

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service — Galveston County Office



PHOTO CREDIT: Dr. William M. Johnson

There is always something to grow and something to harvest in our Gulf Coast gardens—even during the month of December. Whether you are an enthusiastic citrus grower or just interested in tasting an array of locally grown citrus fruit, plan to attend the 2018 Upper Gulf Coast Citrus Tasting & Seminar to be held Tuesday, December 4, at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office.

When you think of citrus, images of grapefruits, lemons, limes and oranges are most likely to come to mind. It's unfortunate that the citrus you see in the supermarket represents a very small portion of the variety of citrus that can be grown locally.

I grew up in Virginia and

my parents traditionally ordered two boxes of citrus for consumption by the family over the Christmas Holiday season—there was one box of oranges and another box of grapefruits.

Fast forward to the present and my Christmas Holidays in Texas still

have a citrus presence with two important exceptions: 1.) I now get to experience many more types of citrus and 2.) all my holiday citrus are homegrown thanks to many of my friends who grow citrus and the two rather productive citrus plants in my backyard.



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News column printed in the Galveston Daily News, The Post, and other Galveston County Newspapers.



My Meiwa kumquat tree produced a respectable harvest of citrus last fall which was its first year of production. I fertilized it well this year and I was expecting a good harvest this fall. The tree set multiple flushes of blooms over the year and every branch is drooping because of the abundance of bright tiny orange fruits. Even though I started harvesting the small (quarter-size) fruits in mid-November, the remaining fruit will continue to ripen over the next several weeks. Meiwa kumquat trees are also very ornamental—the tree looks like I have a decorated Christmas tree in my landscape.

My other citrus tree is a navel orange variety called N-33. This is its first year of production and it has produced about a dozen oranges. I also expect this tree to produce a bumper crop of oranges next year provided I keep it watered when necessary and, of course, properly fertilized. By the way, the fruit produced by N-33 is sweeter and juicier than any naval orange purchased from a grocery store. The tree also offers fragrant flowers in spring and beautiful foliage year-round.

Now visualize one of several types of citrus trees that you can grow in your yard to produce home-grown fruit to give as a distinctive and personal gift to family, neighbors and other friends. Many types of citrus are easier to grow than many "traditional" fruit trees such as peaches.

Whether you are an enthusiastic citrus grower or just interested in tasting an array of locally grown citrus fruit, plan to attend the 2018 Upper Gulf Coast Citrus Tasting & Seminar Program on Tuesday, December 4, from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. The program will be conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park at 4102-B Main Street (FM 519) in La Marque.

Citrus grown by local gardeners will be available for taste-testing starting at 6:00 p.m. At 6:30 p.m., Monte Nesbitt, Texas A&M Extension Specialist in the Department of Horticultural Sciences at College Station, will provide a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Growing Citrus on the Gulf Coast."

Upcoming Seminars

Growing Tomato Transplants from Seed: 9:00 - 11:30 a.m., Saturday, December 1. Galveston County Master Gardener Ira Gervais will provide a presentation seed variety selection and the care needed to have the tomato varieties of your choice ready to transplant to the garden in February for a bountiful crop of the tasty tomatoes.

Small Trees for Small Yards: 1:00 - 3:00 p.m., Saturday, December 1. Galveston County Master Gardener Marie Leal's presentation will feature small trees recommended for small yards in the Gulf Coast Area. Leal will address how to choose healthy, hearty trees for

Growing Citrus in the Home Landscape

your landscape, as well as planting and caring for them. Small trees are a beautiful addition to your yard, without the worry of large roots and extensive shade.

Citrus Seminar & Tasting: 6:00 - 8:00 p.m., Tuesday, December 4. Monte Nesbitt, Texas A&M Extension Specialist, will present this program covering such topics as proper fertilization, rootstock, variety selection, establishment, production, cultural practices, diseases, and insect pest problems. Tasting will begin at 6:00 p.m., and the presentation will start at 6:30 p.m.

Note: All programs will be conducted at the Galveston County AgriLife Extension Office located in Carbide Park (4102-B Main St., La Marque). Pre-registration required (phone 281-309-5065 or e-mail galvcountrymgs@gmail.com) to ensure adequate availability of seminar handouts.

