



Introduction

It rained! Isn't that amazing? With this rain cooler weather has arrived, though this being Texas, it may not stick around.

Fall is a special time of year for a few gardening tasks. It's a great season to plant wildflowers for next year, harvest pecans and decorate your house with pumpkins. Please check this quarter's newsletter for more information. Also included is information about upcoming programs, general announcements and more.

If you have any plant related question, please feel free to contact me at the Extension Office at 830-997-3452. Thanks for reading!

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A Long Lasting Pumpkin



If the seasons were people, Fall's favorite vegetable would be the pumpkin. These winter squash come in a variety of colors, including white, striped, yellow, gray, tan and that classic orange. Pumpkins such as "Jack Be Little" can be as small enough to fit in your hand, while pumpkins such as "Atlantic Giant" you would struggle to load into a truck. Not every pumpkin is smooth skinned. Varieties such as "Warty Goblin" and "Galeux D' Eysines" intentionally have warts on their rinds as a decorative feature.

Pumpkins are considered a winter squash, but that doesn't mean that winter is the time to be planting them. The "winter" means that they store well, over the winter season potentially, if kept in ideal conditions.

Fall and early summer is the time to be picking pumpkins. When selecting for carving or ornamental use, choose those with as green of a stem as possible. These aren't as old as ones with a dried stem.

To help your ornamental pumpkin keep longer, wash and disinfect it, drying it thoroughly afterwards. Place it in a shady spot on cool concrete or somewhere with air circulation beneath the bottom. Placed so, a pumpkin could potentially last one to three months, sans excessive 95° F degree temperatures. If it freezes, that will shorten the life of the pumpkin. After carving, expect it to last only 5-7 days. Pumpkins are not just for ornamental purposes; they can be eaten too. Instead of choosing one that looks like that classic jack-o-lantern, choose a type that's been bred for eating instead. Look for pie pumpkins, kabocha, or Galeux D' Eysines. Favor a brown dried stem instead of a green when choosing one for consumption.

If you'd like to take a chance at growing pumpkins next year, select a variety with powdery mildew resistance. Plant late April to the first week of July. Pumpkins like water and fertilizer, so don't be stingy when growing them. Major issues include cucumber beetles, powdery mildew and spider mites.



Warty Goblin F1



Mellon Yellow F1



Snowball F1



Speckled Hound F1



Jarrahdale Large

Seeding Wildflowers into Landscapes

One of Texas's unique traditions is taking pictures of your kids or pets in bluebonnets. Drive around a week or two after the peak of bluebonnet season, and you will see indentions in the flowers where people have sat for pictures. Stopping on the side of the road isn't the safest thing to do, especially on the interstate. So why not start your own bluebonnet and wildflower patch this fall?

First, purchase your seed. Bluebonnets are the classic choice, but why not consider a mix of wildflowers. Choose a mix that is for Texas, preferably Central Texas. Common species to look for include Texas bluebonnet, Indian blanket, Indian paintbrush, lemon mint (beebalm), prairie coneflower, pink evening primrose, plains coreopsis, prairie verbena and more. If the planting is to be in your pasture, be forewarned that some wildflowers are poisonous, and may not be a good choice. Oppositely, some are very palatable to livestock, and they may not grow without protection.

Location selection is important. Choose a sunny well drained site. There are only a few wildflower species that enjoy shade. For best results, remove the existing vegetation. The stand may not be as vibrant if it has to compete with existing vegetation. If not removing the existing vegetation, mow it as short as you can. Rake the soil surface to the depth of one inch.

Before spreading out your seed, use a carrier material such as fine sand with it. Use four parts sand to one part seed. This will help spread out the seeds and make the seed you purchased go further.

Broadcast one half of the seed in a serpentine vertical direction. Spread the rest of the seed in a horizontal serpentine direction. Make sure the seed has contact with the soil by pressing it in, either by walking on it or using a roller.



Wildflower patch on rocky soil. Photo by S. McMahon.

One of the best parts about wildflowers is that they do not need as much water as vegetables or other plants. If we do not get rain, water the area weekly to get the seed started. Once the little rosettes pop up, water only if we do not get rain every two weeks. You do not need to fertilize. If we go into a fall drought keep the area watered every two weeks.

Planting bluebonnets in your lawn can be done, but it's not healthy for your lawn. Scalp the grass as low as possible in the late fall. Rake up the thatch so bare ground is exposed. Sow the wildflower seed and rake it in. Avoid using weed and feed fertilizers/pesticides in the areas you plant, as well as pre-emergent.

Sometimes home owner associations do not consider patches of bluebonnets in lawns beautiful, and may ask you to mow them. If you live in a subdivision or town, check your local rules before planting. The City of Fredericksburg allows bluebonnets and other wildflowers to be planted in yards. After your wildflower's blooms have been spent, wait until at least half of them have dried up and dropped their seeds before mowing.

Wildflower seed is best planted in the fall, so if you want that field of bluebonnets, you will need to purchase and spread your seed soon. May your wildflower pictures turn out well!



Bluebonnet patch at the Gillespie County Extension Office.

Gillespie County Pecan Show November 30th, 2018

The Gillespie County Extension Office is pleased to announce the 2018 Gillespie County Pecan Show on November 30th, 2018. Entries are due on November 29th, 2018 at noon.

To enter, please bring to the Gillespie County Extension Office a brown paper bag of 40-42 pecans of the same variety that were grown by you. Seedlings, known hybrids and native pecans can be entered too, but will have their own categories respectively. Smallest pecan entries need to have at least a pound of pecan present.

What happens to your pecans when they arrive? Pecan show volunteers and extension agents will crack them. If entering, you are welcome to help us crack pecans on November 30th at 9 am, though it is not necessary to do so.



A light golden color is favored by our pecan judges.



2017 Contest Set-up

Your pecans will be judged based on weight, kernel size and shape, damage/disease presence and color. Pecans are categorized according to variety, so don't worry, your "Mahan" pecans aren't going to be judged against someone else's "Pawnee" until the championship round.

If your entries contain more than one variety of pecan, they will be disqualified. You can enter only one entry per variety, except for natives, seedlings and hybrids. Pecans that have been altered in any way, including but not limited to sanding, cut, or polished will be disqualified. Pecans must be from the 2018 crop.

The champions from the natives, classic/new and commercial divisions will be awarded trophies. Finalists from the county show will move on to the Central Texas Regional Pecan show in early December. Finalists from this competition will move onto the state competition in June 2019.

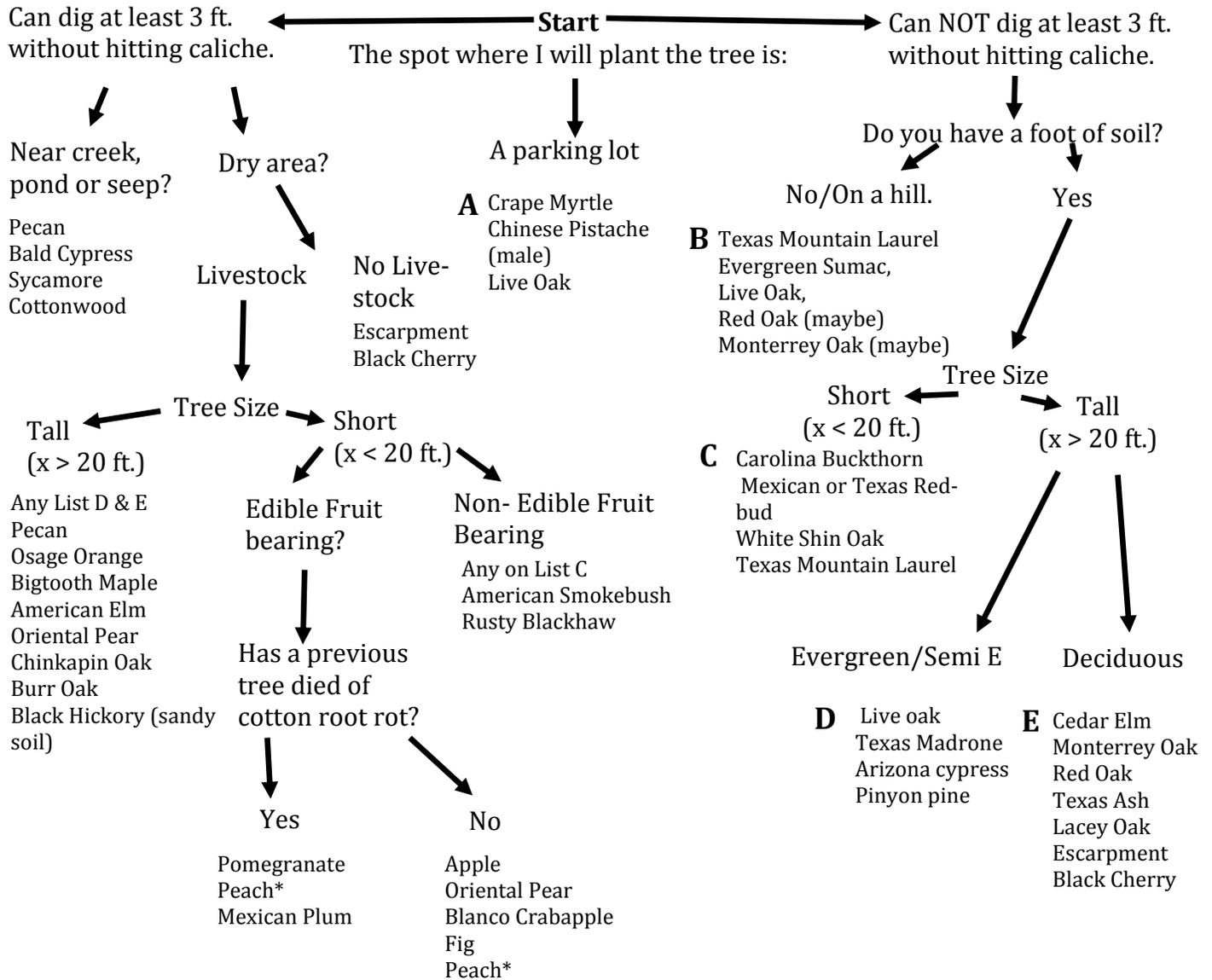
Gillespie County Chill Hour Tracker

Gillespie County AgriLife Extension will be tracking chill hours at the office this winter. Chill hours are a way to estimate if a fruit tree has received enough cold weather to set an adequate crop. Though many fruit crops need chill hours, this is a particular issue regarding peach trees. Chill hours will be reported using the under 45° F method and the 32-45° F method. Counting will start with the first frost. Please see <https://gillespie.agrilife.org/agriculture-2/horticulture/chill-hours/> for updates.

Gillespie County Horticulture Newsletter

Which Tree Should I Plant?

Want to plant a tree and don't know which one you should get? Check out the flowchart below.



Special Notes

Planting any tree in soil that is rocky and with less than 3 feet of soil depth may result in stunting, which means the tree may not reach it's true size.

Trees not advised to be planted include: Lacebark Elm, Olives, Arizona Ash, Huisache, Chinese Tallow, Leyland Cypress, Chinaberry, Silver Maple, and Siberian Elm.

* Peach has intermediate resistance to cotton root rot.

Agricultural Termites

Cause of Concern or Harmless Nuisance?

This year's heat and lack of rain during the summer exposed a usual problem for pastures and lawns. Small tubes of soil encased plants. The tubes could spread across the pasture or lawn, leaving behind no green or brown foliage. While you may not have seen any insects, these tube structures were built by agricultural termites.

Agricultural termites, also known as desert termites, are not the kind that invade and destroy homes. Instead of feeding on dead wood, this kind feeds on live and dead grasses, forbs, and livestock manure. If desperate, you can even spot them feeding on cactus pads. They create the tube-like structures to protect themselves from drying out as they feed.



Agricultural termites in a Fredericksburg yard. Photo by B.M.



Agricultural termite swarmers. Photo by Wizzie Brown.

When not in a drought, one may notice agricultural termites when they find a pile of dead insect wings by their door or on their porch. These wings were left behind by termite swarmers. Both the agricultural and subterranean kinds of termites leave wings behind, but there is a way to distinguish the two. Agricultural swarmers have brown bodies with opaque grayish brownish wings. They swam in the summer, just after dark. Subterranean termites swarm in the spring.

Swarmers cannot fly very far, and many do not survive. They can be either male or female, and after two of them meet, they form a new colony.

In times of more plentiful rainfall, the termites could be considered somewhat beneficial. Their tunneling below the earth improves rainfall infiltration by making the soil more porous. Their damage is noticed the most when the drought hits the hardest what little grass you have. They can transform a struggling lawn to bare ground and consume what remains in a pasture.

There isn't a pesticide specifically labeled for agricultural termites. If in a lawn, watering the grass more should help it recover. With the recent rains, these termite tubes will probably be covered up by the incoming vegetation, until another drought hits.

Office Closures

The Gillespie County Extension Office will be closed on November 12th, November 22-23rd, December 24-25th and December 31st.

Save the Date!

The Plantastic Gardening program returns February 2nd, 2019. Program will be morning and afternoon with two general sessions, breakout sessions and a hands-on session. Come join us and learn how to grow vegetables in the Texas Hill Country.

Common Fall Pecan Tree Issues

Pecan trees can have issues any time of the year, but I've noticed that more people notice them when they are eagerly awaiting their upcoming pecan crop. On this page you will find pictures of common fall pecan problems that you may encounter while waiting for your pecans to ripen.



Hickory Shuckworm

If tree has history of damage, spray with labeled insecticide at half-shell hardening stage.

Picture by USDA Agricultural Service



Black Aphid Damage

Treat when 2-3 black aphids present per leaflet. Use malathion as labeled. Do not treat past August 31st.

Picture by Beth McMahon



Pecan Weevil

If tree has history of damage, do trunk treatments (up to 8 ft.) every 2 weeks with carbaryl insecticide starting in mid-August and continuing through September.

Picture by Dr. Pat Porter and Bill Ree.



Fall Webworms

Treat with BT or Spinosad as labeled.

Picture by Bill Ree.



Powdery Mildew

Treatment usually not needed.

Picture by Jerry Payne, USDA



Pecan Scab

Plant resistant varieties.. Treat varieties with susceptible history with thiophanate methyl, fungicide, but not after shuck-split stage

Picture by Beth McMahon



Bird Feeding

Not much for homeowners to do. Commercial growers can use loud noisemakers.

Picture by Dr. William Reid



Twig Girdler

Minor issue, no treatment needed. If desired, pick up branches as soon as they drop and burn/throw away.

Picture by H.A.

Strange Tales of Horticulture

Why Do Peppers Taste Hot?

With the fall weather comes chili cook-offs, and you've just received your first bowl. You take a bite and suddenly your mouth feels like it's on fire! It's hot!

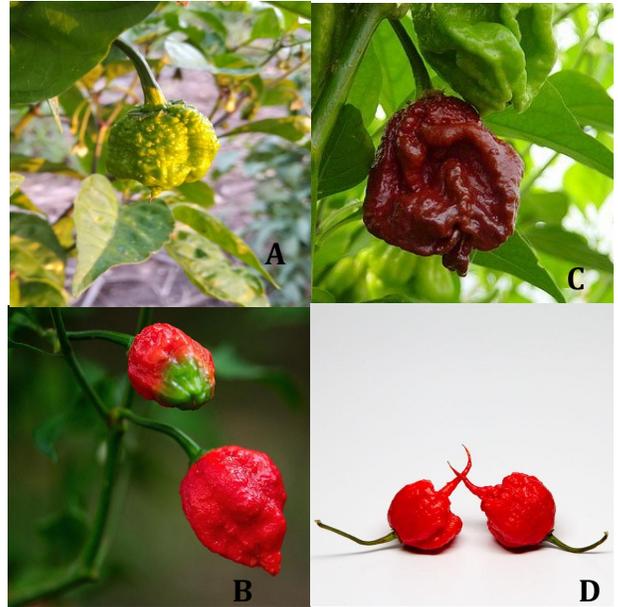
If you were calm enough to think about it more, you might wonder how something that is warm can taste "hot". The reason why, at least in regard to chili peppers, is a chemical known as capsaicin.

When eaten, capsaicin triggers two sets of sensory receptors in your mouth: those that sense being cut/pinched and those that sense high temperatures. The body interprets both of these as a burning heat response.

Capsaicin doesn't actually cause any physical damage in your mouth, but the body responds to it as something that could cause that reaction. The body doesn't remain fooled though. If you constantly eat a lot of spicy food, you can desensitize your sense receptors to the spiciness.

Peppers grow hotter as they ripen and dry out, and smaller peppers are usually hotter than bigger ones. The level of capsaicin in a pepper is measured using the

"Scoville heat scale". Pure chemically refined capsaicin is at the top of the scale with 16 million units. Jalapenos usually fall between 5,000-50,000 units. Pepper spray ranges between 2-5 million. The current hottest pepper is a Carolina Reaper, bred by Ed Currie, which was measured at 2, 200,000 units.



A. Carolina Reaper (Picture by Beth McMahon) B. Moruga Trinidad Scorpion (Pepper Joes) C. 7 Pot Doughlah (Pepperseeds.eu), D. Primo Pepper (Pepper Joes)



Mexibelle on the left, Cajun Belle on the right. Pictures courtesy of Bonnie Plants.

Capsaicin doesn't accumulate in the foliage of a pepper plant, so you are safe to touch the foliage of that ghost chili. It occurs mainly in the thin white membrane inside the pepper. Despite common lore it's actually not in the seeds, but since the seeds have a lot of contact with that membrane, this is why they may taste spicy.

Bell peppers do not normally have any capsaicin. The only way to get a spicy bell pepper is to grow a variety specially bred for it, such as "Mexibelle" or "Cajun Belle". Planting hot peppers next to sweet peppers will not make them hot. Peppers have perfect flowers, with both male and female parts, so they commonly self-pollinate. If pollen from a hot pepper did spread to a sweet pepper, it's still unlikely that pepper will be hot, because it's the mother plant's genetics that forms the fruit over the seeds. If the seeds are the result of the union of the two pepper plants, the bell fruit part is created by the mother plant to spread the seeds.

On this topic there is no such thing as a male or female bell pepper, at least in a biological sense. Both have seeds which will grow into pepper plants.

At that chili cook-off when eating that spicy chili or eating peppers by themselves, instead of reaching for water to cool your mouth, try milk or bread instead. These will bind to the capsaicin better, thus saving your mouth and perhaps leaving you time to wonder "why is this chili so spicy?" or "Why didn't I choose the mild?"

Upcoming Programs in Gillespie County

Everything about Trees in 50 Minutes

September 22nd, 2018. The Gardens at The Ridge, Tierra Linda.

Learn the basics about tree selection, tree care and how to properly plant a tree. Bring leaf samples and pictures of bark if you have a tree you want identified after the program. Free.

A Virtual Plant Walk at Enchanted Rock

September 25th, 2018. Memorial Presbyterian Church, Fredericksburg.

A presentation on the plants of Enchanted Rock, by Chris Anderson. Light refreshments at 6:30 pm. Program and Fredericksburg Native Plant Society meeting begins at 7:00 pm. Free.

Native Landscape Certification Program Level 3

September 29th, 2018. CTEC Meeting Room, Fredericksburg.

Hosted by Native Plant Society. Day long class with two classroom sessions and 1.5 hour plant walk. 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. 6 TNLA CEUS. Lunch not included. Cost is \$37 for Native Plant Society Members, \$52 for non-member. See <https://npsot.org/wp/nlcp/> for more information.

Bennet Trust Women's Conference

October 1st-2nd, 2018. Inn on Barron's Creek, Fredericksburg.

First day is presentations, second day is a tour. Includes all meals and tour transportation costs.

Topics include finances, laws, small ruminants, and more. Register here: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/>

Gillespie County Beef and Range Field Day

October 4th, 2018. Gillespie County Fairgrounds, Fredericksburg.

Registration starts at 5 pm. \$10 dollars. Two agricultural pesticide applicator continuing education credits. Topics include beef industry news including information on beef tariffs and trucks that move beef cattle.



4-H Range Judging Pedernales Falls Plant ID Hike

October 20th, 2018. Pedernales Falls State Park, Johnson City.

Do you have kids interested in 4-H Range Judging? Come join us as we do a 2-3 hour moderate intensity hike. Parents welcome. No cost except what it costs to get into the park. Meet at the Extension Office in Fredericksburg. 8:00 am to 12:00 pm. Good hiking shoes and your own drinking water required, long pants recommended. Contact the Gillespie County Extension office at 830-997-3452 with questions.

Upcoming Programs in Gillespie County

Identify Your Grass Class

October 23rd, 2018. Memorial Presbyterian Church, Fredericksburg.
Presentation by Jim Stanley and John Huecksteadt, who will identify mystery grasses. Attendees limited to eight samples. Light refreshments at 6:30 pm. Program and Fredericksburg Native Plant Society meeting begins at 7:00 pm. Free.

Harper Volunteer Fish Fry

November 3rd, 2018. Harper Volunteer Firefighter and EMS Station, Harper. Come support the Harper Volunteer Fire and EMS in Harper Texas. Fish by donation, raffle tickets available at the fish fry and at extension office.

Gillespie County Wild Game Dinner

November 17th, 2018. Gillespie County Fairgrounds.
From 5:30-10 pm. Cost is \$25 per person. Come enjoy a variety of meats, drinks, live auction, raffle and silent auction. Supports youth and adult agricultural education in Gillespie County.

Gillespie County Pecan Show

November 30th, 2018. Gillespie County Extension Office, Fredericksburg.
Pecans from the county will be judged for the best quality pecan. Pecans are due on November 29th, 2018 at noon. Free entry.

Gillespie County 5 hour Structural and Pesticide Applicator CEU Course

December 11, 2018. Gillespie County Extension Office, Fredericksburg.
Topics include termites, innovative methods to kill gophers demonstration, mosquito control and more. 5 pesticide applicator CEUS. \$75 dollars. Lunch included. Please register by December 7th, 2018. Call the extension office at 830-997-3452 to register. Can pay at the door.



Upcoming Programs Near Gillespie County

Master Gardener 2019 Class Information Forum

October 13th, 2018. Hill District Youth Event Center, Kerrville.

Interested in being a Master Gardener? Come learn more at our informational forum. Program will last from 9:30 am-11:00 am. Please contact the Kerr ((830-257-6568) or Gillespie County extension office (830-997-3452) for more information.

Upcoming Statewide Programs

Kiwifruit Field Day

September 21st, 2018. Piney Woods Native Plant Center, Nacogdoches, Texas.

Cost is \$25 per person, \$40 per couple.

Lunch is provided. Program will last from 8:30 am to 4:00 pm. Learn about growing kiwis in Texas, take a tour of the orchard and sample some of the fruit. Kiwis are not recommended for growing in the Texas Hill Country.

Texas Fruit Conference

October 15th-16th, New Braunfels Conference Center, New Braunfels.

Two day program. Various topics include plums, figs, pomegranates, blueberry container production and more.

Cost is \$65 before 9/15/2018, \$75

9/16-10/11/2018. Contact Monte Nesbitt at mlnesbitt@tamu.edu for more

information. Includes entry into tasting

event and one lunch. Register online at:

[https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/](https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2636)

[productListingDetails/2636](https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/productListingDetails/2636).



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. Bonus accolades if you name the correct cultivar name.

Last Newsletter's Plant



Answer from last quarter's newsletter was Artichoke. First person to name it correctly was William Hogan.

This newsletter is a publication 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 us me at elizabeth.mcmahon@agnet.tamu.edu.

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

*Gillespie County Extension office
95 Frederick Road
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.



NATIVE TREE SALE

BY ORDER ONLY

Pickup Date: November 7 or 8, 2018

At the USDA Service Center 2104 Memorial Blvd

Orders Due by October 25, 2018

ALL TREES SOLD HAVE BEEN GROWN LOCALLY AND ARE NATIVE SPECIES. 5 GALLON POTS.

SPECIES AVAILABLE :

BIG TOOTH MAPLE	GOLDEN BALL LEAD TREE
BLANCO CRABAPPLE	MEXICAN PLUM
BURR OAK	MONTERREY OAK
CEDAR ELM	ANACACHO ORCHID
CHINKAPIN OAK	ESCARPMENT CHERRY
DESERT WILLOW	TEXAS REDBUD
EVE'S NECKLACE	

OTHER SPECIES & SIZES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

For More Information or for Special Orders Please Contact:

Kerr County Soil & Water Conservation District

Missie Dreiss, Technician

missie@kerrcountyswcd.com or

830-896-4911 x 3





NATIVE TREE SALE

PRE-ORDER FORM

Pick Up at USDA Service Center, 2104 Memorial Blvd, on November 7-8, 9am – 3pm

Orders Due by: Thursday, October 25, 2018

Name: _____ Ph. Number: _____

Email: _____

Species:	Quantity		Price Each	Total Price
Burr Oak	_____	X	\$30	_____
Cedar Elm	_____	X	\$30	_____
Chinkapin Oak	_____	X	\$30	_____
Monterrey Oak	_____	X	\$30	_____
Blanco Crabapple	_____	X	\$30	_____
Eve's Necklace	_____	X	\$30	_____
Golden Ball Lead Tree	_____	X	\$30	_____
Mexican Plum	_____	X	\$30	_____
Desert Willow	_____	X	\$30	_____
Bigtooth Maple	_____	X	\$30	_____
Texas Redbud	_____	X	\$30	_____
Anacacho Orchid Tree	_____	X	\$30	_____
Escarpment Cherry	_____	X	\$30	_____
Madrone *1 gallon pot*	_____	X	\$30	_____

Other Species (not guaranteed, call for availability):

Return form to:

Natural Resources Conservation Service Kerrville Field Office 2104
Memorial Blvd Kerrville, Texas 78028

Or email it to : missie@kerrcountyswcd.com

Order can also be called into 830-896-4911. Talk to Shannon or
Missie. Pay when you pick up the trees.

TOTAL AMOUNT: _____

PAID ON: _____