

Gillespie County

Horticulture Newsletter
Late Winter Early Spring 2022



Is it Spring Yet?

I need to confess, I'm a bit tired of winter already. We recently had our first ice storm of the year, and while I love all the moisture, bundling up in my coveralls got tiresome after a while. The prep work for that ice storm inspired the "Covering Plants" article for this quarter's newsletter.



No bluebonnets yet, but coming soon! Picture by Beth McMahon.

Spring fever is here, and there are a lot of gardening programs coming up. I personally would like to recommend our Plantastic Gardening Seminar on March 4th. Due to popular request we've added a fruit program, with more programs to come about fruit in the future.

On the program surveys there has always been a big interest in soil health. This year we are pulling in Justin Duncan from NCAT to speak at Plantastic on this topic. I've heard him speak before and was thoroughly impressed.

If you have any questions or would like to email me, contact me at Elizabeth.mcmahon@ag.tamu.edu or 830-997-3452.

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Fast Facts about Ball Moss



- Ball moss is an epiphyte, which is a plant that grows on another plant.
- It forms a pseudo root instead of a real root, which helps it to cling to things. On its leaves are tiny scales, and this is how it absorbs water. It has flowers and seeds like a normal plant. It does not suck nutrients or water from a tree.
- It's in the bromeliad family, same as pineapples.
- Some people say that ball moss can weight down limbs and cause them to break. This is unlikely because ball moss does not weigh much. The limb likely had some kind of rot issue, or died back due to lack of sunlight.
- Ball moss can get thick enough on a struggling tree to shade out tree foliage, but it usually isn't an issue on most trees.
- Moist wet conditions in the spring encourage more ball moss.
- Ball moss can be removed by hand. This is the fastest method to get it out of your tree, though it is expensive.
- A copper fungicide like Kocide 3000 or potassium bicarbonate and water mixture can kill ball moss. It will take time to drop out of the tree.
- These sprays should be done when the tree doesn't have any leaves or when it's defoliating. For live oaks, this is about February or March, though it depends on the tree.
- Pruning the dead limbs from your tree by an experienced arborist might go far to decrease your ball moss problem.



A healthy live oak can be covered with ball moss on the inside of the canopy.

Rosettes of Spring

These aren't weeds but pretty wildflowers. Avoid spraying these.



Engelmann Daisy



Indian Blanket



Prairie Verbena

Plantastic Gardening. Seminar

March 4th, 2022
8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE:
MARCH 1ST 2022

8:30am - 9:00am Registration

9:00am - 10:15am Welcome

Cover crops for Gardens (Justin Duncan)

10:30am - 11:45am

Soil Health in Gardens (Justin Duncan)

11:45am - 12:30pm Lunch

12:30pm - 1:15pm Breakout Session 1

- Tomatoes (Connie Townsend)
- Basic Gardening 101 (Pat Wolters)
- Vegetable Transplants: Traditional Pots & Soil Blocks (Beth McMahon)

1:30pm - 2:15pm Breakout Session 2

- Tomatoes (Connie Townsend)
- Container Gardening (Allen Mace)
- Growing Fruits in the Texas Hill Country (Beth McMahon)

2:25pm - 3:10pm Breakout Session 3

- Container Gardening (Allen Mace)
- Gardening 101 (Pat Wolters)
- Growing Fruits in the Texas Hill Country (Beth McMahon)

3:10pm - 3:30pm Q & A Session

****A paper registration copy is available by request ****

**DOOR
PRIZES**

Location:

38 Business Ct.
Fredericksburg
Tx 78624

Please Contact
the Gillespie
County
Extension Office
for more
information at
(830) 997-3452

Cost:

Pre-Registration

\$35 lunch included

\$25 no lunch
included

Day of program:

\$25 no lunch
included

Please use the
QR code below
to register
online

****A \$2 fee is applied to
online registration****



The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Growing Cole Crops in the Garden

February is the perfect time of year to plant your cole crops. See below for specific guidelines.



- Plant February (Early March) & September (Late August)
- Space 1.5 ft apart
- Varieties: "Green Magic F1", "Packman F1" & "Burney" F1
- Harvest: When crowns are tight, full sized. Secondary side-shoots can be harvested too.



- Plant February & September (Late August)
- Space 1.5 ft apart
- Varieties: "Flamestar", "DePurple", "Snow Crown"
- Harvest: Full size, this depends on plant size.
- Notes: Needs cold temps to produce head. Barely frost tolerant.



- Plant September & February
- Space 1.5 ft apart
- Varieties: "Greenboy F1", "Red Roadie F1"
- Harvest: When heads feel firm.



- Plant February/March & September
- Space 4-10 inches between plants, depending on end desired size.
- Varieties: "Early White Vienna", "Terek F1"
- Harvest: Start harvesting at 2-3 inch diameter, storage varieties at larger size.

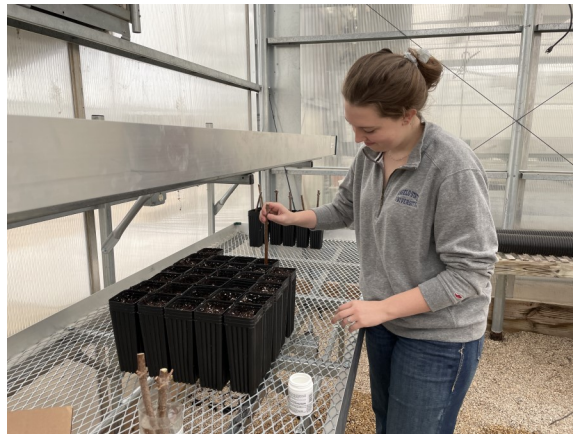


- Plant late August/September & February/Early March
- Space 1-1.5 ft apart
- Varieties: "Red Russian", "Winterbor F1"
- Harvest: Start harvesting once plant is a foot tall.

Elderberry Trial Update



Horticulture extension agent Beth McMahon fills pots with soil.



Assistant Extension Agent Sydney Jones sticks the cuttings in the pots.



First variety, "Wlydewood" has been stuck and is ready for rooting.

New this year, the Gillespie and Kerr County Extension Offices will be holding an elderberry trial. Elderberries are used for making cordials, jellies, drinks and more. The fruit is supposed to have anti-viral and antioxidant properties. Large scale production of elderberry is rare, though the fruiting shrub does grow wild near waterways and in some parts of Gillespie County.

For the trial, three varieties will be tested: "Marge", "Adams" & "Wlydewood". Plants will be started from cuttings, as demonstrated in the pictures. A location in Fredericksburg and a location in Hunt will be planted this April. This is a three year trial, with the goal to have production by 2025. Stay tuned to this newsletter for updates.

Chill Hour Update

Under 45 F

545

32-45 F

320



The Hill Country Master Gardeners will be hosting their annual plant sale April 9th, at the Hill District Youth Event Center (3785 TX-27, Kerrville, TX 78028) in Kerrville. Doors open at 9 AM. Be there early, because plants tend to sell out.

Protect Your Plants From the Cold

Texas weather can be difficult to predict. One must be prepared to cover landscape and vegetable garden plants to protect them against cold damage. Before you choose a cover, you need to understand the difference between a frost and a freeze. Frosts usually occur if the sky is clear and the air is still. The sun heats the plants

and the soil during the day. At night this heat is slowly lost and the plants freeze, usually from the top-downward. The worst of these events can be when the weather is cloudy during the day and clear at night. Some low-lying areas may be more prone to frosts than others. Freezes bring a sudden harsh drop in temperature, usually with wind. These are commonly cold fronts. Plants don't have heat radiating up-

wards, and freeze damage can be uniform throughout the plant. I consider February freezes to be the worst because plants can be emerging from dormancy, only to be hit with a killing blast.

When a frost or freeze is imminent, water the ground a couple of days beforehand. Wet ground releases more heat than dry ground, and well-hydrated plants will be more able to withstand the weather.

Plant covers include many different things. Old blankets, heavy drapes, thick sheets, or thin sheets in multiple layers will work if you need to cover rows. Frost blankets can be used for more long-term plantings, but they can only provide up to four degrees of frost protection. For more cold protection,

heavy frost blankets can be used. These provide between six and ten degrees of protection but do not let light in.

While clear plastic is helpful for keeping the covered section warmer during the day, the heat can be lost at night. Clear tunnels should be covered during frost & freeze events to prevent this heat loss.

To cover individual plants you can use boxes or buckets. Whatever you use, make sure the cover touches the ground so that it can form an air pocket above the plant.

If a hard freeze is imminent, use multiple layers and consider using lights with the plants as well. Make sure to secure the lights and have nothing touching them so they are not a fire risk. LED lights do not

put out any heat, so avoid these. The best lights are the old fashioned Christmas lights.

Cold frames and greenhouses are other options than covering, provided the power doesn't go out.

For a heavy-duty type of covering when a bad cold front blows in, use an aluminum space blanket. This type of blanket reflects all heat downward, but needs to be sealed up tightly to prevent heat loss. Colorado Extension did some trials with this method. With old fashioned Christmas lights (Not LED) and a space blanket, they were able to give eighteen to thirty degrees of frost protection.

There isn't much you can do if you miss the chance to cover your plants. Pouring water to wash off the frost will make your problem worse. The sudden increase of temperature from the water is more likely to rupture cells than a slow increase of temperature. If you forget to cover, covering later might help the plants warm up slower, which might decrease this rupturing.



Sheets are cheap, but may crush plants. Picture by Beth McMahon.



Space blanket experiment done by Colorado Extension. Picture David Whiting



The popularity of backyard chickens has skyrocketed over the past couple of years. Owning laying hens has a vast number of benefits to not only yourself but your family and even your community. This article will discuss many tips and tricks of how to start and maintain a backyard chicken coop.

Most people decide to start with newly hatched chicks to experience the full life cycle of the chickens. A brooder will need to be set up to keep the chicks at an

By Sydney Jones, *Gillespie County Assistant Extension Agent*

ideal temperature, allow easy access to food and water. Once you have your brooder set up in a protected, clean area you can determine the breed/sex and number of chicks to purchase. The breed of your chicks will be determined by where you live, egg production, life span, what is available, etc. Several popular laying hen breeds are: Speckled Sussex, White Leghorn, Rhode Island Red, and Plymouth Rock. Starting with 2 - 4 chicks is suggested, you can always add to your flock later if you want. When ordering chicks from a local hatchery or online, avoid ordering roosters/cockerels to ensure that you get only hens/pullets. Adding a rooster to your group of hens will result in fertilized eggs and more chicks than you need in the future.

Your chicks will spend about 6 weeks in the brooder before they are large enough to be moved into a coop. A premade chicken coop can easily be order and installed or created if resources and time are available. It is always a great recommendation to build/buy larger than you think you will need. The coop will need some form of bedding in the nesting boxes and on the floor of the hen house. This can be straw, shavings, pellets, or any other bedding. Allowing your chickens access to a run or free range during the day will keep your hens healthy but they will still require a high-quality poultry feed. If you are planning on ranging your flock, you will need to keep the kens in their coop for about a week to



Cardboard brooder.



Chicken coop.

train them to understand that the coop is their home. Clipping the wings of your chickens will help contain your free-range chickens within a fenced in area. Once the chicks reach about 6 months of age you can start to expect a few eggs. This is based on season, breed, and many other factors. As the hens age their egg production will slowly decline.

Starting a backyard flock of chickens can save you money, connects you to the agricultural aspect of your community, and so much more. Within the city limits of Fredericksburg is it not prohibited to own chickens, roosters, turkeys, or ducks “provided that the owners or harbors of the

same comply with the provisions of sections 4-17, 4-18, and 4-20” (Ord. No. 16-001, § 4-16, 1-23-2006, Fredericksburg – Code of Ordinances).

Save the Dates

Gillespie County

Plantastic Gardening Seminar.

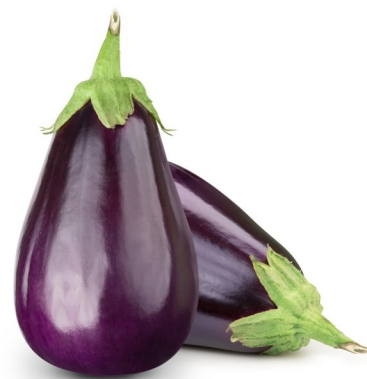
March 4th, 2022. 8:30(9:00) AM – 3:30 PM. Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.

Two main general sessions in morning, covering cover crops and soil health for gardens. Afternoon breakout session topics include tomatoes, gardening 101, growing transplants, fruit trees, and container gardening. Cost is \$35 with lunch, \$25 without lunch or \$25 at door. Register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/plantastic-gardening-seminar-tickets-232179885287> or print off the registration form at <https://gillespie.agrilife.org/agriculture-2/horticulture/upcoming-programs/> and mail it to the Gillespie County Extension Office. Contact the Gillespie County Extension Office with questions.

Grow It Cook It Eggplant

April 1st, 2022. 12:00-1:00 pm.

Come join us at the Gillespie County Extension Office to learn how to grow and cook eggplant. \$15 per program, \$25 per series. Call the Gillespie County Extension Office at 830-997-3452 to register.



Eggplant.
Picture credit: <https://cornershopapp.com/en-us/products/2ifma-eggplant-ideal-food-basket>

Outside Gillespie County

Raised Beds & Square Foot Gardening

February 10th, 2022. 10:00 AM-12:00 PM, Kendall County Court House Commissioners Court Room (3rd Floor), 201 East San Antonio Street, Boerne.

Ten dollars per class, or \$40 for all five classes.

Container Gardening

February 12th, 2022. 10:00 AM-11:00 AM. Butt-Holdsworth Library, Kerrville.

Free presentation on container gardening given by Master Gardener Anne Brown.

Texas A&M Turfgrass Short Course

February 28th – March 3rd. Dallas, Texas.

In-person program covering multiple turfgrass topics, including identification, selection, planting, nutrient management, etc. Intended for turf professionals and enthusiasts. Five Pesticide Applicator CEUS available. Can do single day only if needing CEUS. Breakfast, lunch, snacks, water and coffee provided. For the complete program, it is \$600. For just the 5 hour CEU day, it is \$60.



Thunderturf at Lady Bird Wildflower Center in 2017.

Save the Dates

Outside Gillespie County

Focus on Vegetables

March 10th, 2022. 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, Kendall County Court House Commissioners Court Room (3rd Floor), 201 East San Antonio Street, Boerne.

Ten dollars per class, or forty for all five classes. Class will focus on specific vegetable families and growing tomatoes. Contact the Kendall County Extension Office at 830-331-8242 with questions. Registration due at program.

Shrubs and Trees

March 12th, 2022. 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM. Butt-Holdsworth Library, Kerrville, Texas.

Free presentation on shrubs and trees for the area, given by Master Gardener Anne Brown.

Burnet County Master Gardener Lawn and Garden Show

*March 26th, 2022. 10:00 AM-4:00 PM, Burnet County Extension Office, 607 North Vandev-
eer, Burnet.*

Silent auction, quilt raffle, garden vendors, and educational presentations throughout the day. Free entry to show. Contact the Highland Master Gardeners at highlandlakesmga@gmail.com for more information.

Companion Planting

April 2nd, 2022. 10:00-11:00 AM. Butt-Holdsworth Library, Kerrville.

Free presentation on companion planting, given by Connie Townsend.

Llano County Master Gardener Plant Sale

April 2nd, 2022. 8:00 AM—Sell-out. Llano County Courthouse lawn.

Lots of plants for sale and raffle.

Gardening Pests & Diseases

*April 7th, 2022. 10:00 AM-12:00 PM, Kendall County Court House
Commissioners Court Room (3rd Floor), 201 East San Antonio Street, Boerne.*

Learn about common pests and diseases in local gardens. Contact the Kendall County Extension Office at 830-331-8242 with questions. Registration due at program.

Hill Country Master Gardener Plant Sale

*April 9th, 2022. 9:00 AM-1:00 PM. Hill District Youth Event Center. 3785 HWY 27 East, Kerr-
ville.*

Lots of native and locally adapted plants for sale, as well as a garden shed with gardening materials. Rain barrels available too. Arrive as soon as it starts for best selection. Credit cards not accepted.



*Aphids on silverleaf nightshade
leaf. Picture by Beth McMahon.*

Upcoming Webinars

William County Master Gardeners Vegetable Trials Overview

February 14th, 2022. 7:00—8:00 PM.

Covers results of trial. Also will mention marigolds, parsnips and potatoes and share tips and advice. Free. Register online here: <https://williamson.agrilife.org/event/master-gardener-monthly-meeting-2/>

Crape Myrtle Bark Scale Q&A Webinar

February 28th, 2022. 1:00—2:00 PM.

Due to increase in Crape Myrtle Bark Scale, a free webinar will be hosted by Dr. Mengmeng Gnu at https://tamu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJUqcO-qqj8oGd16t0MxgonFR7_3MxQfgDQq. Intended for nursery professionals or landscaping enthusiasts. Send questions to mgu@tamu.edu before February 14th to facilitate the session.

Integrated Wildlife Damage Management

April 7th, 2022. 12:00—1:00 PM.

RWFM Stewardship Webinar Series. One pesticide application CEU (IPM) available. Cost is \$35. Contact Dr. Morgan Treadwell at morgan.treadwell@ag.tamu.edu for information on how to register.

Beekeeping 101 Virtual Series

March 28th & 29th. April 6th & 7th. 6:00 - 8:00 PM.

Four sessions. Cost is \$45. Will cover honey bee biology, bee keeping basics, what to expect the first year, and risks of honeybees. Participants will get bee keeping information mailed to them. Optional field day in Leon Springs area of San Antonio, tentative date in April. Register online at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/3639> . Contact Molly Keck at mekeck@ag.tamu.edu for more information.

Weedy Rosettes of Spring

While these may be pretty flowers, they are undesirable weeds too. These are recommended to be sprayed.



Malta Star Thistle



Erodium (Storks bill)



Musk Thistle



Bur-Clover

Lawn & Landscape Calendar

February

- Prune roses after Valentines day.
- Prune back ornamental grasses. Do not cut too deeply into the crown.
- Watching weather, apply summer weed pre-emergent.
- Water lawn and landscape if needed.
- As liveoaks lose their leaves, apply Kocide 3000 to control ball moss.
- Prune liveoaks on cold days.
- Plant cole crops like broccoli and cabbage. Delay planting of young transplants if hard freeze is imminent.
- Complete fruit tree pruning at bloom.

March

- Plant potatoes in early part of March.
- If weather has been cold and soil temps are below 50 F, apply a lawn pre-emergent for control of summer weeds.
- Plant perennial ornamentals and all trees.
- If you want a head-start and are willing to cover, plant tomatoes in your vegetable garden, starting after the middle of March.

April

- Plant bulbs such as gladiolas or caladiums.
- On spring blooming bulbs, allow foliage to die and yellow before removing.
- Plant perennial ornamentals and all trees.
- Plant all warm season crops in your vegetable garden, but watch for possible frosts in the first part of April.
- Check lawn irrigation to make sure it is functional and putting out adequate water in all spots. Place a low container or can in multiple areas to make certain each area is receiving adequate water.

Office Closures

We will be closed on February 21st,
March 2nd, and April 15th.



2022 GROW IT COOK IT SERIES

**Interested in growing fruit/vegetables,
cooking them, & then eating them?**

Look no further!

Sign up for our 3 part series

Eggplant - April 1st

Okra - May 13th

Strawberries - September 23rd

**Register for individual
programs at \$15 each or
all 3 programs for \$25.**

**Please contact the Gillespie
County Extension Office to**

Register!

830-997-3452

**Programs are
12-1 pm
& to be held at
38 Business Court,
Fredericksburg TX**

**TEXAS A&M
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EXTENSION**

Name That Plant!



What is the name of this plant? First person to respond with the correct answer will get their name featured in next quarter's newsletter.

Last Newsletter's Plant

*Last newsletter winner was David Braun
The answer was grape hyacinth.*



Picture policy-Unless specifically cited, all pictures were taken by the author of this newsletter. This newsletter is a publication that comes out seasonally. If you would like to stop receiving this newsletter, please contact me at elizabeth.mcmahon@ag.tamu.edu.

*For other questions, comments, and concerns, please contact us at:
Gillespie County Extension office
38 Business Court
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-997-3452*

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, sexual orientation or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Information compiled by Elizabeth McMahon, Gillespie County Horticulture Agent, except where indicated.

Plantastic Vegetable Gardening Seminar March 4th, 2022 Pre-Registration Form

Pre-registration is due at office by March 1st, 2022.

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email address: _____

Zip Code: _____

Cost is \$35 with meal, \$25 without meal, or \$25 dollars register at door (no meal). Meal is a boxed lunch from Clear River. Circle yes or no if you want the meal, then circle and check your sandwich option.

Yes No

Sandwich Option	White Bread	Wheat Bread	Gluten Free
Ham			
Turkey			
Chicken Salad			
Avocado Veggie			
Chipotle Chicken Wrap	Flour Tortilla Option Only		

Mail form with payment to Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Service, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg, Texas. Registration is **due at office** on March 1st, 2022. Full refunds for paper registration will be given until March 1st.

We'd like to email you an anonymous follow-up survey on how your garden went. Filling out this survey is voluntary. The intent is to find out if the program was helpful to you or not. Circle yes if you are ok with receiving the survey, or no if you do not want it emailed to you.

Yes

☐

No

☐