

Top of the Windmill News

Spring 2017

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Kerr County AgriLife Extension Service
3775 Hwy. 27
Kerrville, TX 78028
(830) 257-6568
kerr@ag.tamu.edu
Kerr.agrilife.org



Roy Walston

By: Roy Walston – CEA-Ag/NR

Calendar of Events

February 10 - Private Applicator CEU Opportunities

April 8 - Hill Country Master Gardener Blooms & Barrels Plant Sale

Apr. 18 - Pecan Grafting & Production Workshop (3 CEUs)

Apr 20-21 - Bennett Land Stewardship Conference (3 CEUs)



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Private Applicator CEU Opportunities

Many Private Applicators licenses will be expiring in February of 2017 and will need to have met the minimum of 15 CEU's with two hours in laws and regulations and 2 hours in integrated pest management with the remainder 11 CEU's in general or any other category over a five year period. Applicators may obtain CEU's either through attending field-days, seminars, etc., online courses or video courses. A minimum of 5 CEU's must be obtained through attending a live class, seminar, field-day, etc. The remaining ten hours may be from video, or online classes.



Kerr County Extension offers 8 hours of video training at the Kerr County Extension office. Individuals needing to obtain this training may contact the Kerr County Extension office at 830-257-6568 to schedule a training. Each training is \$10/day regardless the number of CEU hours.

Texas AgriLife Extension in Bexar County will be hosting a training on February 10, 2017 at the Hardberger Park Urban Ecology Center at 8400 NW Military, San Antonio, TX. This program will begin at 8:30 a.m. and include one hour of laws and regulations, one hour of integrated pest management and four hours of general for Private Pesticide Applicators. Contact Molly Keck at the Bexar County Extension office for registration at (210) 631-0400.



Individuals who may not have a private applicator license and would like to obtain a license may contact the Kerr County Extension office at (830) 257-6568 to schedule a training or sign up for a Private Applicator Class to be held in the spring.

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 or veteran status.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

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4th Hill Country Land Stewardship Conference April 20-21, 2017 held at YO Hotel & Conference Center, Kerrville

The fourth annual Hill Country Land Stewardship Conference is scheduled for April 20-21 at the YO Hotel and Conference Center in Kerrville. The conference is funded by the Ruth and Eskel Bennett Endowment and hosted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, said Dr. Larry Redmon, co-chair and Bennett Trust AgriLife Extension specialist.

Cost of the two-day conference is \$75 and includes all meals, break refreshments and tour transportation costs. Register online at <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/BennettTrust>.

The following topics and speakers will fill the morning program:

- Getting to Know Your Resources – Dr. Megan Clayton, Extension Range Specialist, Corpus Christi, TX.
- Managing Deep Rooted Invaders – Dr. Bob Lyons, Extension Range Specialist, Uvalde, TX.
- Top Laws Texas Landowners Need to Know – Dr. Tiffany Lashmet – Extension Real Estate Attorney



Following a lunch, concurrent sessions will be offered with the following topics and speakers:

- Master Naturalist Program – Michelle Haggerty
- Landscaping For Wildlife
- Livestock Options for Smaller Acreage
- Rainwater Harvesting Options – Mr. Billy Kniffen
- Edwards Plateau – “Where We Have Come From and Where We are Going” – Dr. Barron Rector

The second day of the conference will be dedicated to tours. Individuals will pick from a tour of the Hillingdon Ranch in Kendall County, a “Wine and Roses” tour in Gillespie County or a Kerr Wildlife Area tour. For more information, contact Redmon at l-redmon@tamu.edu, Machen at r-machen@tamu.edu, or Roy Walston at RWalston@ag.tamu.edu or call 830-257-6568.





Pecan Grafting and Production Workshop

A Pecan Grafting and Production Workshop is scheduled for April 18th at 9:00 a.m. at Bill Hathaway's Orchard. This will be an informative and educational opportunity for those pecan producers interested in grafting pecans. Early season insect and fertilization management will also be discussed by Dr. Larry Stein, Extension Horticulturist from Uvalde.

The orchard is located on Texas highway 173, approximately 4 1/2 miles from Kerrville-Schreiner State Park. Turn left on Center Point River road and enter the first gate on the right; signs will be posted. Three hours of CEU's will be offered to Private, Commercial and Non-Commercial applicators. Anyone interested in learning more about pecan production will benefit from this field-day. Registration for the field-day is \$10.00 and is payable at the field-day. Please contact the Kerr County Extension office to pre-register for the field-day at 830-257-6568.



Musk Thistle Control

Foliar Herbicide Treatments for Selective Control in Grass Pastures

One properly timed herbicide treatment per year should prevent seed formation. Fall treatments should be made late enough to kill all rosettes germinated before winter. Late germinating rosettes that establish after early fall herbicide applications could flower the next growing season. Early spring treatments should kill all overwintering rosettes and those rosettes germinating later in the season should not produce seed until the following year. Several herbicides have proven to be effective for range and pastures include restricted use products (requiring a private applicator license) include Grazon P+D, Grazon Next and Surmount. For those individuals that do not have an applicators license Chaparral herbicide is recommended.

Cultural and Mechanical Methods of Control

Weed control in pastures starts with good management practices. Forage grass plants are most competitive with weeds when conditions are right for optimum growth. Therefore, proper timing and fertilization as well as preventing the overgrazing of livestock is important. As mentioned previously, preventing seed production is essential for long-term control. Mow pastures after stem elongation, but before flowers open. Some regrowth will occur, so a second or third mowing may be necessary. Also, to avoid spread of the seed, keep areas such as fence rows, adjacent pastures and farm lots free of musk thistle.



Prescribed Burning

Recent high winds and witnessing some unmanned burn piles has brought to my attention the need to inform landowners of the importance of planning all burns and maintaining a watchful eye on all burn piles even after the flames are out. Many times we have absentee landowners that come to enjoy and work on their property for the weekends. Weather conditions on Saturdays are nice with wind speeds 6 - 10 mph, relative humidity between 40%-60% and temperatures between 40 and 60 degrees F. However, some of these piles are so large they may burn for 2-3 days and have embers that can be blown with gusts of wind increasing on Sunday evening to 20 mph and the landowner has headed back to the city. This is a recipe for disaster. Landowners should always begin burning no earlier than one hour after sunrise, end it the same day and no later than one hour before sunset, and make sure that a responsible party is present while the burn is active and the fire is progressing. At the end of the burn, extinguish isolated residual fires or smoldering objects if the smoke they produce can be a nuisance or a traffic hazard. I am including some fire weather conditions to follow when planning a controlled burn or "just" burning brush piles.

Red Flag Conditions for Winter Burns:

- Wind speed greater than 20 mph.
- Relative humidity less than 20 percent.
- Air temperature greater than 80 degrees F

Fine Fuel Loads for Effective Burns:

- Minimum of 1,500 to 2,000 pounds/acre.
- Optimum of 3,000 pounds/acre or more.

Diesel: Gasoline Mixture for Drip Torches:

- 60 to 75 percent diesel plus 25 to 40 percent gasoline.

Optimum Weather Conditions for Winter Backfires:

- Relative humidity between 40 and 60 percent
- Air temperature between 40 and 60 degrees F
- Wind speed between 5 and 8 mph

Optimum Weather Conditions for Winter Headfires:

- Relative humidity between 25 and 40 percent
- Air temperature between 70 and 80 degrees F
- Wind speed between 8 and 15 mph

Texas Air Control Board Regulations for Prescribed Burns:

- Wind speed must be between 6 and 23 mph.
- Burn must be started after 9 a.m.
- Burn must be completed by 5 p.m.
- Burn must be at least 300 feet from adjacent residential, recreational, commercial or industrial properties.
- Burn cannot be conducted when atmospheric temperature inversions are predicted.
- Burn must be outside corporate limits of a city or town.

Minimum Downwind Protection (Backfire + Mineral Fireline Width):

- Slightly volatile fuels = 50 to 100 feet
- Moderately volatile fuels = 100 to 200 feet
- Highly volatile fuels = 300 to 500 feet

Minimum Mineral Fireline Width:

- 8 feet + 1 foot per mph of wind expected.

A very useful link that can be added as an app to iPhones is the Intellicast link: <http://www.intellicast.com/>. This app has GPS capabilities to provide accurate information to help prepare for burns on site specific information.



Wildfire Preparedness

I. BEFORE

Precautions should be taken long before a fire threatens your property in order to minimize costly damages after a fire. All farm and ranch family members and farm workers should be able to identify potential fire hazards and understand the basic fire response techniques to eliminate or minimize personal and property damage.

Basic measures include:

1. Install and maintain smoke detectors. Smoke detectors should be installed in barns and buildings and checked at least once per month. Batteries should be changed at least once per year.
2. Develop an escape or evacuation plan, and practice it. The evacuation plan should also include how to transport animals and livestock that may be in danger.
3. Post emergency numbers in a central location, including the fire department, police department, local emergency response coordinator, and others who provide rural emergency assistance.
4. Place fire extinguishers in all barns, vehicles, and tractors. Check extinguishers periodically for charge. Discard damaged or used fire extinguishers.
5. Store fuels, pesticides, medicines and other chemicals in a fire-retardant enclosure or secure location away from heat sources and combustible materials. In the event of a wildfire, these substances should be removed from the premises.
6. Keep barns and buildings clean of trash and other combustible materials such as hay, lumber, logs, and empty feed sacks.

Practice farm-specific fire safety:

1. Always avoid fire hazards in the initial construction.
2. Make sure your farm has adequate water supply, such as an irrigation ditch, a water tank, a cistern, or a pond.
3. Keep irrigation sources clear of combustible material.
4. Keep areas clear of grass, weeds, and other debris.
5. Park tractors and implements away from combustible materials such as hay stacks and fuel storage containers.
6. Obtain fire insurance for livestock, buildings, and equipment.
7. Conduct random, but regular inspections and fire drills. Invite the fire department for these drills to minimize confusion during an actual occurrence.
8. Keep aboveground fuel storage tanks at least 40 feet from buildings.



Grassbur Control Time Near

Recent moisture in the area may spur growth of many weeds one of which is the troublesome grassbur, sandbur, goathead or sticker that tends to be a problem in many lawns and coastal fields. In lawns a good fertility, water and timely mowing program will minimize if not eliminate this problem.

For bermudagrass hay producers with hay pastures infested with grassburs a relatively new product made by DuPont has been on the market for the last several years known as Pastora. This product is labeled for use in established bermudagrass pastures, and hay meadows and unimproved bermudagrass turf. This product works as a postemergent when the grassburs are less than 1.5" tall. Two applications per year may be applied, a maximum application rate of 2.5 ounces per acre per year may be applied.

Pastora may temporarily injure or stunt bermudagrass. To minimize potential for injury, apply Pastora during bermudagrass dormancy, during spring green-up with < 2 inches of new bermudagrass growth, or within 7 days of cutting for hay. Applications at other times may decrease bermudagrass production. Pastora will severely injure or kill legumes. Pastora has no grazing or haying restriction for any type or livestock. The minimum rotation intervals after the use of Pastora are as follows: 1) 4 months - for seeding bermudagrass, ryegrass, tall fescue and wheat 2) 10 months - for seeding barley and oats 3) 12 months - for seeding alfalfa and clovers



Kerr County Feral Hog Program

Are Feral Hogs a problem on your property? Kerr County, like many areas of Texas continue to see an increase in the feral swine population. As the saying goes, "If you don't have them yet, you will." In many areas of Kerr County feral swine are a destructive nuisance to landowners. In an effort to help landowners manage the feral swine population, in 2016 Kerr county was awarded a grant through the Texas Department of Agriculture known as the "CHOMP" (County Hog Out Management Program) Grant to provide resources for counties to assist landowners in the control of feral swine.



Kerr County has identified three types of control measures they are focusing their efforts on to assist landowners in controlling feral swine. One of which is through a cost share assistance program using aerial gunning with helicopters, another is through the use of a large corral trapping system utilizing remote technology and the third is the payment of bounties on feral swine tails of \$5 each. All three strategies are available for Kerr County landowners to help in controlling this nuisance species.

For more information on the Kerr County Feral Swine Management Program please contact either the Kerr County Extension office at (830) 257-6568, or Bob Reeves at (830) 792-2217 or the Kerr County Animal Services at (830) 257-3100.

Cool Season Post Emergent Weed Control in Lawns

Cool season broadleaf weeds are a major problem throughout Texas where years such as this with mild temperatures stimulate luxuriant growth during winter and spring. These weeds including dandelion, chickweed, henbit, burweed and clover are particularly troublesome in early spring when warm season turfgrasses are dormant. Not only are these weeds unsightly, but they increase mowing requirements and delay the recovery of desirable grasses. Likewise, warm season broadleaf weeds including woodsorrel, spurge and buttonweed are troublesome during summer months.



Controlling broadleaf weeds helps turfgrasses develop a dense, uniform cover that resists further weed invasion, reduces mowing requirements and improves the appearance of a property. On sports fields and golf courses, weed control also improves the safety and uniformity of playing surfaces.

Regular mowing and proper fertilization during late winter and spring improves the appearance of turf areas and reduces the competition weeds provide, but does not eliminate them from the turf. Chemical control with nonselective herbicides in dormant bermudagrass or with selective herbicides in others will remove weeds from the turfgrass.

When selecting a herbicide, accurate identification of weeds is the first step to successful weed control. Descriptions and controls of some common broadleaf weeds are:

Dandelions - Dandelions are readily controlled by 2,4-D, or products containing 2,4-D, if applications are made in fall or early spring before the plants begin to flower. After flowering begins, 2,4-D will twist and curl the leaves and flower stalks, but the plants often survive the treatment.

Chickweed - Postemergence control of chickweed during winter and early spring can be achieved with products containing dicamba, dichlorprop and triclopyr. The latter product is only labelled for use on cool season turfgrasses such as tall fescue, bluegrass and perennial ryegrass.

Henbit - Henbit is most effectively controlled with herbicides in the fall while plants are small and immature. Products containing dicamba, MCPP and 2,4-D have demonstrated effective control in the fall and early spring. In dormant bermudagrass, glyphosate, diquat or metribuzin will control henbit.

Burclover - Burclover (*Medicago* spp.) is an annual species whose vegetative characteristics are similar to white clover. In place of the whitish splotches on the upper leaf surfaces characteristic of white clover, burclover has purplish markings (spotted burclover) or no distinct markings. Flowers develop in small clusters and the yellow petals fall soon after blooming. Seed develop in pods, usually in clusters, with a double row of soft spines forming the bur. Burclover blooms from March through May.

HILL COUNTRY MASTER GARDENERS ARE AT IT AGAIN - GROWING PLANTS THAT IS!

The **Blooms and Barrel Annual Plant Sale** will be held at the Hill Country Youth Event Center on Saturday, April 8th 2017 from 9 am to 2 pm. Admission is free to the public.

The gardeners started purchasing 4" plants from local distributors and repotting them into large pots to be ready for the April sale. In addition, shoppers can visit local horticultural related exhibitors, local non-profit exhibitors and attend several educational programs plus tours of the Demonstration Gardens at the Extension Office.

Proceeds from the plant sales support HCMG's mission to promote the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service by providing research-based information and education to the communities of five local counties (Kerr, Gillespie, Kimble, Bandera, and Real) on horticulture and environmental stewardship.

55-gallon rain barrels will also be available to purchase for \$50. Kerr County residents can apply for a 50% refund (up to \$100) from Upper Guadalupe River Association. Proceeds from the rain barrel sales are dedicated to the HCMG's scholarship fund which will provide two \$2,000 scholarships in horticultural science for the 2017/2018 academic year. It is their intention to provide financial support to two undergraduate or graduate students at Texas A&M, Texas Tech, Tarleton State or Stephen F. Austin State Universities.



Picture courtesy HCMG Barbara Hunter



Picture courtesy HCMG Barbara Hunter

Kerr County AgriLife Extension Office
3775 Hwy 27
Kerrville, Texas 78028