

**September 11, 2014**

**AGRIVIEW**

**By: Rick Hirsch**  
**County Extension Agent**

**Fall is getting closer. The weather will hopefully be getting cooler and wetter and gardeners will slowly be migrating back outdoors after the heat this summer. Now is a perfect time to plan the addition of a new tree or a grouping of shrubs to the landscape. Or perhaps you have an area in the landscape that needs ‘remodeling’ or rejuvenating. The fall may be the best season to plant, surpassing even the spring.**

**Many people prefer January through March for planting, but the fall months of September through December have distinct advantages. Fall planting follows the heat of summer, before a cool winter season, and trees and shrubs planted in the fall use this to good advantage. Plant roots grow anytime the soil temperature is 40 degrees or higher, which may occur all winter in Texas. During the winter months, the roots systems of the fall-planted specimens develop and become established. When spring arrives, this expanded root system can support and take advantage of the full surge of spring growth.**

**Fall is the optimum time to plant balled and burlapped trees and shrubs. Balled and burlapped plants have ample time to recover from transplanting and proliferate roots before spring growth begins. Remember, however, all bare root plants, including roses and pecan and fruit trees, should be planted in late winter when they are completely dormant.**

**When buying plants for your landscape, be sure to get healthy, well-grown plants. Always buy from a reputable dealer. Those in the plant-selling business year-round depend on repeat customers, and only by selling customers quality plants can there be assurance of future business. Beware of plant bargains. They can easily turn out to be real headaches. A bargain is no good if it dies. The price tag, especially the cheapest one, is not the best guide to quality.**

**All plants have growing requirements. Think about the plant's needs before you invest. Is it adapted to your area's soil? Will it grow in sun or shade? Does it need a wet or dry location? Is it cold hardy? Some nurseries have this type of information on tags beside the plant. If not, ask a nursery professional or the county Extension agent.**

**'Plan before you plant' is always a good rule of thumb. Whether you are planting a single plant or an entire landscape, plan first, then plant. Good planning is a worthwhile investment of time that will pay off in greater enjoyment of attractive and useful home grounds, and in increasing the value of your home. It's much easier to move plants on paper than to dig them after planting in the wrong place. A plan saves many planting mistakes.**

**Every plant in the landscape should serve a purpose. Ask yourself if you want a plant for screening, for privacy or for shade. How large will it be five years from now? Plants, like people, grow up. Remember, that a small one-gallon size plant will look entirely different after a few years of growth in your landscape.**

#### **SOIL TESTING:**

**This past week I have had questions from several landowners who are making**

plants to plant new pastures next year. This of course is dependent on adequate rainfall.

One of the best first steps is to take a soil sample.

Periodic soil testing, followed by liming and fertilization according to soil test recommendations, is critically important to achieve good forage production and maintain forage stands. On most livestock farms in Henderson County, no management practice will have more long-term influence on animal production per acre.

Soil test recommendations are based on the assumption that the forage produced will be utilized. Thus, it is important for a producer to adjust stocking rates and grazing management as necessary to ensure that the forage produced is used. This is essential to obtain the maximum or near maximum benefit from the investment in fertilizer.

In forage production, as is the case for most crops, the major nutrients - nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium - are of greatest concern because their deficiencies are most common. Each of these nutrients must be available in substantial quantities to obtain profitable, environmentally friendly forage production.

When soil pH becomes too low for good crop growth, as is the tendency for some soils in Henderson County, it becomes necessary to apply sufficient lime to raise soil pH to the desired level.

Soil test kits are available at the Henderson County Extension office or several retail Ag suppliers throughout the county.

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

September 13<sup>th</sup> - Hunter Education Class - Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center - Athens - 903-676-2277 - 7:30 a.m.

- September 19<sup>th</sup>** - **Fall Hunters Rendezvous - 5:00 p.m. - Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center - Hart-Morris Conference Center**
- September 23<sup>rd</sup>** - **Winter Pasture Seminar - Senior Citizens Center - Athens - 5:30 p.m. - \$15.00/person - 2.5 C. E. U.'s**
- September 26<sup>th</sup>** - **Private Applicator Pesticide License Training - 8:00 a.m. - Call 903-675-6130 to register - \$40.00 for Pesticide Study Manuals + \$10.00/Person**

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