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Fruit Tree Pruning Class

On **February 26, 2020**, our Master Gardeners, Robin Liebe and Virgil Curtis will offer a "Fruit Tree Pruning Class at Rancho Liebe. Class size is limited and only open to the first 20 persons that call in. You must call the Extension Office to RSVP and get directions by February 24, 2020.

RSVP Information

It is very important to RSVP to programs you are interested in attending. Every RSVP gives us a more accurate headcount for planning purposes. Call the Extension office at (254)757-5180 and we will get you counted!

Private Applicator Training

On **March 19, 2020**, we will offer the Texas Department of Agriculture's Private Pesticide Applicator Training. A private pesticide applicator is someone who uses or supervises the use of restricted-use or state-limited-use pesticides or regulated herbicides to produce an agricultural commodity on personal or rented property. No license is required to apply general-use pesticides to produce agricultural commodities. Registration is \$60 and includes training and study materials. The class will begin at 8:00 a.m. and end at 12:00 noon. **Seating is limited.** Call the Extension office at (254)757-5180 to RSVP.

February Lawn Weed Management

With all the warm weather and sunshine, we have had this winter, many weeds are emerging. I would wait to spray a herbicide on your lawn, but you can apply a pre-emerge product. Pre-emerge herbicides are designed to kill weeds as they germinate. My ideal time to apply pre-emerge is February 15th and September 1st. But you can put out a pre-emerge year-round. If you have a very bad lawn weed problem, you should apply a pre-emerge product every 60 to 90 days, if the label allows that often of an application. Be sure and follow the label. One of the most common causes of lawn damage is from over application of pre-emerge products. Over application could be from too much pre-emerge or too often an application. Pay attention to the label rate, that label is the law. Never put a pre-emerge product in a garden or flower bed where you intend to grow plants from seed. If you plan on seeding a lawn, do not apply a pre-emerge product the same season you plan on planting your seed.

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February 2020

Pecan Grafting Workshop

On **April 8, 2020**, we will offer our Bi-Annual Pecan Grafting Workshop at Dan Russell's Pecan Orchard located at 12633 Gholson Road, Waco, Texas. Registration is \$10 and opens at 8:00 a.m. Monte Nesbitt, Extension Fruit and Nut Specialist, will provide a live demonstration on *Pecan Grafting: Tools and Methods*; Dan Russell will discuss *Pecan Tree Maintenance and Pest Prevention*; Monte will follow that with *Pecan Tree 101 for Homeowners*; the entertaining Bob Irving with Texas Crow Patrol will cover *Effective Crow Control Options*. McLennan County Master Gardeners will provide breakfast. We will offer 2 IPM CEU's at this program. Bring your own lawn chair as seating will not be provided. Please RSVP by April 6th.

Facebook and E-Mail Information

Keep up to date with program announcements and follow McLennan County Extension - Agriculture on Facebook @**McLennanAgExtension**. If you are not receiving our updates via e-mail, call the office at (254)757-5180 and let us know so we can update our address book or e-mail Melba Catchings at melba.catchings@ag.tamu.edu.

Pesticide Applicator CEU's

Agriculture private pesticide applicator licenses and certificates are valid for five years, and the applicator must obtain 15 CEU's during that time to renew, including two (2) credits in Laws and Regulations (L&R) and two (2) credits in Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

Small Grain Field Day

The annual Small Grain Field Day is scheduled a week earlier this year for Friday, **April 17, 2020**. We will begin in Kevin Huffman's wheat field on Hwy. 84, two miles from the Hwy. 84/FM 317 intersection, East of McGregor where we have 14 Hard Red Winter Wheats and 10 Oat Varieties in the plots. Topics and speakers will include *Variety Trial Walking Tour* with Dr. Russell Sutton, Assistant Research Scientist, AgriLife; *Small Grain Insect Scouting Report* by Mark Nemec, MJN Consulting; *Commodity Market Update* by Jason Johnson, Extension Economist; *Fungicide and Herbicide Applications* by Pam Worrell with Corteva; and *Laws and Liabilities of Protected Seed* by Dr. Richard Vierling, Vernon AgriLife Director and Director of Texas Foundation Seed. Registration is \$10 and opens in the field at 7:30 a.m. We will offer 1 General CEU. Breakfast will be provided by Capital Farm Credit. Lunch will be steak tidbits. Please RSVP by calling the McLennan County Extension office by April 14th. We have applied for CCA's.

O.D. Butler Field Day Franklin, Texas

The annual O.D. Butler Field Day will be at Circle X Camp Cooley near Franklin on **May 15, 2020**. More information on this wonderful event will be shared when available. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

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State Master Gardener Conference 2020

The McLennan County Master Gardeners are hosting the Texas Master Gardener Association Conference **May 12 – 14, 2020**. We expect over 800 people to come to Waco and attend our conference full of workshops, educational sessions and tours. There is a special caveat our 150 MG's are offering the public. The vendors attending the conference will be set up in the McLennan Hall of the Waco Convention Center and open to the public on Wednesday, May 13th from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Thursday, May 14th from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. So, if you have any interest in any form of horticulture, there will be something for you at our vendors. Come see us!

Spring Forage Management

On **May 22, 2020**, we will be offering a program at the Bentwood Dairy, 3099 Horseshoe Bend Road, Waco, Texas. Registration will begin at 7:30 a.m. Topics and speakers are still being confirmed, but will include: *Welcome and Walking Tours*, David and Jodi Jackson; *Establishment and Management of Improved Pastures*, Vanessa Corriher-Olson; as well as presentations from Dairy Max on the *Dairy Industry* and *How to Talk to Activists and Advocate for Agriculture*. This program will also offer a look at the everyday work of a dairy, the steps taken to ensure milk is safe, biosecurity in agriculture, demonstration of digging and planting sprigs, as well as a sneak peek at some really good Brangus cattle. I think that area off Horseshoe Bend is one of the prettier places in McLennan County. The Jackson family does a great job in their program and as advocates for agriculture, you will want to attend this program. Please RSVP before May 15th.

Vines & Wines Program

The 3rd Annual Vines & Wines program will be **May 28, 2020** at Curtis and Mary Timmons' Country Spring Vineyard and Wine Garden located at 1625 Country Spring Road, Lorena, Texas. Topics and speakers are currently being confirmed and will be announced as the plans are finalized. This is the location where we held our first Vines & Wines program. They have made many updates and finished the winery. This should be a "bucket list" stop in our county.

East Side Row Crop Tour

The East Side Row Crop Tour is scheduled for **June 12, 2020** and will be in the Downsville area. Nick Holy will plant our east side variety trial and that is where we will begin with registration at 7:30 a.m. Directions to plots: Loop 340 divides FM 434, so you will need to be on the access road headed north. You will turn right onto FM 434 (3rd Street) and drive about 2.7 miles down FM 434 and the plots will be on the left. We will have signs posted to assist you in finding the plot. If you are coming from the South (FM 434/South University Parks Drive), you will drive 2.64 miles and the plots will be on the right. We will take a walking tour through the corn hybrids and seed companies and sponsors will talk about their hybrid entry and/or company. Ronnie Schnell, Extension Crop Specialist will speak on *What's in a Bag, Traits and Technology*; Mark Welch, Extension Economist, will provide the *Ag Commodity Market Update*; *Pasture Weed ID and Control* will be presented by Dillon DeMuth with Corteva. There will be 2 CEU's offered – 1 Laws & Regulations and 1 General. We have applied for CCA's. Lone Star Ag Credit will provide breakfast. Please RSVP by June 10th to our office.

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West Side Turn Row Meeting

The West Side Row Crop Tour is being replaced in 2020 by the Harvest Celebration (more info regarding the Harvest Celebration is in this newsletter).

We will have a West Side Turn Row meeting on **June 19, 2020**. Registration starts at 7:30 a.m. at the Grain Sorghum plots (from McGregor Hwy 84/317 intersection drive 3.2 miles West on Hwy. 84. Turn North onto Farmview Parkway and drive 5 miles to the Grain Sorghum Plots). The program begins at 8:00 a.m. with Dr. Ronnie Schnell providing an *Update on the Corn and Grain Sorghum 2020 Growing Season*, as well as providing a detailed discussion on *Corn Rootworm, Sugarcane Aphid and Other Insect Pests*. Our plot seed providers are encouraged to attend and provide information about their seed entry. We will start these talks at the grain sorghum plot after Ronnie's presentation and then move to the corn plots. We will offer 1 IPM CEU. Breakfast will be provided by Lone Star Ag Credit.

Summer Lawn/Turf Program

We are working with VirKim in Hewitt and Baylor University to offer a very special turf program in the month of July. If everything comes together, you may be offered a very rare opportunity to tour Baylor Athletic fields and talk about lawn and turf. Be on the lookout for that announcement.

Some say that if there is any thunder in February, it will frost in April. Others say that the day that you hear thunder in February, that on the same date in April will have a frost...I guess we will see!

Central Texas Stocker Cattle

The annual Central Texas Stocker Cattle Program will be held on **June 24, 2020** at the West Auction Barn. Registration will open at 7:30 a.m. Lone Star Ag Credit will provide breakfast. The steak lunch is courtesy of our Ag vendors.

Topics and speakers will include: *Chute Side Cattle Working Live Cattle Demonstration* by Dr. Jared Ranly, DVM, Ranly Veterinary Services; *Low Stress Facilities and Cattle Handling*, Dr. Ron Gill, Assistant Department Head & Extension Livestock Specialist; *My Cattle Got Out: Liability, Risk & Concerns*; *Defining the Dollar Value of Cattle: Live Cattle Demonstration* with Brian Uptmore, Auctioneer and Manager, West Auction Barn; *Factors Affecting the Cattle Market* by Tracy Tomascik, Assistant Director, Commodity and Regulatory Activities for Texas Farm Bureau. There will be a \$10 registration fee. All interested persons should RSVP by calling the Extension office by June 21st. We will have many ag businesses on hand with booths.

Annual Turf Conference

The annual Multi-CEU Turf Conference hosted by VirKim will be **September 8, 2020**. You can obtain either 5 hours of Structural or 5 hours Ag CEU's at this event. This program will be at the Hewitt VFW located at 724 Sun Valley Boulevard, Hewitt, Texas. Registration normally begins at 7:30 a.m. and the program runs from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. We will have more details as we near the program.

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McLennan County Harvest Celebration

A new program will be offered in 2020 that will hopefully bring our farmers, their families and private industry together to celebrate and recognize our result demonstrators and all farmers in McLennan County. The program is planned for **September 15, 2020** at the Crawford Community Center. We are currently planning this event and will offer education, CEU hours, a steak meal, beverages, sponsor highlights, as well as seed company recognition. We will offer sponsors an opportunity to set up booth space at this event. More information will be provided as we confirm details. Oh yea, there will be lots of door prizes. Not just caps and working sticks but BBQ pits to take home.

Soil Temperature for Bermudagrass Growth

Bermudagrass is a warm season perennial species that is adapted to tropical and subtropical climates. It grows best under extended periods of high temperatures, mild winters and moderate to high rainfall. Research has demonstrated that bermudagrass will continue to grow with night temperatures as low as 34°F if day temperatures are near 70°F. However, when average temperatures drop below 50°F growth stops. After the first killing frost, leaves and stems of bermudagrass remain dormant until average daily temperatures rise above 50°F for several days. The roots and rhizomes of bermudagrass continue to grow several weeks after the leaves and stems stop growth. The species makes the best growth where average daily temperatures are above 75°F. Optimum daytime temperature for bermudagrass is between 95°F and 100°F.

Spring/Summer Program Dates

February 26, 2020 – Pruning Fruit Tree Class

March 19, 2020 – Private Applicator Training

April 8, 2020 – Pecan Grafting Workshop

April 17, 2020 – Small Grain Field Day

May 15, 2020 – O.D. Butler Field Day

**May 12-14, 2020 – State Master Gardener
Conference**

May 22, 2020 – Spring Forage Management

May 28, 2020 – Vines & Wines Program

June 12, 2020 – East Side Row Crop Tour

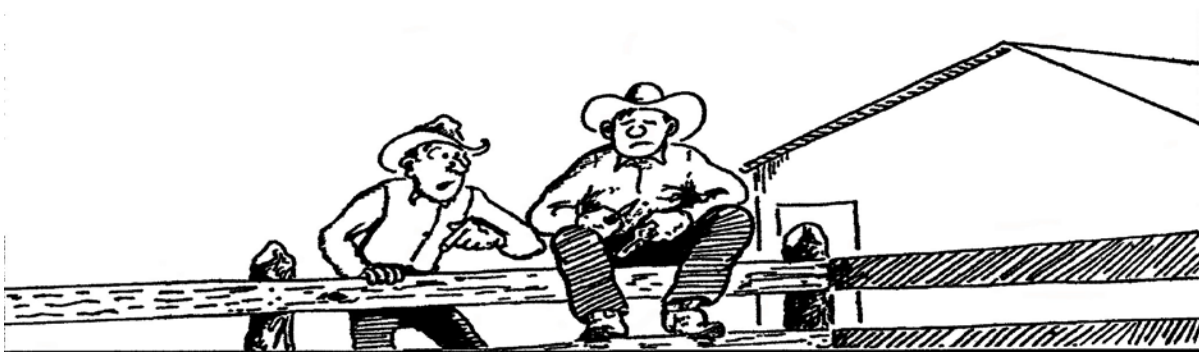
June 19, 2020 – West Side Turn Row Meeting

June 24, 2020 – Central Texas Stocker Cattle

September 8, 2020 – Annual Turf Conference

**September 15, 2020 – McLennan County Harvest
Celebration**

**September 25, 2020 – CenTex Beef Cattle
Symposium**



From The Top Rail

Rambling About a Good Ole Rain

Driving to the office on February 12th, I had a 6-hour long program waiting on me to host and I really wanted to go to my lease place and see if the tanks were full after all the wonderful rain. As I drove to work, I saw water standing in pastures and slowly draining out of fields. It was still raining, and I was pretty darn happy. We honestly haven't had a rain like this since June of 2019. That weather report that says we had 2 inches of rain in October was a tenth here, two-tenths there, until it added up to 2 inches. The moisture that we have received from June of '19 until now came in the same fashion, a little here, a little there and none of it adding up to more than a sticky soil surface, but hardly any deep moisture. Going through a winter and being dry makes me uncomfortable. My darling wife would say it makes me gripey. I think of winter months as wet and cold and replenishing our soil with life giving moisture. My little operation of show goats and commercial hair sheep along with my twelve-year-old son's little cow herd is small. It's there more for my mental health than it is income. But we have been feeling the bite of dry weather, one cutting of hay, low stock tanks, feeding way too much, hardly any grazing, hay supplies diminishing. The ryegrass and wheat we planted was "no mas." My son's little herd can go through some hay and it has been fun watching him feed and pay attention to things he never has before. I get a daily update on how many hay bales we have. He never cared before, now it affects something he cares about. The morning it rained a little boy came running into our bedroom waking me up, "DAD IT'S RAINING." He was jibber jabbering about fertilizing and hay and feed and a thousand other things, but that little fella was way happy. Most people don't understand that a long dry spell is emotionally hard on a farming family. I remember the really bad droughts of the 80's and I was a little kid and I drew rain clouds in every picture I was coloring. I may have been 9 or 10 years old, but I knew my dad, grandpa and other farmers were stressed and rain would make that pain and worry go away. A rain makes me happy. I never speak negative of a rain; I don't know when it might rain again. One time we were in a dry spell and I asked a land owner my dad farmed for, Mr. R.T. Taylor, when it was going to rain, making small talk and he said "I am not worried about it, it's always rained before, it'll rain again." The older I get, the more I understand, I shouldn't worry about it, nothing I can do about it. Draw a rain turtle and look up, pray a little, and it'll rain sometime. If you don't make a living off the land you probably don't understand the feeling of joy when you hear the pitter patter of rain falling on a tin roof. The most limiting factor in agriculture isn't trade, China, the mid-west production of corn, fake meat, activist or politics. The most limiting factor to agriculture is moisture, unless you have a pivot or some source of irrigation. For most of us, rain makes us or breaks us, all that other stuff is secondary. It's important, but it doesn't matter if we don't get a rain. In early November 2018, I buried my pickup in a pasture. I thought I could pull a grain drill closer to the house and it wasn't that muddy. Well it was muddier than I thought. Seven days later, a stuck tractor, my wife's muddy jeep, and with two chains hooked to a mini excavator, we got my pickup out. My wife was really proud of me. It was frustrating, but I was happy....it rained. Come see me, sMc.