



### Introduction

Can you believe that it is so hot already? I certainly cannot. As you take a break from pulling weeds (because they still grow despite the heat), check out this quarter's newsletter.

Included in this quarter's newsletter are articles about chinch bugs in your lawn, cucurbit viruses, an update on the tomato trial and more!

As ever, if you have any horticulture questions, please feel free to contact us at the Gillespie County Agrilife Extension Office at 830-997-3452.

### Preview

Chinch Bugs	Pg. 2
Tomato Trial Update	Pg. 3
Have You Seen this Disease?	Pg. 4
Call for Entries for Gillespie County Fair	Pg. 5
Check Your Chips!	Pg. 6
Strange Tales of Horticulture	Pg. 8
Upcoming Programs	Pg. 9
Garden Calendar	Pg. 12
Name That Plant!	Pg. 13

## Chinch Bugs in St. Augustine Turfgrass



During hot and dry weather, chinch bugs can become an issue in many local lawns. The damage they cause first appears near concrete and other hot areas, usually in direct sun. Irregular spots of dead grass will appear, but changes from patches to large swatches as damaged areas unite.

If you have areas of your lawn that is dying in this pattern, check and see if you have chinch bugs. Take a can without a bottom, press it into the area where the effected turf meets the unaffected, fill it with soapy water, and wait five minutes. If chinch bugs are present, they will float to the top. Or if you have good eyesight, sit very still in your lawn near a damaged area, and you should be able to see them move. Young chinch bugs are oval with a pill-like shape, reddish tan with a white band around their middle. Mature chinch bugs are black with white wings that have a black dot on either side.

So what do you do if you have chinch bugs? You can use a pesticide with acephate, bifenthrin, permethrin or carbaryl in it. Check the label to make sure it is labeled for your lawn and for chinch bugs. Floratam St. Augustine grass is supposed to be resistant to chinch bugs, . It's not a good choice for local lawns though because it doesn't tolerate as many herbicides as other St. Augustine grasses do, and it is not as cold hardy.

To help prevent chinch bugs, reduce thatch (if it's thicker than 1 inch layer), apply the appropriate amount of fertilizer, and water when the grass just starts to shrivel.



*Chinch Bugs Nymphs and Adults. The nymphs are tan/reddish brown. Photo by Drees. Taken from the Agrilife Extension Field Guide to Common Texas Insects.*

# Tomato Trial Update

This year with the help of Dr. Stein, extension horticulturalist, and Barrett Jenke, local peach grower, we have put together a small determinate tomato trial at the Jenke Peach Orchard. The goal of this trial is to determine which tomato varieties produce the most fruit and have adequate foliage cover to prevent sun burning.

For this trial, we planted six plants of each variety. Varieties include cherries and regular sized slicer tomatoes. New types and old favorites such as “Celebrity”, “Tycoon”, “Valley Cat” and others are among the varieties being trialed. Trial was planted on April 11th, 2018.



*The tomato trial field.*

Determinate cherry varieties have set the most fruit so far, with a range of 2-50 tomatoes per plant already. The cherry tomato variety with the highest average fruit set currently is “BHN 268”. Regular sized determinate tomato varieties have been slow to set fruit, despite prolific blooms. So far the variety “Sunstart” has the most average fruit per plant (3.6 tomatoes) and has set the most fruit overall, but it only 18 tomatoes for the entire set.

Plants generally look similar in height and health, except that the Mountain series tomatoes (“Mountain Spring” and “Mountain Glory”) are not as big as the others. I suspect wind damage when the plants were small may have been a factor. Varieties “Rockytop”, “Sunbrite”, “Chiquita”, “Sweet Zen” have had two or more of their six plants die.

The trial is far from completed and other varieties may soon shine instead of these. Please stay tuned for the final results in the fall newsletter. Results will also be posted on our website under the horticulture tab



## Local Horticulture Info on the Go!

Would you rather learn by listening, instead of reading? Check out my radio shorts on KNAF 910 in the morning around 7:10 am during the Farm and Ranch News. Or check them out on the internet, where you can download them and listen to them at your convenience on your phone, computer or MP3 player.

Go to <https://soundcloud.com/txhillgarden> , pick a radio program to listen to, click “More” and then click “Download” to download.

## Have You Seen This Disease?

Viral issues can make plants look very strange. In the case of cucurbit viruses, they can cause the foliage to bubble and bump, and cause a mottling of color. If infected early enough, a squash plant might die. If infected later, the plant may not produce as much, or grow twisted looking fruit.

To this end, I need your help! I am looking for cases of viral infections on yellow squash, zucchini, pumpkins and other cucurbits in Gillespie County. I've had a couple of reports of it in the past, and I am currently investigating if it is a widespread issue. If your squash, pumpkin, zucchini or other cucurbit exhibits foliar symptoms like those in the pictures on this page, please email me at [elizabeth.mcmahon@agnet.tamu.edu](mailto:elizabeth.mcmahon@agnet.tamu.edu). If you live outside the county, feel free to chime in too.

If this viral issue is common, I will look into putting together a yellow squash/ zucchini variety trial next year to test resistance and suitability to the Gillespie County climate.



## Gillespie County Fair Agricultural Show Call for Entries

One could argue that the horse races or the carnival is the best part of the Gillespie County Fair. I think the agricultural show is the best. Where else would you see such an amazing display of so many local fruits and vegetables in one place? Fortunately, if you are a resident of Gillespie County or from a surrounding county, you can enter and try your luck at winning one of the categories. But how does one enter? Listed below are the major rules as well as tips if you intend to enter the agricultural show.

- The Gillespie County Fair is August 23rd-26th, 2018.
- Participation in the adult division is limited to citizens of Gillespie County or surrounding counties. Kids can show in the adult open show, but they cannot show in both the junior and open show. Entries are given a code so your name is not displayed until after the judging is completed.
- Entries are free, but they must have been grown by YOU. Entries must have been grown from between September 1st, 2017 and August 23th, 2018.
- Please make sure to check the fair catalogue and make sure that you have the correct number of vegetables per each entry. Because vegetables are judged on uniformity, we can't accept entries without the required amount.
- Please have your entries ready before you check-in. Items are judged right after check-in is completed at 6 pm, so you need not worry that your carrots will wilt before being judged.
- Entries are due by 6 pm in the Agricultural Exhibit Hall. Hate waiting in line? Enter your vegetables between 11 am -3:30 pm to avoid the rush. The line is the longest after 5 pm.
- Make sure to enter ripe produce. Less damage is good, though I have seen tomatoes with cracks on the top do well (Enter these with the bottoms up). Bigger is not always better. In the past, uniformity has been king.
- Only wash your vegetables. Do not oil, wax, polish, sand, or otherwise alter their appearance. The judges do notice this, and your vegetables/fruits may not place as well or be disqualified.
- Cash prizes are awarded for champions, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place. Item pick-up is on Sunday. Items (especially sunflowers) sometimes get damaged, so be forewarned.
- Eggs have been very competitive the last few years. There were many good pecan entries last year. Pumpkin entries were lower than normal, and they didn't seem as big. I was impressed to see multiple carrot entries last year. Spaghetti squash was unusually competitive.



*Display of the Adult Division 2017 entries.*



*Getting carrots to grow over a hot Texas summer is impressive.*

For more information about these exhibits and contests, please call the fair office at (830) 997-2359 or email them at [Info@gillespiefair.com](mailto:Info@gillespiefair.com). A fair catalogue will be out within the next couple of months with updated class descriptions. Check out their website at <http://www.gillespiefair.net/gillespie-county-fair/> to view it online, get a copy with your newspaper (The Fredericksburg Standard) or stop by the AgriLife Extension Office for a copy (when available). I hope to see your entries this year!

# Check Your Chips!

## Labeling Law for Bioengineered Foods

If you eat any product with corn in it that isn't organic, it was likely made with bioengineered (GMO) corn. Not many people realize this, especially as they eat their corn or tortilla chips. However, due to a 2016 amendment to the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, products containing bioengineered foods are required as of 2020 to be labeled as such.

Yet it isn't as simple as just putting a label on foods that have been bioengineered. Take the terminology for example. Foods will not be listed as GMOS. Instead, they will be listed as "bioengineered food", "bioengineered food ingredient" or "contains a bioengineered food ingredient".

Bioengineering is officially defined in this ruling as "food that contains genetic material that has been modified through in vitro recombinant DNA techniques and for which this modification could not be obtained through conventional breeding or found in nature". Because of this definition, plant varieties that have been altered using CRISPR gene silencing will probably not be required to have the bioengineered label (for more information on what CRISPR is, please see the Winter 2017/2018 newsletter).

Up for debate before the final ruling is if highly refined foods, such as vegetable oil or high fructose corn syrup, should have a bioengineered label included (if made from bioengineered crops). The argument against including a label for these products is that they have been so processed, the foreign DNA is no longer present or detectable by a test, and the products are chemically identical to products made with non-bioengineered crops. The argument for including them is that even if the test may not detect the modified genetic material, it still may be present and that the science is inconclusive about whether these end products still contain the DNA or not.

It gets more complicated when you consider food items made with these highly refined and processed ingredients. For example, if a canned stew has a type of commonly raised terrestrial meat as the first ingredient, but corn syrup made from bioengineered corn as the second ingredient, it will not have a bioengineered label. This is because the labeling of meat falls under the Federal Meat Inspection Act, and because meat is predominant, the bioengineered food law does not apply. These types of products will only get a bioengineered label if a meat or egg is the third most predominant ingredient or lower. However seafood and wild game products that have bioengineered foods in them would be labeled as such because they don't fall under the Federal Meat Inspection Act.



*Proposed labels for bioengineered foods. Yes, two of them are smiling at you. , Other options include lines of text or aa QR code. I suspect the text option will be chosen.*

# Check Your Chips!

## Labeling Law for Bioengineered Foods

It isn't just meat and canned stews though. There will be a threshold of how much bioengineered crops are in the processed food before it gets the bioengineered label. Purposed thresholds include labeling if a specific ingredient is greater than 5% by weight of a bioengineered food, labeling if a specific ingredient by weight is greater than 0.9%, or if greater than 5% of total weight of product is made from bioengineered food.

To better define which crops are considered bioengineered and which are not, the rule proposes making lists of highly adopted and not highly adopted crops. Highly adopted crops are grown very commonly using bioengineered varieties. These include: canola, field corn, cotton, soybeans and sugar beets (a source of sugar). Foods made from these materials, such as corn chips and corn tortillas, would be subject to disclosure.

Non-highly adopted foods are crops that are not commonly grown with bioengineered varieties. This ruling would separate them out by variety instead of the entire crop being lumped together as a whole. Included crops are sweet corn, non-browning apples, some potatoes, papaya, and summer squash.

Two noteworthy exemptions have been proposed. First, animals that eat bioengineered food, would not have their meat labeled as bioengineered. Also, food served in restaurants and by very small manufactures will not be required to label their items as "made with bioengineered crops.". So if you make brownies, use regular vegetable oil and then sell them at a bake sale, you do not have to worry about labeling your brownies.

Text, symbols or an electronic link/text message could be used for the labeling. Several symbol sets have been proposed, but a final one has not been chosen yet. For tiny labels, the products may be labeled differently.

If you love or hate something about this proposed rule, it is still going through its commenting period, so it isn't finalized yet. To comment and read this proposed regulation in its entirety go to [https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=AMS\\_FRDOC\\_0001-1709](https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=AMS_FRDOC_0001-1709) The commenting period will end on July 3rd. This law is scheduled to go into compliance by January 1st, 2020 for big companies and a year later for smaller companies.

### Office Closures

The Gillespie County Extension Office will be closed on July 4th for Independence Day and August 24th for Gillespie County Fair Friday.

### Save the Date!

The Texas State Fruit Conference will be on October 15th-16th in New Braunfels.

# Strange Tales of Horticulture

## Weird Bumps on Pecan Leaves

Bumpy galls and warts have been appearing on your pecan leaves. Is it some kind of disease? Is it damage from the neighbor's herbicide spray? Is it aliens? No, it's actually caused by an insect.

Get a magnifying glass, cut open a gall, and look at the tiny aphid like creatures. This is the pecan phylloxera.

Pecans are attacked by two kinds of phylloxera insects, and fortunately, the pecan leaf phylloxera is the least damaging of the two. As it feeds on the leaves, the plant creates a gall that closes around insects. The phylloxera will lay eggs inside the gall. These eggs will hatch, and the young insects will

feed. Eventually the galls will break open and the phylloxera will emerge and spread. They overwinter by nesting in the crevices of the bark. They usually spread slowly from tree to tree.

Phylloxera issues will be worse one year, not as bad the next. Some pecan varieties are more susceptible than others. Pecan leaf phylloxera isn't normally worth treating. Once galls are noticed, treatment is too late anyways because the phylloxera are protected from insecticide sprays by the galls. If the damage seems extremely severe or if it bothers you, this year rake up dropped infected leaves and move them away. Then you have two options for an insecticide.

### Option 1

You can spray the trunks and branches with malathion or Lambda-cyhalothrin (labeled for aphids and pecans). You can find these insecticides at a feed store or plant nursery. Spray 1-2 times after the leaf buds begin to emerge. Have at least 7-10 days between the applications.

### Option 2

You can spray the trunks, branches, everything you can reach with horticultural oil. Thoroughly wet these surfaces. Use a 4% solution. Do this in late winter/early spring, but about a month before the leaf buds break (So February or late January). The horticultural oil will smother the eggs. Depending on what oil you use, this option could be organic.

Despite your efforts with either of these two options, you will be unlikely to completely get rid of all the leaf phylloxera, because you won't be able to reach all the branches. But you should be able to decrease its impact substantially.

For commercial orchards, treat with malathion or imidacloprid.



# Upcoming Programs in Gillespie County

## **Stonewall Peach Jamboree**

June 15th-16th, Stonewall.  
Live peach auction. Peach salsa and biggest peach contest. BBQ meal available on Saturday, with 42 and washer pitcher tournament. Dance and rodeo on Friday and Saturday night.

## **Urban Wildscapes Presentation**

June 26th, 2018. Memorial Presbyterian Church, 607 North Milam, Fredericksburg, TX.  
Open meeting for the Fredericksburg Native Plant Society. Learn about landscapes that wildlife would find appealing, and how to manage undesirable animals such as deer. At 6:30 pm, light refreshments and social. Program starts at 7 pm. Free.

## **Get the Dirt on Soil**

July 24th, 2018. Memorial Presbyterian church, 607 North Milam, Fredericksburg, TX.  
Open meeting for the Fredericksburg Native Plant Society. David Vaughan will talk about the living skin of the earth, aka soil. At 6:30 pm, light refreshments and social. Program starts at 7 pm. Free.

## **Managing Your Piece of Texas: Gillespie County Landowner Workshop**

June 22nd, 2018. Hill Country University Center, 2818 US-290, Fredericksburg, TX.  
Landowner seminar with topics covering tree selection and planting, tree health, planting for wildlife, wildlife and other tax exemptions, riparian management, wildfire prevention and more. Starts with registration at 8:30 am. Ends around 3:15 pm. Lunch included. Cost is \$20.

## **Austin Foodshed Investor; Rolling Roadshow**

June 28th, 2018. Gillespie County Extension Office, 95 Frederick road, Fredericksburg, TX.  
Learn about funding and lending landscape available to small food and agricultural companies in Texas. Starts at 8:30, goes until noon. Free. Optional lunch available for purchase. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/funding-our-foodshed-the-rolling-roadshow-fredericksburg-tickets-45099125699>.

## **Gillespie County Fair**

August 23th-67th, 2018. Gillespie County Fairgrounds, 530 Fair Drive, Fredericksburg, TX  
County fair with agricultural and home products show, livestock shows, carnival, agricultural and local organization exhibits and horse racing! See the fair magazine or <http://www.gillespiefair.net/> for more information.

# Upcoming Programs Near Gillespie County

## **Rainwater Harvesting Class**

June 9th, 2018. Llano River Field Station, 254 Red Raider Lane, Junction, TX  
8am to 12 noon. Free.

Free class on rainwater harvesting. For more information on the class, call 972-952-9688. Register at <https://wateruniversity.tamu.edu/water-university-events/2018/June-9-2018-rainwater-harvesting-largesystem-Junction>

## Upcoming Statewide Programs

### **Texas Water Star Conference for Landscape Professionals**

June 8th, 2018. Tom Green County 4-H Center, 3168 N. U.S. Highway 67, San Angelo, Texas.  
Starts at 9 am and runs until 2 pm. Cost is \$30. Topics include: tools for landscape water management, irrigation scheduling using the WaterMyYard program, developing and using water budgets, irrigation management and technology updates. Speakers will include Charles Swanson, AgriLife Extension landscape irrigation specialist at College Station, and Roger Havlak, parks senior manager for the City of San Angelo. Register by calling 325-659-6522.

### **State Pecan Show**

July 15th-18, 2018. Embassy Suites & Conference Center, San Marcos, TX.

Group rate available for hotel. Mini pecan short course, updates from pecan industry groups, Smithville Orchard Tour, Pecan Museum of Texas for a dinner and casino night. Spouse and children's outing also. For more information and to register, see <https://www.tpga.org/annconference.php> . You can also call or email 979-846-3285 or [pecans@tpga.org](mailto:pecans@tpga.org) with additional questions.

## **Junior Master Gardeners Starts in August!**

Do you have a kid or know a kid that is interested in gardening? Are they in 3rd-5th grade (or near that age)? Sign them up for the Gillespie County Junior Master Gardening program. Program is tentatively scheduled to be on Tuesdays starting at 4:30 pm. It will tentatively start August 14th and run until November 13th, 2018. Further details forthcoming. If you have a high school student interested, please let me know because I have a special landscaping competition they might be interested in this fall.



GILLESPIE COUNTY

# MANAGING YOUR PIECE OF TEXAS

LANDOWNER WORKSHOP

**JUNE 22 AT HILL COUNTRY UNIVERSITY  
CENTER; FREDERICKSBURG, TX**

**Topics Presented:**

- Planting for Wildlife
- Identifying Tree Diseases
- Riparian Areas and How to Manage Them
- Tax Valuation Options
- Wildfire prevention
- Tree Selection, Planting and Care

The cost to attend this seminar is \$20 and lunch is included. 3 CEU's will be offered. This class is limited to 100 attendees, so call the Gillespie County Extension Office at 830-997-3452 by June 20 to RSVP. Payment should be made ahead of time.

Please visit <http://texasconservation.org/> for more info about the Texas Conservation Partnership.

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# Garden Calendar



*With tips taken from "Dr. Welch's Garden Tips", Neil Sperry and Dallas Master Gardener Gardening by the Month Guide*

## June

- Water lawn and garden thoroughly, but not too frequently.
- Check for insects and diseases. Destroy badly infested plants.
- Consider digging and dividing any crowded spring bulbs. Once the bulbs have matured and the foliage has turned brown, it is time to spade them up and thin out the stand. Crowded bulbs produce fewer and smaller blooms. They usually need thinning every 3 to 4 years.
- Fertilize roses every 4 to 6 weeks. Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer immediately after a flush of bloom. Continue to spray susceptible roses with a black-spot control every 7 to 10 days or as the labels advise.
- Re-blooming salvias, such as *Salvia greggii* and *S. farinacea*, should be pruned back periodically during the summer. To make the job easier, use hedging shears, and remove only the spent flowers and a few inches of stem below.
- Plant pumpkins for county fair and Halloween.

## July

- Trim off faded flowers on crape myrtles and vitex to encourage later rebloom.
- Sow seeds of cool-season flowers and vegetables in flats for planting outside during mid-to-late fall.
- Pick okra, peas and peppers often to maintain production.
- Plant pumpkins first week of July for Halloween.
- Plant tomatoes for fall. Choose a determinate or short day to maturity variety such as "Early Girl".

## August

- Plant your fall tomato transplants the first week of this month. Carrots can be planted this month too. Plant fall crop of beans and summer squash in early August.
- Fall planted bulbs are usually on sale this month and September. Get your order in early and save money.
- Plant bluebonnet and other spring wildflowers.

## Name that Plant!



What is the specific 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



*Answer was Bradford Pear. First person to name it correctly was Raeann Reid.*

*This newsletter is a publication that comes out quarterly, with issues out on February/March (spring), June/July (summer), September/October (fall), November/December (winter). If you would like to stop receiving this newsletter, please contact me at [elizabeth.mcmahon@agnet.tamu.edu](mailto:elizabeth.mcmahon@agnet.tamu.edu).*

*For other questions, comments, and concerns, please contact us at:*

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