

News From Your County Agent
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Zavala County

Fall is definitely in the air as cold temperatures dipped into the upper 30's and lower 40's over the weekend across our area. National weather forecasters indicate that a series of cold fronts are lining up to make their way in our direction over the next few weeks so we shall see if they will make it all the way down to our part of the world. Get ready to start seeing numerous holiday commercials on t.v. as the holiday season for the most part is upon us. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

Reminder Private Water Well Screening This Week

The Zavala, Dimmit, Frio, Atascosa, and McMullen Counties of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is hosting a water well screening on Wednesday, November 1st at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service offices for Zavala County at 221 N 1st Ave in Crystal City, Dimmit County at 539 Industrial Boulevard, in Carrizo Springs, Frio County at 400 S. Pecan Street, Pearsall, TX Atascosa County at 25 E. 5th Street, Leming, TX, and McMullen County Courthouse, HWYS 72 & 16 Tilden, TX in to give area residents the opportunity to have their well water screened.

Results will be available on Friday, November 3rd, at your Local County Extension Office. If results indicate high levels of contaminants then owners are advised to get a full water test done by a certified water testing lab. If samples submitted are within tolerable limits the well owner do NOT have to do any additional testing and thus save the cost of a full blown water test. The screening is presented by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. According to John W. Smith, AgriLife Extension Program Specialist private water wells should be tested annually. It is very important that only sampling bags from the Zavala, Frio, Atascosa, McMullen or Dimmit County AgriLife Extension offices be used and all instructions for proper sampling are followed to ensure accurate results.

Area residents who want to have their well water screened, will need to pick up a sample bag and sampling instructions from the Dimmit County AgriLife Extension office (call 830-876-4216 for more information), Frio County AgriLife Extension office (830-334-0099), or Zavala County AgriLife Extension office (830-374-2883). McMullen County AgriLife Extension office (361-274-3323) or Atascosa County AgriLife Extension office (830-596-8997)

The cost is \$15 per sample and samples must be turned in by 10a.m. on November 1st. Samples will be screened for common contaminants, including fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates, high salinity and presence of hydrocarbons. The presence of fecal coliform bacteria in water indicates that waste from humans or warm-blooded animals may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with fecal coliform bacteria is more likely to also have pathogens present that can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea or other symptoms. Water with nitrates at levels of 10 parts per million is considered unsafe for human consumption. Nitrate levels above 10 parts per million can disrupt the ability of blood to carry oxygen throughout the body, resulting in a condition called methemoglobinemia. Infants less than 6 months of age and young livestock are most susceptible.

Salinity as measured by total dissolved solids will also be determined for each sample. Water with high levels may leave deposits and have a salty taste, and using water with high levels for irrigation may damage soil or plants. For more information, please contact your local County Extension Office . To learn more about the programs offered through the network or to find additional publications and resources, please visit <http://twon.tamu.edu>. Support for the Texas Well Owner Network program is provided through Clean Water Act nonpoint source funding from the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For more information about this event contact the Zavala County AgriLife Extension office at 830-374-2883.

New Nematode Control Available Next Year

In time for the 2018 planting season, Monsanto now offers NemaStrike Technology by Acceleron Seed Applied Solutions as a new seed treatment solution to control root knot, reniform and other nematode species that exist in a range of soil types where cotton is grown.

A broad-spectrum nematicide, NemaStrike Technology is designed to work in the root zone where nematodes attack, while providing consistent yield protection. Tioxazafen, the active ingredient in NemaStrike Technology, has a novel mode of action for controlling nematodes. Trial results showed an average yield protection advantage in cotton of 80 pounds of lint per acre versus the competitive standard, with an 86% positive response rate in cotton (results varied based on nematode pressure in each field).

In 2016 field testing, NemaStrike Technology showed advantages in the early summer period. Above ground, plants from seed treated with NemaStrike Technology had an additional node and more lateral growth than the untreated check. Below ground, plants from seed treated with NemaStrike Technology had more root mass. Overall, the plants from treated seeds were healthier throughout the early growing season. With a novel mode of action and low water solubility, NemaStrike Technology stays in the root zone as plants grow for up to 75 days. The relative reproductive rate for nematodes is high, with many species having several generations in a growing season. The active ingredient (tioxazafen) branded as NemaStrike Technology prevents the synthesis (translation) of proteins in the mitochondria, which leads to disruption of the life cycle of the nematode. In May, the U.S. EPA issued registration for the product containing NemaStrike Technology. Since the approval, the technology has gained approval for application to seeds in 45 states. For more information about nematodes or NemaStrike Technology visit the NemaStrike Technology webpage at

[http://www.acceleronsas.com/Pages/NemaStrikeTechnology.aspxutm_campaign=NemaStrike Acceleron NA&utm_source=Various Various&utm_medium=OfflineMarketing&utm_content=NemaStrikeTechnologyLandingPage_VanityURL](http://www.acceleronsas.com/Pages/NemaStrikeTechnology.aspxutm_campaign=NemaStrike%20Acceleron%20NA&utm_source=Various%20Various&utm_medium=OfflineMarketing&utm_content=NemaStrikeTechnologyLandingPage_VanityURL)

Tip of the week: Preparing Plants for Cold Weather

With a touch of fall over the weekend you know that colder weather is just around the corner. Many of us have cold sensitive plants which can be affected even with the mild winters we have in the Zavala County area. Here are a few things you can do to protect tender plants for the colder days ahead. Cold weather plant protection takes a little pre-planning and some equipment in harsher zones. In mild and temperate climates such as in our Zavala County area it usually just means re-

mulching and dividing peonies and other early spring bloomers. Fall maintenance should include a plan for winter protection for plants and winter plant covers.

In Zavala and surrounding counties one of the easiest and most effective ways to protect sensitive plants is by mulching. Mulching with an organic material will also help enhance the soil as the mulch decomposes and releases nutrients to the earth. At this time of year, pull back old mulches from the base of plants and spread a new 3-inch layer around them out to the drip line. Leave a 1/2-inch space around the plant's stem to allow air circulation and prevent rot. Wrap tender tree trunks with burlap or white wash them to prevent winter sunscald. Rake a mound of soil around the base of roses to a depth of 12 to 18 inches to protect the crown. Apply an anti-desiccant to new foliage on bushes and shrubs that will shield the foliage from wind and winter sun. Lay a layer of 6 to 8 inches of wood chips or straw over perennial and flower beds. Protect outdoor plants in winter with screens or frames erected on the southwest side and make sure to water before a freeze. Wet soils prevent freeze injury to roots because moist soil holds more heat than dry soil. Keep potted plants on dollies so you can wheel them to a sheltered location or indoors when temperatures drop. It can be beneficial to create a structure or cage around some plants. A chicken wire cage is useful as a cold barrier for trunks when filled with straw. Use twine to wrap tall shrubs to keep the wrap in place during windy cold nights.

Seasoned gardeners know their zones, check the weather often and are prepared with materials to protect plants from freezing. Cold weather plant protection can be as simple as a blanket. Have on hand frost barrier fabric for fruit trees in spring. A swath of burlap is also useful to cover plants in the event of a freeze. These types of winter protection for plants may be left in place for the duration of the freeze. Covers should be removed during the daytime. Covers must reach all the way to the root zone to be the most effective. Stake or tie them down but resist the urge to bind them around the plant. This can cause stem and foliar injury. The key is to be prepared when and if we get some cold weather in our area this winter. Have a great week. M.V.

November 1, 2017