry, Ag/NR

If you would like to volunteer to help manage pesticide educational programs for Jasper for 2015, I am interested in visiting with you. In 2014, Jasper Extension has trained about 30 individuals for TDA private applicator testing, and private applicators had the opportunity to receive more than 19 CEU hours for license renewal.

What would this volunteer do? They would assist with a monthly educational event (except November and December unless a special program is called). Facilitate and coordinate meetings. Report all necessary information to Extension personnel.

What benefits would this volunteer receive? Giving back to the community, working closely with Extension personnel, seeing that Extension is able to maximize its potential for offering CEU hours.

Private Applicator Facts!

Private Applicator -- A person who uses or supervises the use of restricted-use or state-limited-use pesticides for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity on property owned or rented by the person or the person's employer or under the person's general control; or on the property of another person if applied without compensation other than the trading of personal services between producers of agricultural commodities. An agricultural commodity is defined as a plant or animal grown for sale, lease, barter, feed or human consumption and animals

raised for farm or ranch work.

Private applicator licenses are valid for five years, and the applicator must obtain 15 CEUs during that time to renew.

Private Applicator Certificates -- From 1977 - 1989, TDA issued private applicator certificates (not licenses) under a voluntary program. Private applicators who originally obtained a private applicator certification prior to January 10, 1989, were "grandfathered" by the legislature, meaning the certificate does not expire; however, in 1989 the Texas Pesticide Regulations were revised to require recertification for all applicators, including certified applicators, in order to purchase or use restricted-use or state-limited-use pesticides. The "grandfathered" certificates had an issue number of 158532 or below. Because of computer advancements, when the original certificate is recertified, the applicator is given a new certificate number. Certified private applicators may not supervise an application of restricted use or state-limited-use pesticides. Certificate holders must obtain 15 CEUs every five years to keep the certificate valid.

The next opportunity to gain 8 CEU credit hours will be February 26, 2015 at the Extension office from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Lunch will be provided; this will cost \$30 per person.

Planned-overs, not left-overs, budget smart and tasty!

For seasonal healthy recipes visit FCS agent Cindy VanDevender's *Jasper County Health & Wellness* page [facebook.com/jaspercountyfcs/info](https://www.facebook.com/jaspercountyfcs/info)



Fire Ants

Early frost hasn't slowed fire ants down at all — if anything, the mounds are piled higher & deeper. Fight back with the latest information on fire ant control :

<http://fireant.tamu.edu/controlmethods/products/>



What does **NOT** work? Most "home remedies" for fire ant control just don't pass the science test, according to Extension service entomologist Wizzie Brown. Club soda, coffee grounds and cinnamon all failed. Read the whole article at: <http://fireant.tamu.edu/entomologist-testing-puts-bite-on-many-home-fire-ant-treatments/>



STATE resources, workshops & events

Pesticide Applicator Training

Texas A&M Agrilife Research Center
1710 N. Hwy 3053, Overton, TX 75684



Tuesday, Dec. 9, 7:30 am to 3 pm
5 CEUs, 1 Laws & Regs, 2 IPM & 2 General
Cost: \$30, includes lunch

Covers TDA Laws & Regs, integrated pest management, insect and disease issues and management, urban and suburban trees, turf diseases and pests, turf weed management.

For more information, contact Pam Hickman at 903-834-6191. Overton is approximately two hours drive, north of Jasper near Tyler. If you have a private applicator license, you need 15 CEUs within a 5 year period in order to renew your license without retaking the test.



Half the battle with invasive species is knowing how big the problem is, and where. To get more eyes in the field, the Texas Invasives program teaches people to observe and report pests to a database that scientists use to study the problem.

About 20 people recently took training in Jasper hosted by the Longleaf Ridge Master Naturalists, but if you missed it, you can take the training online anytime.

Texasinvasives.org Online Training



EMERALD ASH BORER

Would you like to become involved in the Invaders of Texas Program but don't have time to attend a workshop? Consider signing up for online training, which you can complete on your

own schedule. Topics include GPS use, detection reporting and much more. Get involved today by visiting www.texasinvasives.org/training/.

Creative Sausage Making

Rosenthal Meat Science & Tech Center,
Texas A&M, College Station
Jan. 16-17, 2015

This workshop isn't cheap at \$325 now (\$375 after Jan. 2), but you get hands on experience in sausage making, "from meat selection, ingredients, casings, stuffing, equipment, processing and finished product," according to Dr. Davey Griffin, workshop coordinator.

It's geared to beginners and novices who want to manufacture their own sausages, both smoked and fresh, and they will have the opportunity to take sausages home.

Visit <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu> and type in keyword "sausage." For more information, email Griffin at dgriff@tamu.edu or visit <http://animalscience.tamu.edu> for online registration.

Hunters: Beware

This year many hunters will travel to game ranches in south Texas for the thrill of hunting nilgai antelope and other exotic species in addition to trophy size white tail. TAHC (Texas Animal Health Commission) says be aware if you are hunting in a cattle fever tick quarantine area — know what to look for and what steps to take before you travel with your kill. Don't bring back any unwanted hitch hikers that can harm our cattle industry. Before you go, take a moment to view : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOLzGUKYwHE>

Resources to find CEU classes:
ceusearch.texasagriculture.gov/
Now is a good time if you hold a private applicator license to pull it out and check the expiration date. You need 15 CEUs in a 5-year period to be able to renew your license without retaking the test. Please don't wait until the last minute to try to take classes. Also, if you just want to learn more on a variety of topics, it's never been easier to find classes and webinars:
naturalresourcewebinars.tamu.edu/
also: agriliferegister.tamu.edu
"View all" to see classes that are open to the public for a small fee (and some are free).

East Texas events

Christmas parade in downtown Jasper, Dec. 4 starting at 5:30 pm. Music, hot chocolate, a chance to visit Santa...

Jasper Community Theater's 5th annual Christmas Show, Dec. 4—6, 7 pm each evening, "Madcap & Music"

Jasper County Sheriff Association benefit fish fry on Friday, Dec. 5, 10:30 am until sold out at the DuPont-Goodrich Federal Credit Union, Hwy 96 & 190 in Jasper

Tour of Homes, Dec. 11, 11 am to 7 pm
Each home has been decorated throughout by various local clubs and organizations; 7 homes in all, some in Jasper and some near Lake Sam Rayburn. Sponsored by the Woman's Civic Club of Jasper, tickets available at the Chamber of Commerce, Jasper Library or Jasper County Historical Museum. Call 409-384-5747 or 382-0832.

Famous Bake Sale fundraiser, Woman's Civic Club of Jasper, Dec. 11, Thursday, 11 am until it's all gone, at the corner of Milam and North Main St. in Jasper (1 block north of post office)

Open House at City Hall, Dec. 18, 1 to 4 pm, 465 S. Main, Jasper.

Chamber of Commerce Banquet, Jan. 30 at Wesley Center in Jasper, jaspercoc.org



SFA Gardens hosts wreath-making workshop

Saturday, Dec. 6, 9 am to noon
Pineywoods Native Plant Center
2900 S. Raguet, Nacodoches, TX

"Deck the Halls" uses evergreens to decorate for the holidays. Evergreen branches serve as symbols of enduring life and a fruitful year to come. Research associate Dawn Stoves shows how to create elegant wreaths, garlands and tabletop centerpieces using materials from the garden.

Limited seating so register in advance by calling 936-468-1832 or email erodewald@sfasu.edu. Cost is \$30 and includes all materials for class.

SFA Gardens hosts lecture by Dr. Dave Creech "The True and Unabridged Story..."

Thursday, Dec. 11, 7 pm
Pineywoods Native Plant Center
2900 S. Raguet, Nacodoches, TX

Parking is available at Raguet Elementary School, 2428 Raguet St., with continual shuttle service to the Ina Brundrett Conservation Education Building.

For more information, call Elyce Rodewald at (936) 468-1832

or email grant-damon@sfasu.edu.



AgriLife Today news

from a story by Kathleen Phillips

The online Texas Vegetable Selector helps growers choose the best varieties to grow in a particular locale, according to Dr. Joe Masabni, Texas A&M AgriLife horticulturist.

“It’s a one-stop website designed to help people throughout the state,” said Masabni, the site’s creator. “I collected the variety recommendations from all the counties and updated them with the currently available varieties.”

Using an interactive map, choose a location at http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg_variety/. If a specific county is selected, the user can select a specific vegetable or request all vegetables for that county. If “all vegetables” is selected, the list has categories of vegetables with several varieties for each and the number of growing days before harvest in the specific county, he added.

“Some crops and varieties can be grown in many regions. Other crops, such as onions, and some varieties, such as Celebrity tomato, are more adapted to particular regions,” Masabni said.

The database contains information for more than 240 counties, eight regions, 40 vegetables and 200 varieties. Regions don’t necessarily follow county lines. North Jasper County is region G, and South of Kirbyville choose region C.

“The list of varieties comes from two sources – results of research conducted by AgriLife Extension specialists and county agents and from demonstration trials,” he added. “Some varieties that are not on the list may have worked well for a gardening enthusiast but are not on our list, pending research-based trials.”

For more stories, photos, videos and audio: <http://today.agrilife.org>



‘Liking’ this page may help you treat what you don’t like on your plants



from an article by Kathleen Phillips

If you “like” the *Texas Plant Diagnostic Lab* on Facebook, it’s probably because there is something happening to your plants that you do not like.

Seeing yellow leaves or black spots, for example, is much the same for a plant having a rash is for humans. They mean a sickness is present, and there may be ways to treat it before it worsens, according to Dr. Kevin Ong, director of the Texas Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab in College Station.

“Facebook lets us provide information with many people,” said Ong, who started the page, <https://www.facebook.com/TXPlantClinic>.

Texas Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab — aka the Plant Clinic — helps folks know what types of samples to send for diagnosis and increases awareness of newly emerging or seasonal issues – some of which can be taken care of easily.

Home gardeners and commercial growers are welcome to provide samples to the clinic for a low-cost diagnosis and information about diseases, prevention and treatment.

“Physical sample submission to the lab is still the best approach to get an accurate diagnosis to your plant problems,” Ong said.

The clinic’s staff posts pictures of the “sample of the week” showing common plant issues that others may be experiencing, and links to publications that describe common problems. Ong also posts about new pests such as the spotted lanternfly found in Pennsylvania, and gave advice on what to do if the insect is spotted in Texas.

“This one is not too friendly on fruits — grapes, stone fruit and others,” he posted. “Hope that it will not get to Texas. So Texas peeps – if you see something like this, call your Extension county office or us at the TX Plant Clinic.”

For more, visit the clinic’s website at <http://plantclinic.tamu.edu>, phone 979-845-8032, or email plantclinic@ag.tamu.edu.

Where have all the wild birds gone?

This time of year, people frequently ask that question, remembering that last year their bird feeders were busy places with hungry mouths.

Fact in, there is a lull between when hummingbirds leave (late September/October) and when birds will visit your feeders. November/December is a time rich with berries, seeds and acorns abundant in the wild, so local birds are happy in the field. Also, many migratory species have not yet arrived from up north.

Continue to stock feeders, sparingly, until one day soon you find you are covered up with feathered friends.



BirdSleuth eNews: Cornell Lab of Ornithology has a wealth of free resources for birders, kids and educators. They also have a small stock of kits and gifts for birders on sale, including bird ID cards, scavenger hunt cards and bird bingo cards. Stocking stuffers!

<http://www.birdsleuth.org/winter-specials/>



Calling all **bird watchers!** Look for holes in trees!

Teaching bird watchers to identify the signs of invasive pests while bird watching can significantly increase eyes in the field. To assist this effort, Don't Move Firewood has developed a special handout called "*Birdwatcher's Guide to Holes in Trees.*" To learn more and download the resource, visit dontmovefirewood.org.

**DON'T MOVE
FIREWOOD.org**

Moving firewood from one area to another can spread diseases like Oak Wilt or transport invasive insects that we don't want in Jasper County.



[click here
facebook
link](#)

New: **Food Handler's class & 2-year certificate**

Jan. 31, 2015 — 9 am to noon
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office
103 East Houston St.—Jasper TX
RSVP required: 409-384-3721

Q. Who needs a Food Handler card?

A. All Texas food service workers are required to obtain food handlers training & license. If you are preparing and/or serving food to the public, you need a license. This includes unpaid volunteers, even serving free samples.

The Texas Department of State Health Services accredited food handlers program is recommended for all food service workers to promote food safety. The class is a basic overview of food safety principles and practices that are necessary to be sure you serve safe food. It covers storing food at proper temperatures; how to avoid cross contamination between raw meat and fresh salads; basic hygiene (wash your hands!) and more.

The 2-year certificate is accepted anywhere in Texas. Anyone preparing, serving or selling food under Texas Cottage Food Law must also have this card, or be under the direct supervision of someone with a card.

\$20 for class and certificate, pay at the door, but we need your RSVP so we know how many handouts to prepare.

Call 409-384-3721

Fresh Texas sweet potatoes — flavorful & healthy

from an article in AgriLife Today by Kathleen Phillips

At a time of year when people toss aside any notion of dieting, the sweet potato — depending on what's added to it — is among the healthiest holiday dishes—almost fat free, low calorie, high fiber and packed with vitamin A, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Vitamin A helps maintain healthy skin, teeth, skeletal and soft tissue, mucous membranes and eyes, according to the National Institute of Health, and is rich in beta-carotene that protects cells from damage by free radicals.

If a Texas-grown sweet potato finds its way to your table, all the better, though the Texas sweet potato industry has been peeling back in recent years, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture figures. Aging farmers and lack of labor weighed in as causes, but chief among the impacts was the drought of 2011-12, since Texas production was historically grown without irrigation in East Texas where rainfall had been plentiful.

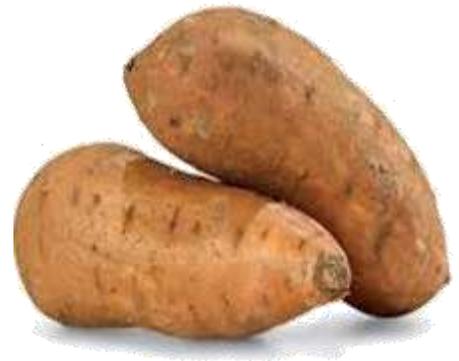
Sweet potatoes are labor intensive from planting — where the slips are hand cut and transplanted — to harvest where up to eight people ride a machine to field grade potatoes that are dug two rows at a time.

Sweet potatoes sold soon after harvest are 'green' potatoes and are not sweet if baked. Those held in storage for seven or eight weeks are sold as 'cured' or 'kiln dried' and that indicates they will be sweet and moist when baked. Harvested sweet potatoes are moved quickly out of the field to prevent sun scald and are placed in a curing room at 85-90 degrees with 85-95 percent humidity for up to a week to heal cuts and bruises. This makes them look better and be less susceptible to disease. Once cured, they can be stored for several months at 55-60 degrees.

Dr. Joe Masabni, Texas A&M vegetable specialist, offers a publication, *Easy Gardening: Sweet Potato*, to help people who want to grow their own sweet potatoes. It can be downloaded for free at <http://www.agrilifebookstore.org/Texas-Sweet-Potato-p/eht-026.htm>

“For home growers, the best time to harvest is immediately before or after the first fall frost, when the leaves turn yellow,” Masabni says. Now, in other words.

Find more stories at:
<http://today.agrilife.org>



Prescribed Burning School Feb. 19—21 & Advanced, March 6-8

From a story by: Kay Ledbetter, skledbetter@ag.tamu.edu

The Academy for Ranch Management will host two rangeland burning schools in February and March at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research station between Sonora and Rocksprings.

Prescribed Rangeland Burning School will be Feb. 19-21, according to Ray Hinnant, an AgriLife Research senior research associate. This workshop provides an overview of prescribed burning and includes the history of fire, weather, planning a burn, fuels and fuel moisture, and equipment.

The Advanced Rangeland Burning March 6-8 builds on the previous school, providing more information on fire behavior, fire effects, and planning and conducting a prescribed burn.

The cost for each event is \$395 including meals and lodging. In addition, Hinnant said, there will be a \$45 facilities-use fee due upon arrival for each school.

The Academy for Ranch Management is a program of AgriLife Research and the Texas A&M University department of ecosystems science and management in College Station. The Sonora facilities provide a teaching laboratory for hands-on experience.

Hinnant and Dr. Charles “Butch” Taylor, superintendent of the research station, are prescribed burning board lead instructors. Other speakers include Dr. Mort Kothmann, Texas A&M ecosystems science and management professor, and Nick Garza, an AgriLife Research associate at Sonora.

The Academy for Ranch Management has provided prescribed burn training to more than 200 participants, Hinnant said. Over 150 students have passed the Texas Prescribed Burning Board’s course, which is the educational component to apply for a **Certified and Insured Prescribed Burn Manager license**.

Also provided is an introductory course in prescribed fire for those interested in helping as a volunteer on a burn or to burn on their own ranch, he said.

“Our classes are limited in enrollment so that the participants can ask specific questions about their ranch or land management burning and to have camaraderie with other participants with similar problems and potential solutions,” Hinnant said.



Fire in north Jasper County during the drought of 2011

“This course provides the basics of prescribed burning and can be used throughout the state of Texas,” he said. “We have also had volunteer firefighters and landowners and managers in several other states take the prescribed burning classes.”

Successful completion of both courses and a passing grade on the exam provide the educational component to begin application for a private, commercial, government or not-for-profit certified prescribed burn manager through the Texas Department of Agriculture, Hinnant said.

Persons interested in attending either school should go to www.agrilife.org/arm for a registration form, and mail it and payment to Jeanne Andreski. Hinnant also asked those planning to attend to send him an email so he can get them on the list.

For more information, Ray Hinnant, 979-820-1778, ray.hinnant@gmail.com