

**January 2, 2014**

**AGRIVIEW**

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**Happy New Year and welcome to 2014!**

**Late winter is the time to complete most pruning chores around the landscape. The fastest period of wound healing is in the spring so pruning done now will soon be on its way to healing. Pruning cuts are often done incorrectly.**

**Leaving a stub results in a dead piece of branch that prevents the wound from being able to close. The dead stub becomes a route for decay to enter the tree. Cutting flush up against the trunk or another branch removes the natural collar around the branch that results in fast healing. It also creates a larger wound than is necessary. Thus it takes a lot longer for the wound to heal.**

**Different plants often require different pruning techniques. Factors such as deciduous, evergreen, spring blooming, upright shrubs and arching shrubs, all affect the type and timing of pruning. There are many resources online and from your local Extension office to illustrate proper pruning practices. Take advantage of these cold days to brush up on your knowledge before heading outside to prune.**

**As a general rule, if an ornamental plant blooms only in the spring wait to prune it until after the blooms are gone. Otherwise late winter is the time to get the job done.**

**This is also a good time to plant woody ornamental trees, shrubs and vines. The**

sooner you get them in the longer they have to establish roots into the surrounding soil so that when hot dry weather arrives they have a better chance of survival. As with pruning, planting can be done correctly or incorrectly. There is plenty of information available to help you do it right. This will help protect your investment in time and money.

### **FRUIT, NUT TREES DELICIOUS GARDEN ADDITIONS:**

If you have been contemplating walking out your back door and harvesting fresh blueberries, peaches, blackberries or other culinary delights, now is the time to plan and plant for those future harvests.

Before rushing to make that purchase, you first need to do some homework. Make sure that the fruit variety you select will grow and produce for you - and that you are able to provide the attention required enduring you'll have something to harvest.

Picking the best planting spot is very important. All fruits, berries and nuts need full sun for the best yields. Less than maximum sunlight means a reduced harvest and more pest problems.

Well-drained soils are crucial for the success of every fruit and nut species. Few fruit types thrive in poorly drained soils. Mayhaws are an exception to this rule and tolerate poorly drained, although they also do best in moist, well-drained soils. Poorly drained soils lack the oxygen necessary for the roots to function at their peak potential.

Here's a simple test to determine your soil's internal drainage. Dig a hole three feet deep with a posthole digger and fill with water. If the water is gone within 24 hours, you'll have no trouble growing fruit and nut trees. If the water is gone within 48 hours, the soil is acceptable but can give problems. If water is still in the hole after 48 hours, grow

vegetable or flowers instead.

If you are planning a home orchard, pay attention to spacing between plants. Give your trees enough room to grow to their full size without crowding. Crowded plants compete for light, water and nutrients, and eventually yields are reduced and disease and other problems occur.

After planting, water your trees (in the absence of a good, soaking rain) every four days for two weeks, then every five days for two weeks, and so on until you can water the tree every 10 to 20 days without placing the tree under stress. The key to watering established trees is to water deeply and infrequently. Lawn sprinklers set for 15 minutes every other day will not wetting the soil sufficiently for producing trees. Newly planted trees should be pruned back rather severely to compensate for loss of roots during transplanting and to begin the process of training the new growth into a good form for that particular type of tree or vine.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has a number of publications for the most common fruits and nuts grown in Texas. These provide establishment and cultural information, along with a wealth of other information for successfully growing your own fruit.

**“UDDERLY” UNPREDICTABLE WEATHER:**

“Udderly” unpredictable weather has kept Texas cattle producers busy trying to keep herds healthy. Rainfall paired with “yo-yo” high and low temperatures have made cattle more susceptible to disease. With increased risk, producers need to keep an eye out for problems.

**A wet animal during cold temperatures needs greater attention than it normally would. Respiratory problems are the most common ailments for animals in this type of weather. Symptoms are coughing and wheezing, along with a runny nose and eyes.**

**You have to be a great observer of the animal. With all these changes you need to pay attention because they have a greater opportunity to get sick.**

**As soon as symptoms are spotted, do something about it so the animal doesn't get any sicker. If problems develop, contact your veterinarian.**

**IMPORTANT DATES:**

**January 11<sup>th</sup> - Henderson County Livestock Show Swine Validation - 7:00 a.m. -  
11:00 a.m. - Henderson County Fairgrounds - Athens**

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