

News From Your County Agent
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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Zavala County

Winter is over! Yes even if it has not felt like winter over the past few days, according to the official National Weather Service we are still in Winter(*the official last day of winter is March 20th*) but we have an natural prediction tool to announce the end of winter in Southwest Texas- MESQUITE TREES. Yep mesquite trees seem to start budding and greening up as soon as the threat for cold weather is gone and they are pretty accurate. As I traveled across the county this past Friday making site visits to gather information about current crop and livestock conditions for my weekly crop progress reports, I could not help but notice that mesquite trees are greening up, a good indication that winter is over in our area. Warm temperatures this week coupled with an inch or more of rain last Sunday night they are sure to take off. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

Capital Farm Credit's 2nd Annual "What Agriculture Means to Me" Video Contest For 4-H Members

To help Celebrate National Ag. Day Capital Farm Credit will be accepting 30 second videos from now until **March 20**, so **they** can announce the winners on National Ag Day (March 21.)

Here are the Contest Rules:

- Video must address the question "What does Agriculture mean to me?"
- Entrants must hold membership in a Texas 4H and be considered a High School student (current Freshman to Senior).
- Video must be uploaded to YouTube or Instagram first. Paste the video URL when entering contest.
- Video can be raw footage or edited.
- Preferred video length is 30 seconds or less.
- One entry allowed per entrant.
- Videos become the property of Capital Farm Credit.
- Entrants certify they have permission of all adults shown in each video and the permission of parents for all minors shown in each video. (as applicable)
- The deadline to submit (and vote) is March 20, 2017. (hint- the earlier you post, the sooner you can start promoting your video)

Prizes:

- Winners will be announced March 21, 2017, based on number of votes. Voting is open to the public, one vote per user per day.
- TOP FIVE VIDEOS: Individuals receive \$1,000 scholarships. Their 4H Club receives a \$500 donation.
- TOP VIDEO: Individual receives additional \$1,500 scholarship (\$2,500 total). Their 4H club receives additional \$1,000 donation (\$1,500 total).

For more information about this exciting 4-H opportunity contact Sarah Hamm, Executive director, Texas 4-H foundation at 979-845-1213 or by e-mail at <http://texas4hfoundation.org> or the Zavala

County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 or by e-mail at zavala@ag.tamu.edu. Good luck to those who submit videos from Zavala county.

4-H Members Encouraged To Try Fashion and Modeling at District Fashion Show

The district 12 4-H fashion sensation event will consist of the fashion show and all 5 related contests and will be held on Saturday April 1, 2017 at the Atascosa County Extension Service Office located at 25 East fifth street, Leming Texas.

This year, the FASHION SENSATION will include the Fashion Show, Trashion Show, Storyboard Contest, Natural Fiber Contest, Duds to Dazzle and Top Model Runway. All six contests are to be treated as separate events. The theme will be “Wild About High Fashion”.

Each 4-H'er planning to participate in any of the four District 12 4-H Fashion Sensation events must register online via 4-H CONNECT through a single listed event of “D12 4-H Fashion Sensation (April 1 – Leming)”. Registration will be open February 28th through the deadline of March 21st. There is a \$14.00 dollar registration fee per contestant per event payable on 4-H connect. For more information and complete details about this contest contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 or by e-mail at zavala@ag.tamu.edu.

Tip of the Week: Springtime Means, flowers and Bees- Bee Safety Reminders

As Zavala county begins to switch over to spring we are reminded to practice good habits as we live with or much needed pollinators-Bees. Honey bees are fascinating social insects with a complex set of behaviors. One of the most interesting honey bee colony behaviors is known as “swarming.” Swarming is the method used by honey bees to start a new colony. Honey Bee swarms are a natural biological event. Although swarms normally occur during the spring months of April and May in Texas, they could happen in other months as well so keep that in mind. A swarm is merely a honey bee colony in search of a nesting site. A swarm generally consists of a mated queen bee along with hundreds or thousands of accompanying worker bees. Swarming bees are not normally aggressive and can, in most cases, be approached safely. Unless you are an experienced beekeeper, however, it is best to avoid getting too close to swarming bees. Bees in swarms may, on occasion, sting intruders who venture too close. Although bee swarms generally pose little threat to people, and provide a unique chance to observe honey bee behavior, they can cause problems. When swarms come too close to areas of human activity, or frighten people with a fear of bees, they may need to be controlled. Also, in Texas where Africanized honey bees have been identified and in some cases established since 1990, it may become necessary to control wild bee swarms. Bee swarms should not be killed indiscriminately. Bees are beneficial insects, helping pollinate flowers and vegetables. Unless a swarm is causing a distinct problem and cannot be tolerated, it should be left alone. Most honey bee swarms will leave a resting site within a few hours. Eliminating possible points of entry by bees into buildings and removing other potential nest sites is the best way to prevent serious problems with bees around structures.

Honeybees are disappearing at an alarming rate. Nobody is quite sure what is causing the hives' inhabitants to desert their colonies—now known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD)—but it has become a great concern. In the last few years bee populations have declined as much as 60 percent on the West Coast and 70 percent on the East Coast. CCD poses a huge threat to food production as bees are needed to pollinate plants and are extensively used in agriculture for this purpose. Follow these safety tips can reduce your chances of getting stung and in the process protect yourself and protect honeybees.

Reduce the chance of getting stung (and save a bee!):

1. Wear light-colored clothing. Bright colors make bees think you are a giant flower and will attract the bees
2. Don't use perfume or soaps, shampoos and deodorants with fragrance. If you smell like a flower bees will tend to check you out.
3. Avoid bananas and banana-scented products. Bees love Bananas.
4. Wear clean clothing and be clean—our sweat makes bees angry.
5. Stay clear of flowering plants. If you see one bee, rest assure that there are more close by.
6. Keep your outside areas clean. Bees and wasps thrive in places with food trash: Picnic tables, grills and other outdoor eating areas.
7. When working on your lawn using a lawnmower, weed eater, or blower do a bee SURVEY. Start this equipment and let it run for a couple of minutes. Turn the equipment off. Walk around the house or your yard scouting and surveying for bees. If you do not see any you are good to go. If you see a couple you are also ok. If you see several chances are their might me a hive close by. Try to locate it and have it removed by a beekeeper. As a last resort call an exterminator to destroy the hive.
8. Do not swat or kill a bee that is merely taking a closer look at you. Smashing a bee releases a pheromone (scent) that tell other bees there is a danger and signals them to come help.
9. Cover holes in trees with plaster and use door screens to cover opening in storage sheds and other building where bees can establish a colony.

For further information about honey bees, contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 or by e-mail at zavala@ag.tamu.edu. and ask for publication K" https://agrilifebookstore.org/publications_details.cfm?whichpublication=484"E-346, Honey Bees in and Around Buildings. Information is also available on Africanized Honey Bees and their current range in Texas at <http://honeybee.tamu.edu/africanized/quarantine.html>. Have a great week.

February 20-25, 2017