Extension Update
Bowie County Extension Office
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service * PVAMU Cooperative Extension

Keeping You *"In the Loop"*
Spring 2015

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program

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Spring Ranch Field Day - Thursday, April 30th

The Bowie Co. Livestock and Forage Committee will be hosting a Spring Ranch Field Day on Thursday, April 30th at the Chris Moser Island Farm north of DeKalb.

Registration for the Field Day will begin at 9:30 AM with the meeting starting at 10 and lasting until 2 PM. Lunch will be provided.

Topics for this year's event include: Marketing Your Calf Crop, When to Cull a Cow, Managing Hay Fields and External Parasite Control Tips and Options.

TX Dept. of Agriculture pesticide license holders will receive 2 hours of CEU credit (1 general & 1 IPM) for attending.

Cost is $10 per person & an RSVP is requested to the Bowie Co. Extension office 903-628-6702 by April 28th.

Persons with special needs are asked to contact the Bowie County Extension office at least 5 work days in advance so necessary accommodations can be made.

Directions: Take Hwy 259 N of DeKalb about 11 miles and turn left on to CR 3406. Travel 2.6 miles to the 'T'. Turn right onto CR 3405 and travel 1.1 miles. The road will end at a silver gate with a sign that reads 'Chris Moser Farm'. Watch for field day signs as well.

Get Into Gardening

Spring is a great time to garden in Northeast Texas. Gardening consistently ranks as one of the most popular hobbies in the United States. Going outside and reconnecting with the soil is both relaxing and a good source of exercise.

Vegetable gardeners get to enjoy the 'fruits' of their labor through fresh produce for the table with maybe a little extra to preserve for the winter. Flower gardeners get to enjoy the 'fruits' of their labor through aesthetically pleasing landscapes and cut specimens to brighten up the inside of the home.

If you have been thinking about gardening but are not sure where to begin, we have included an insert in this newsletter about raised bed gardening. Raised beds can be a good starting point or a great addition to an existing garden space. Raised beds are great options if you have heavy clay soils that hold too much water or sandy soils that hold too little. You can build tall raised beds or add seating around a bed to enable someone with physical limitations to enjoy gardening again. Your creativity is the limit when it comes to construction materials and designs options.

Options Increase for Obtaining a Private Applicator Pesticide License

In Texas, agricultural producers who need to obtain a Private Applicator license to purchase Restricted Use or State Limited Use pesticides must first attend a training class like the one provided by AgriLife Extension in order to be eligible to sit for the license exam.

Traditionally, Extension offices have offered group training or individual in-office training for these individuals. This option is still available at the Bowie County Extension office by calling and setting up a training time.

Beginning this month, producers will have the option of taking this required training on-line. Cost for the on-line option is $75 which includes the training manuals designed to help students pass the examination. You can access the course at: http://campus.extension.org.

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 or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

A Pinch of Flavor:
Cooking with Herbs

By Courtney Davis, Bowie County Extension Agent - FCS

Spring has sprung and now's the perfect time for planting some fresh herbs to enjoy throughout the season. Herbs are a great way to flavor food without adding salt or fat to a dish. Herbs are fragrant leaves of low-growing shrubs that grow in temperate climates. Examples of herbs are parsley, chives, thyme, basil, dill, oregano, rosemary, sage and celery leaves. Herbs can be used fresh or dried. Dried forms may be whole, crushed, or ground.

GROWING HERBS: Herbs don't take much room to grow and are generally low-maintenance plants. Also, because herbs are used in small amounts, only a few plants are usually needed to provide enough fresh and dried herbs for an entire season. Herbs can be grown in flower beds, in rock gardens as borders, or as corner plantings. Care for your herb garden as you would a vegetable or flower garden. Choose a sunny, well-drained location. Apply a balanced fertilizer but do not use too much nitrogen fertilizer. Water the herbs as necessary during dry periods; generally, about 1 inch of water should be added per week. Adding mulch can help to keep the soil moist and reduce weed growth. Mint likes moist soil so it may need to be watered more often. Also, keeping your mint in a pot will help keep it from spreading.

Some herbs can be planted in pots and grown indoors. Those best adapted to growing in pots are basil, chives, mint, parsley, rosemary, and sweet marjoram. Set these pots in a sunny south window and care for them as you would houseplants.

COOKING WITH HERBS: Pick fresh herbs early in the morning before it gets too hot. Always wash fresh herbs before cooking with them. Rinse them under cool, running water or place in a colander and wash thoroughly. If you are using herbs with woody stems, strip off the leaves and discard the stems. You should also discard any damaged leaves you may find on fresh herbs. The stems of herbs may be used for flavor if they are soft and pliable, such as that of cilantro.

To release more flavor and aroma, crumble dry, leafy herbs such as basil or oregano between your fingers or finely chop fresh herbs. The amount of spice or herb you add to a food varies greatly. A general rule it to start with only one or two herbs and spices at a time and add more if necessary. Also, keep this equation in mind:

1 tablespoon fresh, finely cut herbs =

1 teaspoon crumbled, dried herbs =

¼ to ½ teaspoon ground, dried herbs

Begin with ¼ teaspoon of most ground spices or ground, dried herbs for every pound of meat or pint of soup or sauce. Add additional herbs and spices if needed. Remember to use more herbs if you're using a crumbled dried or fresh form. Red pepper will intensify in flavor during the cooking process. Start with 1/8 teaspoon of cayenne pepper and add more in small increments.

When doubling a recipe, do not double the amount of spices and herbs. It's always easier to add more of a spice or herb, if needed, but it is difficult to adjust a recipe if you've added too much.

Add fresh herbs near the end of the cooking process or just before serving as prolonged heating can cause flavor loss. Delicate fresh herbs can be added a minute or two before the end of cooking or sprinkled on food before serving. Some examples of delicate herbs include basil, chives, cilantro, dill, parsley, marjoram and mint. Some of the less delicate fresh herbs include rosemary, tarragon and thyme. For uncooked or chilled foods such as salads and dips, add seasonings several hours ahead so flavors blend.

For more information on growing fresh herbs or on cooking with fresh herbs and spices, contact the Bowie County Extension Office at 903-628-6702 or email Courtney Davis at cmdavis@ag.tamu.edu

"Spice a dish with love and it pleases every palate."

-Plautus

Here's one of my favorite summertime recipes using fresh tomatoes and fresh basil. Enjoy!

Caprese Salad

1 tomato, sliced
1 block of part-skim mozzarella cheese
Chopped fresh basil
Salt and pepper to taste
Olive Oil
Balsamic Vinegar

Slice the tomato and spread the slices on a plate/platter. Top each tomato slice with a thin slice of mozzarella cheese. Sprinkle basil over each slice and season with salt and pepper. Drizzle a small amount of extra virgin olive oil and balsamic vinegar over each tomato and enjoy!

*Also try making C**aprese Salad Skewers**...use cherry tomatoes left whole, ¼ inch blocked mozzarella cheese (I've used sliced string cheese) and whole fresh basil leaves layered on toothpicks. Season as above. These are great for parties or for serving large crowds!

Texas 4-H and Youth Development

Let's Go Let's Grow

Let's Make Texas 4-H Stronger . . . Together

4-H is on the Grow!

The Bowie County 4-H Shooting Sports – Rifle and Shotgun projects are getting underway. Youth ages 9 – 19 years of age are participating in the rifle and/or shotgun projects. They will be competing in the District IV 4-H Rifle and Shotgun matches April 25th in Paris.

The 4-H rifle project is coached by Mr. Lee Sands, Jr. Mr. Sands has been coaching the 4-H Rifle Team for 22 years. He has taken numerous teams to state competition over the years. The Rifle team practices at the Texarkana Gun Club.

The 4-H shotgun project is coached by Mr. Eddy Anders, Dr. Gary Old and Mr. Galo Morlet. The shotgun team practices at the Maud Gun Club.

Our pistol and archery projects will get under way in the fall. The pistol team is led by coaching team of Mr. Robert Haley, Mr. Jimmy Curtis, Mr. Kevin DuPree, Mr. Brad Tucker and Mr. Bill Vickers. Our pistol coaches have been putting together some fun practices and more opportunities to learn about your firearm. The archery project has received some 3D targets to use this fall. Mr. Fred Goodgion will once again be working with the archers.

The 4-H Support Foundation is selling tickets for our 52 Gun Drawing. Tickets are $50 each and good for all 52 weeks – that is less than a dollar a week with a 1 in 1000 chance to win! The proceeds will benefit Bowie County 4-H youth by providing scholarships to qualifying graduating high school seniors, sending 4-H members to leadership camps and events as well as enabling 4-H leaders to attend trainings

We look forward to you and your family joining our 4-H family for hands on learning while having fun. Come by the Extension office to get your ticket!

For more information on how to get involved in 4-H, contact the Extension office at 903-628-6702 or email Cherrie Curtis at cc-curtis@tamu.edu. 4-H and Texas AgriLife Extension Service programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin. Persons wishing to participate in Extension programs who have special needs are asked to contact the Bowie County Extension office at least 5 working days in advance so that necessary accommodations can be made.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

4-H SUPPORT FOUNDATION

52 GUN DRAWING

A GUN A WEEK FOR YEAR
TICKETS - $50

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT BOWIE COUNTY 4-H YOUTH THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS (ONLY 1,000 TICKETS TO BE SOLD)

For More Information Visit

www.4htoday.com

D & D Guns – New Boston

DDGunsNB@gmail.com **or 903-628-1270**

Or call the Extension Office at 903-628-6702

Earth-Kind®
Texas AgriLife Extension Service

Raised Bed Construction:

Soil conditions throughout much of Texas are not well suited for landscape plant materials. Sandy soils tend to drain /dry out rapidly, while clay soils hold excessive amounts of moisture during periods of heavy rainfall. Sandy soils are relatively easy to amend through the addition of decomposed organic matter. Clay soils pose a greater challenge and typically require more effort to create suitable conditions for landscape plant materials.

The key, in both situations, is to strike a balance between the aeration, drainage and water holding characteristics of the soil. The goal is to have adequate aeration and drainage to avoid excessive moisture during periods of heavy rainfall (i.e. spring and fall) and enough water holding capacity to sustain plants during dry periods (i.e. summer). This is most commonly achieved by adjusting the distribution of particle sizes in the soil. Large particles promote aeration and drainage; small particles contribute to water retention. Landscape soil "mixtures" are frequently made from a combination of materials, with varying particles sizes, to obtain optimum aeration, drainage and water holding properties.

The term "heavy" is frequently used to describe the physical properties of clay soils. It refers to the water holding characteristics associated with the extremely small particles that make up a clay soil. Heavy soils can be amended with coarse particle materials to enhance aeration and drainage. However, during periods of excessive rainfall, water can eventually overcome these built in properties and fill the soil like a bathtub. Although this condition may only last for a limited time, plant loss from the depletion of soil oxygen and/or root disease(s) is very common. Under these conditions the construction/use of raised beds may be the best option for long-term landscape success.

Raised beds can range in height from a few inches to several feet. Generally speaking, beds less than 6" in height do little to promote drainage. Beds can be either linear or curvilinear in shape and should compliment the overall landscape design. Begin the construction process by laying out the beds using landscape paint, a flexible garden hose, string or other marking tools. Next, remove existing vegetation to reduce/eliminate future weed problems. Chemical herbicides (glyphosate) can be useful for broad spectrum control. Removing a 3" – 4" layer of vegetation/sod is also an effective approach. Nutsedge and Bermuda grass are particularly difficult to control.

Earth-Kind uses research-proven techniques to provide maximum gardening and landscape enjoyment while preserving and protecting our environment.

The objective of Earth-Kind is to combine the best of organic and traditional gardening and landscaping principles to create a new horticultural system based on real-world effectiveness and environmental responsibility.

The principal goals of Earth-Kind include:

- ☑ Water conservation
- ☑ The safe use and handling of fertilizers & pesticides
- ☑ Reduction of yard wastes entering urban landfills
- ☑ Landscaping for Energy Conservation

As your interest and knowledge in these areas grows you will have an increased awareness of the many programs, practices and activities that are Earth-Kind. Working together we can make a difference in conserving and protecting our valuable natural resources.

AgriLIFE EXTENSION
Texas A&M System

For more information see our Web site:

EarthKind.tamu.edu

Line the bed with an appropriate edging material. Railroad ties, landscape timbers, rock, brick, concrete block, metal and plastic edging, etc. are all commonly used materials in the construction of raised beds. Be sure to select an edging material that compliments the overall landscape design. Concrete reinforcing bars and/or epoxy can be used to hold some edging material in place. Stone and brick are often used dry stack.

Consider irrigation and install any necessary system components. Raised beds work well with conventional overhead irrigation systems or with low volume systems (i.e. drip, porous pipe, etc.).

The use of a semi-permeable weed barrier mat can help suppress many grass and broadleaf weeds. It should be noted, however, that nutsedge frequently grows right through these mats - another important reason to do a thorough job of weed control/elimination BERFORE constructing a raised bed.

Fill the bed with a high quality landscape soil mix. This material should include a range of particle sizes to provide for optimum aeration, drainage and water holding characteristics. These mixes are often costly but can be extremely important for long-term success. IMPORTANT – when adding the mix, DO NOT attempt to incorporate this material in to the native soil. DO NOT rototill or otherwise disturb the native soil underlying the bed. These practices will largely nullify efforts to increase aeration and drainage and will also unearth weed seed that can later become a problem. Construct the bed directly on top of the soil and do not disturb the surface in the process. Think of it as creating a huge container garden on top of the existing soil.

Lightly compact the soil mix by walking through the bed. This will help prevent settling following watering/irrigation. Add soil mix as necessary to within 2" – 3" of the top of the edging. The top 2" – 3" area will later be required to hold a thin layer of mulch. Raised beds should be crowned slightly higher in the middle to promote surface drainage.

After planting, apply a 3" – 4" layer of mulch to the bed. Mulch has numerous benefits including moisture retention, weed suppression, moderating soil temperature, etc. Organic mulches break down over time and are typically replenished twice/year.

Raised beds will require occasional maintenance to repair/replace edging materials. Also, over time landscape soil mixtures break down as the result of microbial decomposition. It is important to periodically replenish the mix to maintain desired aeration, drainage and water holding characteristics. Replenishing the mulch layer can also help maintain these properties. Do not allow the level of landscape soil mix to fall below the top of the bed. This may create a bathtub effect – holding excessive moisture during periods of heavy rainfall.

Raised beds can be a very effective means of dealing with even the worst soil conditions. The cost of a building a raised bed can be significant. Therefore it is important to understand the basics of design, construction, and maintenance to ensure maximum landscape benefits and long-term success.

Earth-Kind®
Texas AgriLife Extension Service

See the Earth Kind Web site for more ways to preserve and protect the environment...

http://EarthKind.tamu.edu

THE 5TH ANNUAL
SMALL SCALE PRODUCERS CONFERENCE
APRIL 30, 2015; THURSDAY

Location:
CCU Building, FM 992 (Daniels Chapel Rd) 314 Ardell Hubbard Dr.
New Boston, TX 75570

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Date:
Thursday, April 30, 2015

UNIVERSITY of ARKANSAS AT PINE BLUFF
1873

Time:
9:15 am - 3:00 pm

This free educational workshop will include the following topics; timber management, beef management, managing meat goats, pond management, marketing agriculture products, and cost-share programs available. Participants will be able to talk directly to extension agents, specialists, local speakers about programs and technical assistance available. Registration will begin at 9:15 am. Conference will begin at 9:25 am. For special accommodation contact the Prairie View A&M Bowie County Cooperative Extension Office 5 days prior of this event 903.628.6702.

The 3rd Annual Small Scale Producer Conference is free to the public due to the generosity of the following sponsors and participants: Silas H. Hunt CDC , Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program Service, and University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Small Farm Program.

For more information please contact Brandon Hawkins, Prairie View A&M, Bowie County Extension Office 903.628.6702, and Kandi Williams, UAPB Southwest Arkansas Small Farm Program 870.575.2427, or Silas H. Hunt CDC office 870.774.0446.

Lunch will be provided.

Educational programs conducted by the Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff Cooperative Extension and Silas H. Hunt CDC serve people of all ages regardless of socio-economic level, race, color, religion, handicap or national origin.