

# Gillespie County

Horticulture Newsletter  
Winter 2024



## A Better Spring is Coming!

It's time to start preparing for flower, fruit & vegetable gardening. Come join the Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Office or your local county office for some of the gardening programs we offer this time of year.

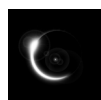
Wondering if some of those wildflowers you planted in the fall are coming up? Check out the wildflower rosette guide on page 4. With the moisture we have received this should be a good wildflower year.

Can't function without your morning coffee? Bees can be caffeine addicts too. Read "Strange Tales of Horticulture" on page nine to learn more.

If you have any questions, please email me at [elizabeth.mcmahon@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:elizabeth.mcmahon@ag.tamu.edu) or call me at the office at 830-997-3452.



### Looking for Information Regarding the Upcoming April Eclipse?



Dr. Tiffany Lashmet, Extension Ag Law Specialist with Texas A&M University, did a podcast on how Hill Country landowners can prepare for the upcoming eclipse. Check out this podcast and others at <https://podbay.fm/p/ag-law-in-the-field/e/1690473600>

*Picture by Steren. From freeimages.com*

TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION

## Highlights

**Plant Shopping Tips Pg. 2**

**Sunflower Seeds For Birds Pg. 3**

**Wildflower or Weed Pg. 4**

**Upcoming Invasives to Watch for Pg. 6**

**Hill Country Vegetable Variety Trial Pg. 8**

**Strange Tales of Horticulture Pg. 9**

**Upcoming Programs Pg. 10**

# Top Five Tips to Help Avoid Spending Too Much from a Plant Catalog



Plant and seed catalogs have descriptions that make any plant they sell sound as if it's the best plant in the world, whether or not it is actually suited for our area.

Here are some tips to help limit your spending.

- 1. Inventory**-Know what you have already and what space you have to plant things. Think over purchases overnight. Do not impulse buy.
- 2. Shop Around**- Many companies sell the same plants. Compare seed prices, the number of seeds or plants you are getting, and most importantly, shipping costs.
- 3. Buy or Trade**-Buy in bulk or trade with a fellow gardener.
- 4. Limit Your "Experiments"**- Is this kind of plant on any recommendation lists? Has it been known to grow here? It's fun to experiment, because new plant varieties can push boundaries and sometimes you will get unexpected surprises, but consider the basic growing requirements before purchasing.
- 5. Buy From a Reputable Company**- Influencers with blogs or Instagram channels are paid to sell you things, whether or not they have used them or not. Don't buy off Etsy or Amazon. Reviews can be faked on these sites as well as google. Check garden watchdog at <https://davesgarden.com/products/gwd/> for more legitimate reviews.



## Gillespie County Chill Hour Update

Want to know the latest number of chill hours Fredericksburg has received? Please see <https://gillespie.agrilife.org/agriculture-2/horticulture/chill-hours/> for updates. Chill hours started getting tracked on December 11th, 2023 after the temperature dipped to 27° F at the Gillespie County Extension Office.

## Current Chill Hours

Chill Hours as of 11:00 AM  
1/12/2024

Under 45 F Model: 322  
35 F - 45 F Model: 240

## Black Oil Sunflower Seed for Bird Feeding

By Dr. Calvin Trostle, Professor and Extension Agronomist



Fig. 1. Sunflower seed for bird feeding, a product that emphasizes "black" as suitable for bird feeding. (Calvin Trostle)

I gifted my in-laws a bird feeder and seed for Christmas. Mom & Dad did a lot of birding when they lived in Michigan then in West Texas. But age and health have ended that. I was reminded that those feeding birds place a premium on "black" oilseed sunflower. And marketing takes advantage of that. Among all sunflower seeds these are black oilseed sunflowers. This is akin to "Black" Angus beef that is marketed at the meat counter and in restaurants. (It might even be "certified" Black Angus beef.) In the commercial sunflower industry sunflower seeds are commonly divided into 'oilseed' and 'confectionary.' Both oilseed and confectionary sunflowers are used in bird feeding.

Smaller resident songbirds and other birds of beauty usually have the beak necessary—like a cardinal—to crack the sunflower seed and extract the meat inside. The birds spit out the shell. They do not eat it. This is most common for oilseed sunflowers which are smaller in size (Fig. 2A). Larger birds with the proper beak can handle the confectionary sunflower seed, which most commonly is striped (Fig. 2B).

According to the National Sunflower Association the birdfood industry in the U.S. is more than \$3 billion annually for the seed. Bird feeders and other accessories can approach \$1 billion a year. Contractors for oilseed sunflower for birds have lower specs for seed quality, including seed that may not be fully mature. Regardless, the seed still has >30% oil and likely near 40%. This represents fat and energy that is especially important for overwintering birds.

### Do oilseed sunflowers for bird feeding have to be black?

No. As noted above the 'black' of oilseed bird feeding is likely a product of marketing. Many oilseed sunflowers are light to dark gray. It does not matter to the birds! I had a caller one time who was adamant that oil seed sunflower for birds had to be black, not gray. That was the concept she had been sold.



Figs. 2A&B. Black oilseed sunflower (from above bag) vs. striped (confectionary) sunflower seed that is suitable for larger birds. Oilseed sunflower for birds does not have to be 'black' but may be gray. Striped sunflower is not bred for oil content but is still a preferred food source for many larger birds (A, Calvin Trostle; B, Krankate/Getty Images).

### Can I avoid the mess of sunflower hulls on my balcony?

Some avid birders would love to have a birdfeeder, but they live in an apartment or other limited location where the mess of sunflower hulls on the ground, their balcony, or their neighbor below, is not acceptable. Sunflower hearts and chips are sold for this purpose. These are the meats from inside the shell. Birds do not have to crack the shell only to spit it out. The price may be double.

### Can you grow your own sunflower for bird feeding?

This is possible. Many gardeners will save their sunflower heads with seed and put them out later for bird feeding. It takes more effort to shell off the seed to place in a birdfeeder. The seed you purchase at a garden store is very expensive if you wish to plant sunflowers to collect the seed. Some online seed catalogs like Johnny's Seeds do sell sunflower seed (oilseed or striped) you can grow for bird food. This is much better than using the small packets that have 50-100 seeds for which you pay \$2-3/packet. Commercial companies like Croplan, Nuseed, and Pioneer do not sell sunflower seed in bags less than about 40 lbs. for birdfood growers. Do not feed commercial planting seed to birds. It is treated with fungicides and other chemicals to protect seedling growth, and this could sicken birds.

*This weekly agronomic Memo for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension county agents is compiled by Dr. Calvin Trostle, Professor & Extension Agronomist, Lubbock. Permission is granted to AgriLife Extension personnel to use this information as you see fit for Extension education purposes (newsletters, web posting, social media, etc.).*



# Wildflower or Weed?

## Picture Guide for Identifying Common Winter Rosettes

Winter rains encourage both wildflower and weed growth. Common cool season rosettes are pictured here. Use these to tell if you have a wildflower or weed.



Name: Indian Blanket  
Verdict: **Wildflower**. Non-toxic, enjoyed by livestock.



Name: Star Thistle  
Verdict: Invasive **Weed**. Sheep will graze when small. Toxic to horses. *Flower picture by TAMU Rangelands.*



Name: Storksbill, Wild Geranium, Filaree  
Verdict: **Weed**, but a pretty weed. *Flower picture by Aggie Turf.*



Name: Burclover  
Verdict: **Weed**. Non-toxic, grazed by livestock. *Flower picture by Casey Reynolds.*



Name: Engelmann daisy  
Verdict: **Wildflower**. *Flower picture by TAMU Rangelands.*



Name: Texas Bluebonnet  
Verdict: **Wildflower**.



Name: Ten Petal Anemone  
Verdict: **Wildflower**.



Name: Texas Groundsel, Squawweed  
Verdict: **Weed**. Toxic. *Flower picture by TAMU Rangelands.*



LEARN HOW TO GROW, PREPARE AND COOK THE VEGETABLE



**IRISH  
POTATOES**  
**FEBRUARY 28**

**YELLOW  
SQUASH**  
**APRIL 24**

**BROCCOLI**  
**AUGUST 7**

**12:00 PM - 1:00 PM**  
**Gillespie County Extension Office**  
**38 Business Court, Fredericksburg**

**Call (830) 997-3452 to register.**  
**Credit Cards not accepted.**

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

**TEXAS A&M**  
**AGRI LIFE**  
**EXTENSION**



# Upcoming Invasives to Watch For

## Emerald Ash Borer



In Gillespie County only stressed trees fall victim to borers. This could change if the emerald ash borer invades the county.

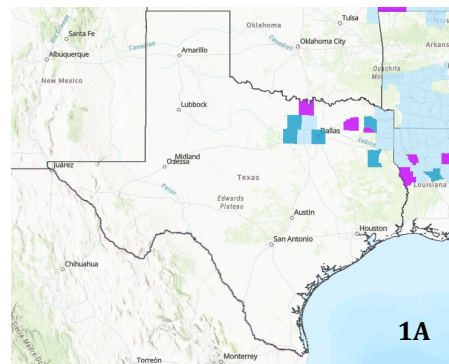
Emerald ash borers attack healthy ash trees, and can kill a tree in as little as two to three years. It attacks all species of ash known to grow in Gillespie

County.

Damages are expected to be minimal, when compared to oak wilt. Ash trees in the wild and rural areas are very uncommon and the borer can only fly a quarter of a mile. City and subdivision plantings are most likely to suffer because of the greater concentration of ash trees.

Emerald ash borers have spread mainly by contaminated firewood. Use only local firewood to prevent this pest from spreading here.

For more information, please see the USDA's website at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/plant-pest-and-disease-programs/pests-and-diseases/emerald-ash-borer>



1A. Map of emerald ash borer sightings. Photo by USDA. 2. Emerald ash borer adult. Brian Sullivan

## Spotted lanternfly



The spotted lanternfly is a sap feeder, preferring the "Tree of Heaven", but also threatens a variety of trees and plants, including grapes and peaches. This insect has not been spotted in Texas or in a neighboring state.

Its main method of spread are egg masses that are laid on items left outside. In infected areas the public is encouraged to check items for egg masses and scrape /smash them when found. Adults should be smashed on site.

Immature lanternflies have a red or black body with white polka dots. Adults have tannish gray wings with black spots that unfold to red. These bugs can look similar to leopard moths.

If you think these are pretty and don't understand why there is a problem, please see this video: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/Iz8hMpWw66s?feature=share> . **Do not watch if squeamish about insects.**



1B. Egg mass . Photo by USDA. 2B. Adult lanternfly. Photo by Delaware Extension .



1C. Mites that transmit Rose Rosette. Photo by Molly Giesbrecht, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Bugwood.org. 2C. Rose Rosette symptoms. Photo by Jennifer Olson, Oklahoma State University, Bugwood.org.

## Rose Rosette

Rose Rosette is likely already in Gillespie County. Symptoms include thorns, foliage and flowering that appear as if "kicked into overdrive". The leaves and stems will be reddish and never turn green. This overgrowth may be limited to one part of the plant.

This disease is caused by a virus that is spread by tiny mites. Infected plants should be killed and bagged where they were planted before moving off-site. Until this disease is cured or resistant roses found, avoid planting roses in mass, as was common with the "Knock-out" series of roses.

Report sightings at <https://roserosette.org/reporting/>. You will need pictures of the plant.



DOOR  
PRIZES  
DRAWN  
AT THE  
END!

## 6TH ANNUAL **PLANTASTIC** VEGETABLE GARDENING SEMINAR

February 23, 2024 8:30 am - 3:35 pm

### LOCATION:

Gillespie County Extension Office  
38 Business Court  
Fredericksburg, TX 78624

### PRE REGISTRATION:

Deadline: February 21, 2024

Cost: \$40 with lunch

\$30 without lunch

Paper registration form available by  
request.

### DAY OF PROGRAM:

Cost: \$30 without lunch.

Credit Cards not accepted.

Contact the Extension Office at  
(830) 997-3452 for more information.



SCAN QR CODE  
TO REGISTER

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is an equal opportunity employer and program provider. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.



### GENERAL SESSIONS

Special guest speaker Dr. Joe Masabni will present on organic gardening and hydroponics.



### BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Growing Herbs

Raising Your Own Tomatoes

The Permaculture Ecosystem

Growing Alliums: Onions, Garlic & More!

Good Bugs & Troublemakers



### LIGHTNING ROUND BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Gardening Disasters

Vegetables for Heat

Conserving Water in Vegetable Gardens



### TEST YOUR VEGETABLE IDENTIFICATION KNOWLEDGE

Test your vegetable identification  
knowledge at the seedling table!

See paper registration form at end of newsletter.

# Sign-ups now open for the Hill Country Vegetable Survey

The purpose of this survey is to find specific vegetables that are easy to grow for both beginner and experienced Hill Country Vegetable gardeners. The theme vegetables this year are Irish potatoes, yellow squash and broccoli. Participation is simple.

## Sign-Up

- If you live in Blanco, Burnet or Bexar counties, please contact Carley Howell at [carley.howell@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:carley.howell@ag.tamu.edu) or 830-868-7167 to sign-up.
- For Gillespie and all other counties, please contact Beth McMahon at 830-997-3452 or [elizabeth.mcmahon@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:elizabeth.mcmahon@ag.tamu.edu)
- There are 25 spots per vegetable. If all spots are filled, you will be placed on a waiting list. You must respond to the second email sent on February 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> to be officially signed up.
- You can select all three vegetables or just one. For the vegetable you select, you need to grow both varieties. Save space for four plants total.
- You do not need to participate in the Grow It Cook It or Plantastic Gardening Seminar programs to participate in this survey. There is no cost to participate.

## Pick-Up

- Plants will not be shipped. Participants must pick up plants. Pick-up will be between February 20<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> at either the Blanco County Extension Office (206 US-281, Johnson City) or the Gillespie County Extension Office (38 Business Court, Fredericksburg by the airport).
- Broccoli plants will be plugs. Potatoes will be chunks and squash will be seeds.

## Plant

- Plant the plants during the appropriate time. Plant in full sun.
- Grow as you normally would grow them, organically or conventionally.
- Check the data sheet to see if you need to measure anything special at harvest time.

## Report

- Fill out the datasheet and turn it in to either Carley or Beth. Data will be compiled and a report will be sent out to all participants.
- Results will also be published in this newsletter.

Please contact Beth McMahon or Carley Howell with any questions. This survey was inspired by the University of Tennessee trials. Check it out here: <https://mastergardener.tennessee.edu/home-garden-vegetable-trial/>



### Yellow Squash Varieties

Straight neck—heirloom variety, thicker yellow squash. Prolific.

Slick Pik Y26—Spineless hybrid. Slender, straight yellow squash.



### Broccoli Varieties

Green Magic F1—hybrid, classic recommendation, good heat tolerance, resprouts for secondary crop.

Covina F1—performance unknown, supposed to be heat tolerant.



### Irish Potato Varieties

Yukon Gold—standard gold potato variety recommended for this region.

Huckleberry Gold—gold potato with lower glycemic index (raises blood sugar not as fast).



# Strange Tales of Horticulture

## Bees are Caffeine Addicts

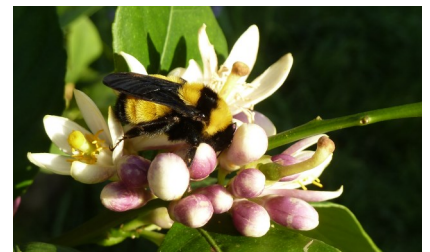
**In humans, caffeine increases alertness and focus. Honey and bumblebees love it as well, but is it as helpful to them as it is to humans?**

In an experiment by Arnold et al 2021<sup>1</sup>, they trained bumblebees to find flowers. The bumblebees that had been given caffeine visited the target flower more often as well as handled it faster. Caffeine helped honeybees significantly increase the number of times they left the hive to forage. These honeybees also kept returning to the same location, indicating a preference for the caffeine (Couvillon et al 2015)<sup>2</sup>. Other health benefits of caffeine for honeybees included finding that caffeine boosted gut microflora in an experiment by Seshadri et al 2021<sup>3</sup>.

But wait, caffeine is toxic to cats and dogs, and even humans in certain amounts (adults 18-50 grams and children, 3 grams aka 30 cups of coffee aka ~ ten high caffeine energy drinks)<sup>4</sup>. If caffeine is toxic, how can tiny bees survive it? Turns out there isn't enough caffeine in the nectar to cause the bitterness, but just enough to be addictive (Wright et al 2013)<sup>5</sup>.

Don't think there were no ill effects from the caffeine. In the experiment by Couvillon et al 2015, because the bees visited the same flowers that they had gotten caffeine from, the model suggested that honey storage would decrease.<sup>2</sup> There is also the case of the silver linden tree. Across Europe and some locations in the USA, one can find reports of mass deaths of bumblebees association with silver linden trees. In a literature review by Koch & Stevenson 2017<sup>6</sup>, trees were checked for pesticide applications and if the tree produced toxic compounds. There is some research that the silver linden trees (*Tilia tomentosa*) are not actually poisonous to bumblebees, but lure the bees in with caffeine for poor quality pollen or low nectar. Because the bees are being lured to this particular tree that doesn't provide them quality food, they could starve to death. This is not a reason to remove a native linden (basswood) tree. The rare native tree, Carolina Basswood, has not been known to cause massive kills of bees.

If you want to intentionally caffeinate your bees, you may be out of luck. Citrus and coffee plants contain nectar spiked with caffeine, but both must be grown in pots here and coffee plants get too big for most pots. Yaupon, a shrub native to East Texas and sometimes used in local landscaping, contains caffeine in its foliage, enough that it can be used as a coffee substitute, but it is unknown if its nectar also contains caffeine. There are likely other plants that may have caffeine in their nectar.



*Bumblebee getting her caffeine fix off a citrus flower. Picture by Beth McMahon.*

If you would like to read more, the University of Arkansas Bee Blog has an excellent review of different articles regarding bees and caffeine. Check it out at: <https://www.uaex.uada.edu/farm-ranch/special-programs/beekeeping/uabeeblog/posts/coffee-cigarettes-bees.aspx>

<sup>1</sup>[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353533445\\_Bumble\\_bees\\_show\\_an\\_induced\\_preference\\_for\\_flowers\\_when\\_primed\\_with\\_caffeinated\\_nectar\\_and\\_a\\_target\\_floral\\_odor](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353533445_Bumble_bees_show_an_induced_preference_for_flowers_when_primed_with_caffeinated_nectar_and_a_target_floral_odor)

<sup>2</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26480843/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ars.usda.gov/news-events/news/research-news/2021/four-nutrients-in-flower-pollens-improve-honey-bee-gut-health/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://pubchem.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/compound/Caffeine#section=Reported-Fatal-Dose>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4521368/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5627179/>

# Save the Dates

## Gillespie County

### What Happened to Our Understory?

*January 23rd, 2024. 6:30 PM—8:30 PM. St. Josephs Halle, 212 W. San Antonio St., Fredericksburg.*

Program speaker is Robert Edmonson, speaking on 'What Happened to Our Understory'. Part of Native Plant Society monthly meeting, open to the public.

### Plantastic Gardening Seminar

*February 23rd, 2024. 8:30 AM -3:35 PM Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.*

Vegetable gardening focused seminar. Dr. Masabni will be the main speaker, speaking on hydroponics and organic gardening. Breakout session topics include tomatoes, insects, herbs, onions and garlic as well as different topics around gardening with hot summers. Cost is \$40 pre-register with lunch, \$30 pre-register without lunch and \$30 at the door. Register at [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeC3W2Yya7m4pSZkmTOl52AlaVu5\\_436EvOl77p5tea7K7pOA/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeC3W2Yya7m4pSZkmTOl52AlaVu5_436EvOl77p5tea7K7pOA/viewform) or see the paper form at the end. Please call the Gillespie County Extension Office at 830-997-3452 or email Beth at [beth.mcmahon@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:beth.mcmahon@ag.tamu.edu) for other questions.



*Increase your cooking potential by growing your own garlic. Learn how at the Plantastic Gardening Seminar this year. Picture and garlic grown by Beth McMahon.*

### Native Seed Selection & Planting Tips

*February 27th, 2024, 2024. 6:30 PM—8:30 PM. St. Josephs Halle, 212 W. San Antonio St., Fredericksburg.*

Program speaker is George Cates, from the Native American Seed Company in Junction Texas. He will talk about the Native American Seed company products.

### Grow It Cook It: Irish Potatoes

*February 28th, 2024. 12:00-1:00 PM Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.*

Come learn not just how to grow potatoes, but different recipes to cook them as well. Please contact the Gillespie County Extension office at 830-997-3452 to register. Cost is \$25 for all January 2024-August 2024 Grow It Cook It programs, \$15 per program otherwise.

### Grow It Cook It: Yellow Squash

*April 24th, 2024. 12:00-1:00 PM Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.*

Come learn not just how to grow yellow squash but different recipes to cook them as well. Please contact the Gillespie County Extension office at 830-997-3452 to register. Cost is \$25 for all January 2024-August 2024 Grow It Cook It programs, \$15 per program otherwise.



*Is it a yellow squash? Is it a zucchini? What is it? Find out at the Grow It Cook It Yellow Squash program. Picture by Beth McMahon.*



## Counties Near Gillespie County

## Save the Dates

### Texas Superstar Plants

January 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024. 10:30 AM Butt Holdsworth Memorial Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville.

What makes a plant a Texas Superstar? Come listen to Rae Raeford's presentation to find out. Program is free.



Come learn how to propagate your own plants at the plant propagation class on March 9th. Picture by Beth McMahon.

### Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop

January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Registration 8:30 AM. Program 9:00-11:00 AM. Triple JD Ranch, 2626 Elm Pass Road, Bandera.

Led by Dr. Stein, AgriLife Extension Horticulturist. Hands-on fruit tree pruning demonstration. Free. Register in advance by calling the Bandera County AgriLife Extension Office at 830-796-7755. Please RSVP by January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

### Plant Propagation

March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024. 10:30 AM Butt Holdsworth Memorial Library, 505 Water Street, Kerrville. Program by Hill Country Master Gardener Debbie Lea. Free.

### 8<sup>th</sup> Hill Country Land Stewardship Conference

March 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

First day programs on laws, landscape and whitetail deer management, livestock oriented topics and vegetation management. Second day is your choice of tours between the Diamond V Ranch or the Hillingdon Ranch. RSVP by February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Sponsored by the Bennet trust. Register online at [https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/ereg/index.php?](https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/ereg/index.php?even-)

[even-](https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/ereg/index.php?even-tid=782695&gl=1*hhqqwm*ga*MTI0MjYyNTI1NS4xNjg0MzQzMTg5*ga_6Z244NFEFP*MTcwNDQwNTU3Mi45LjEuMTcwNDQwNTYxOS4xMy4wLjA.*ga_SJ5GMN0ZQL*MTcwNDQwNTU3Mi45LjEuMTcwNDQwNTYxOS4xMy4wLjA)

[tid=782695&gl=1\\*hhqqwm\\*ga\\*MTI0MjYyNTI1NS4xNjg0MzQzMTg5\\*ga\\_6Z244NFEFP\\*MTcwNDQwNTU3Mi45LjEuMTcwNDQwNTYxOS4xMy4wLjA.\\*ga\\_SJ5GMN0ZQL\\*MTcwNDQwNTU3Mi45LjEuMTcwNDQwNTYxOS4xMy4wLjA](https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/ereg/index.php?even-tid=782695&gl=1*hhqqwm*ga*MTI0MjYyNTI1NS4xNjg0MzQzMTg5*ga_6Z244NFEFP*MTcwNDQwNTU3Mi45LjEuMTcwNDQwNTYxOS4xMy4wLjA.*ga_SJ5GMN0ZQL*MTcwNDQwNTU3Mi45LjEuMTcwNDQwNTYxOS4xMy4wLjA)

### State Level Programs

#### Rooted Across Texas: 2024 Texas Organic Farmers & Gardeners Conference

January 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Estancia Del Norte, A Tapestry Hotel 37 NE Loop 410 at McCullough San Antonio, TX, 78216.

The conference includes two days of in-depth workshops and learning sessions, plus multiple off-site intensives and farm tours. Additional highlights include a Farm Feast with a keynote speaker, social and networking opportunities, and a trade show. Cost is \$275.



TOFGA presentations include one about growing citrus (make sure you have a heater) and figs in high tunnels. The trees in the picture are peaches. Picture by Beth McMahon

# Save the Dates

## State Level Programs

### Landscape Design School Course #2

February 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>, 2024. George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, College Station, TX.

Courses can be taken in any order. Course #2 includes topics : landscape design processes, Designing for Pollinators & Wildlife; Plants in the Landscape; Accessible, Enabling & Therapeutic Gardens; Structures in the Landscape; Redesign of Areas; Development of North American LD; Preservation of Historic Sites & Structures; Overused, Often Invasive Plants & Native Alternatives . 12 Master Gardener CEUS. Cost is \$135, includes two box lunches as well as snacks. Call Michele Wehrheim at 313-649-1067 or email [texaslandscape-designschool@gmail.com](mailto:texaslandscape-designschool@gmail.com) for more information.



Improving your landscape takes more than setting a croton on a stump in your yard. Learn more at the landscape design school. Picture by Beth McMahon.

### Spinach Field Day

February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024. 10:00 AM -1:00 PM. Crystal City, TX.

Free to attend. Focusses on disease management and new field spinach varieties. Primarily for commercial growers. Free. To register, please see <https://forms.office.com/r/GgBmxBvtYY>



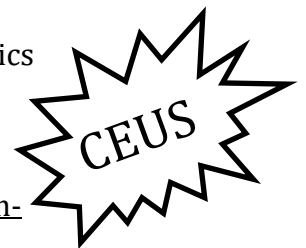
Come see the spinach trials at the Spinach Field Day. Picture by Beth McMahon.

## Webinars

### Virtual CEU Seminar

February 1st, 2024. 8:00 AM Webinar.

For ag private, non-commercial and commercial agricultural applicator license. Topics include brush control, understanding pesticides laws and regulations, IPM management in hay fields, reading a pesticide label, and minimizing drift. Option auxin training at the end. 2 hours laws and regs, 1 hour IPM, 1 hour drift, 1 hour general. Cost is \$50. Register online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-victoriacalhoun-counties-virtual-ceu-workshop-tickets-735827197957?aff=ebdshpsearchautocomplete> .





# Lawn & Landscape Calendar

## January

- Plan gardens and flowerbeds.
- Sow seeds of petunias, begonias, and impatiens in flats in early January. Sow seeds of tomatoes, peppers, marigolds, and periwinkles in late January or early February.
- Avoid “topping” crape myrtles.
- If desired, test your soil.
- Plant onion sets in your vegetable garden.

## February

- Prepare area for spring planting
- Select and order gladiolus corms for February/ March planting. Plant at two-week intervals to prolong flowering period.
- Protect tender plants from hard freezes
- Apply horticultural oil to fruit and pecan trees when temperature is 45 -65 for two weeks.
- Finish pruning pecan and fruit trees before spring bud break.

## March

- Complete pruning of evergreens by early March.
- Begin planting dahlias in mid-March. Plant in mulched locations with afternoon shade.
- Tomatoes can be planted in late March, provided you have a way to cover them for a late frost.
- Order caladium bulbs for planting next month.
- Petunias prefer cooler weather, but may need protection from late frosts.

### Extension Office Closures

We will be closed on January 15th, February 19th, March 1st & March 29th. Depending on local conditions, the office might be closed on the eclipse day, April 8th.

## Name That Plant!



First person to respond with the correct answer will get their names featured in next quarter's newsletter.

## Last Newsletter's Plant



*Last quarter's plant was Buffalo gourd, also known as skunk gourd. It was correctly identified first by Tammy Jo Blackwell .*

*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](mailto: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 February 23rd, 2024 Pre-Registration Form

Pre-registration is due at office by February 21st, 2024.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost is \$40 with meal, \$30 without meal, or \$30 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**

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

Mail form with payment to Gillespie County AgriLife Extension Service, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg, Texas. Registration is **due at office** on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024. Full refunds will be given until February 21st.

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**

Can we email you next year's flyer?

**Yes**

**No**