

Smith County Ag News
January 2018

Happy New Year!



Clint Perkins (*effective Jan 1, 2018*)
County Extension Agent—Ag/NR
Smith County

Greg Grant
County Extension Agent—Horticulture
Smith County

<http://agrilife.org/smithcountyagriculture/>

Garden news column in the weekly Thursday's paper of the Tyler Morning Telegraph.

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.

Forage Website:
<http://foragefax.tamu.edu/>

Beef Website:
<http://beeffax.tamu.edu/>



NEWS

December 12, 2017

SMITH COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT NAMED

OVERTON - Mr. Clint Perkins has been named Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's County Extension Agent-AG/NR Smith County, effective January 1, 2018 according to a joint announcement by Smith County Judge, Nathaniel Moran, the Smith County Commissioners Court, and Mrs. Shelia Harris, District Extension Administrator, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, headquartered at Overton, Texas.

"I am pleased to have Mr. Perkins join our County Extension Faculty in Smith County. He will be a great asset to the county and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service," says Mrs. Harris. "I feel certain he will do an excellent job because of his enthusiasm for providing quality, educational programs and working with the public."

Mr. Perkins earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from Texas A&M University. He earned his Master of Science Degree at Texas Tech University. Clint has recently been employed with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in Wood County.

The County Extension Office in Smith County is part of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, an agency of the Texas A&M University System. Local Extension programs extend university resources to local residents by providing practical information and education in the four areas of agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H and youth development, and community development. Extension is a cooperative effort of the United States Department of Agriculture, the State of Texas through Texas A&M University, and the Smith County Commissioners' Court.

Clint commented "I am very excited about becoming the Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension Agent and look forward to serving the citizens of Smith County. I am also proud to be joining an excellent team of Extension Agents and staff of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Smith County."



Texas Beef Quality Assurance (TBQA) is a collaborative effort between Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers, Texas Beef Council and Texas A&M AgriLife Animal Science Extension beef group. ANSC Extension faculty develops resources and conducts the educational programming associated with this industry wide effort. The mission of the program is to promote good management practices for cattle producers in an effort to strengthen consumer confidence in beef as a wholesome food product.

ONLINE PRIVATE APPLICATOR TRAINING

For those needing a Private Applicator License, we will continue to offer the classroom style, face to face training opportunities in our office. There now is an online training as well for those interested.

Here is the link to register for the Online Private Applicator Training:

<https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/index.cfm>

In the search box type in “Texas Private Applicator”.

This training tool walks potential applicators through 11 topics, including Integrated Pest Management, reading and understanding pesticide labels, pesticide record keeping, recognizing pests and pest damage, and an updated pollinator protection module. At the conclusion of the course, after trainees pass a review exam, they will receive a certificate of completion and an electronic version of the D-1411 which they will then submit to TDA. The cost of the online course is \$75, which includes the shipping and handling fees for the training manuals.

The State of Texas Agriculture Relief Fund

Many of our fellow Texans are in need of a helping hand. Texas Agriculture Farmers, Rancher, producers and agribusiness owners are rebuilding and working towards picking up the pieces after all of these natural disasters. As natural disasters continue to impact Texas farmers and ranchers, the need for donations continues.

The STAR Fund (State of Texas Agriculture Relief Fund) was created solely with monetary donations from private individuals and companies. STAR Fund money may be used to assist farmers and ranchers in rebuilding fences, restoring operations and paying for other agricultural disaster relief.



Upcoming Educational Programs:

****Friday, January 12 – 2018 Master Gardeners at the Library (see flyer)**

****Wednesday, January 24 – 3 CEU program, Quitman, Texas (see flyer)**

BQA TIP-OF-THE-MONTH: RECOMMENDED TYPE AND LOCATION OF INJECTIONS

Always follow product labels when giving injections. If the label allows for either intramuscular or subcutaneous injection, then the subcutaneous route should be used regardless of animal age. If the label requires intramuscular use, give all intramuscular injections in the neck. When given in the muscle, all products have the potential to create injection site lesions and impact the tenderness of meat for a few inches around the injection. Give subcutaneous injections in the neck, dewlap, or elbow pocket. When given properly, any knots that result from subcutaneous injections will not impact meat quality and will be removed with the hide.

(Jason Banta, Ph. D., jpbanta@ag.tamu.edu, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Beef Quality Assurance Coordinator)

Zika Websites and Mosquito Useful Information:

<http://preventingzika.org/>

<http://mosquitosafari.tamu.edu/>

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/find-repellent-right-you>

<http://www.texaszika.org/>

Beef Loving Texans:

<https://www.beeflovingtexans.com/>

RanchTV Online site:

<http://ranchtv.org/>

January Things To Do

Plant Care

Dig beds for spring planting and mix in compost.

Cut back and divide ornamental grasses.

Prune peach and plum trees into bowl shape so light and air can reach all branches.

Prune deadwood, lower limbs, suckers, and crossed limbs from shade trees. Do NOT top.

DO NOT top or hard prune crapemyrtles.

Plant fruit and bare root nut trees, roses, asparagus and onions, ornamental cabbages, pansies, and snapdragons this month

Divide crowded summer and fall perennials.

Fertilize

Fertilize cool season annuals, vegetables, and winter flowering plants with a 3:1:2 lawn fertilizer such as 15-5-10.

Pests

Apply broadleaf weed killer to control non-grassy weeds during warm periods.

Spray dormant oil to control scale.

Remove and destroy bagworm pouches.

Odds and Ends

Have soil tested and amend as necessary.

Clean flowerpots with soapy water and soak in a 5% bleach solution.

Clean out bird feeders, houses, and baths.

Sort chemicals and properly dispose of expired ones.

Deer Proof Landscape Plants

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/publications/deerbest.html>

The 2018 Calendar and Planning Guide is now available at \$7 each. They can be picked up at the Smith County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office at 1517 W Front Street, Suite 116, Tyler, TX or other locations around town.



Image caption: Topping crapemyrtles is not a recommended horticultural practice.

Ten Reasons Not to Top Your Crapemyrtles

And so it begins. Years ago, this was hog butchering time. Now it's become crapemyrtle butchering time.

The only pruning crapemyrtles ever need is thinning the trunks as they are developing to the desired permanent number, removing suckers as they sprout at the base, and cutting out dead wood and rubbing branches. That's it. As with all other ornamental (and shade) trees in our landscapes, they should never be topped. And here's why.

1. Pruning crapemyrtles late in the year decreases cold hardiness, and as we all know, we periodically go from a balmy wind to a polar vortex. I'll always remember in the 1980s when many crapemyrtle trees froze to the ground.
2. Topping crapemyrtles causes them to sucker more at the base leading to more pruning and more work to remove the unwanted sprouts. The ultimate goal with crapemyrtles is to have a permanent number of trunks with no suckers and no more pruning. Bumping them with lawn mowers and string trimmers causes them to sucker as well.
3. Topping (butchering) crapemyrtles costs money. Folks don't cut and haul crapemyrtles for free and the gas and oil used for the power equipment isn't cheap or environmentally friendly. Don't get me wrong. There are plenty of things you can hire done to your crapemyrtles including thinning, limbing up, sucker removal, bark scale treatment, etc. If you have money you need to spend, you have my permission.
4. Hacking and hauling crapemyrtles is lots of work. I myself have had shoulder surgery, two neck surgeries, back surgery, and four hip surgeries. I'm certainly not looking for things to cut and pick up!
5. If your crapemyrtle grows too big for the space you have it in, then you have the wrong cultivar and should remove it entirely instead of chopping on it every year. Some are bushes and some are trees.
6. Topping crapemyrtles produces a plethora of new shoots, narrow crotch angles, and crevices for the pesky crapemyrtle bark scale to hide and overwinter in. Plus hauling infested branches around has helped spread the insect I'm sure.
7. Crapemyrtles have some of the most beautiful trunks and branching structure of any ornamental tree that we grow, so I promise you a crapemyrtle never pruned will always be prettier than one that is topped. We don't top dogwoods, Japanese maples, redbuds, and

Bradford pears.

8. Cutting crapemyrtles back hard produces long sappy growth that flops when they come into bloom. Yes, pruning them heavy makes larger flowers, but we aren't taking them to a flower show, so it doesn't matter if you have a hundred big flowers or a thousand small flowers.

9. Topping crapemyrtles isn't recommended by any expert or gardening publication on Planet Earth, with all agreeing that it's bad for the tree and ugly.

10. Topping your crapemyrtles is like hanging a sign in your yard saying "I can't read," otherwise you would no better!

Greg Grant is the Smith County Horticulturist for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

You can follow him on Facebook at "Greg Grant Gardens," read his "Greg's Ramblings" blog at arborgate.com, or read his "In Greg's Garden" in each issue of *Texas Gardener* magazine (texasgardener.com).

For more information on local educational programming, go to smith.agrilife.org.