

News From Your County Agent
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Zavala County

Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week. It has been a while since we have had any measurable rainfall across the county so many of us will begin to implement drought conditions watering plans for our lawns and landscapes which is to save water and maintain our lawns and plants alive. I hope my weather experts are correct as they are predicting rain by the middle and latter part of the week.

Zavala County Sorghum Producers Asked To Help Track Sugarcane Aphids

My fellow colleague Allen Knutson the Extension Entomologist located at the Texas A&M Research and Extension Center in Dallas, is working on a project to map the movement of Sugarcane Aphid from south Texas north to Oklahoma and Kansas. Zavala County sorghum growers are asked to scout for sugarcane aphids in their fields. If you find sugarcane aphid in planted sorghum in Zavala county, or receive a report from a consultant, grower, applicator or your neighbor that you believe is reliable and can identify sugarcane aphid please let me know by calling 830-374-2883 or by e-mail at mj-valdez@tamu.edu so that I can report it to our statewide tracking program. You may also report cases of found sugarcane aphid directly to Dr. Allen Knutson at allen.knutson@agnet.tamu.edu or Dr. Robert Bowling at robert.bowling@ag.tamu.edu.

Once sugarcane aphid is found in the county, I will send the information in to Dr. Knutson and the report is posted online through the MyFields.info program developed at Kansas State University. Growers and consultants can use the map to determine where sugarcane aphids have been found in sorghum fields across the state and anticipate the need to scout fields to determine aphid infestation levels in their area. Information from AgriLife Extension on scouting, thresholds, insecticides and integrated pest management practices for sugarcane aphid is also posted on the site. You can view the current sugarcane aphid distribution by going to our tracking map on line at <https://www.myfields.info>.

Since it was first discovered feeding on sorghum in 2013, the sugarcane aphid has become an annual pest, infesting both grain and forage sorghums. The tiny insect sucks plant sap, causing leaves to yellow and die, thus reducing yields. In addition to the feeding damage to the crop, the aphids' sticky excrement called honeydew, can actually become so heavy that it can gum up combines and forage harvesters, rendering them inoperable. For more information on sugarcane aphid, see the AgriLife Extension websites <http://txscan.blogspot.com/> and <http://betteryield.agrilife.org/>.

2018 Steer Validation To Be Held Next Month

Seems like the 2017 livestock show season was just over and here we are planning for the next stockshow season already. Tells us how fast time is going by. If any 4-H family is considering having a steer project for the 2018 Zavala County Livestock Show or showing a steer project at a major

show in Texas you must have those animals in your possession by June 24, 2017. Please contact our office at 830-374-2883 if you plan to show a steer project so that we can put you on the list of animals to be validated. Steers must weigh at least 1000 pounds in January 2018 and not more than 1450 pounds. Any steer above this weight limit will be sifted and not be allowed to show so keep this in mind when making your steer purchase. If you need assistance in locating a steer project or any other assistance regarding the steer validation process contact our office at 830-374-2883.

Tip of the Week: Using Extension Resources To Identify and Manage Pest in Your Garden

By now most of you have established a productive vegetable garden but as temperatures increase and dry conditions start to take over so do garden pest, which will appear sooner or later. Talk to most vegetable gardeners and you'll quickly find that pests and pesticides are hot-button topics. While pests are strongly disliked, most gardeners are reluctant to use pesticides on fruits and vegetables in their own gardens. This is understandable, because if you use pesticides at the wrong time you will not only kill the pest but you also put beneficial insects and pollinators such as bees at risk. . While most of us, to varying degrees, accept the need for pesticides in commercial food production, the home vegetable garden is seen almost universally as the best place to get fresh, wholesome produce—without pesticides. Fortunately, you can grow produce in your home garden with minimal use of artificial pest control products. Using less and safer pesticides, however, means knowing more about pests and pest control methods.

Here are some Extension Resources you can use when you encounter a pest problem in your garden. Most of these are available from our office located at 221 North First Avenue in Crystal City or call us and ask for your copy at 830-374-2883 or Check them out by going to <http://agrilifebookstore.org> and searching on the keyword “vegetable”

Extension publication E-194 titled "Managing insect Mite Pests in Vegetable Gardens" is a good one to have. This publication provides an in-depth guide to the strategies, pests and pesticides that can be used in vegetable gardens. This attractive, 2008 publication is the principal AgriLife Extension reference to vegetable insect control. The Vegetable IPM website is a joint project between the entomology and horticulture departments at Texas A&M University. You can access this useful website by going to <http://vegetableipm.tamu.edu>.

A detailed identification guide to caterpillars found in Texas vegetable crops is our Extension publication E-532. Written for commercial growers, the fact sheet is provided with numerous color pictures that will help home gardeners accurately identify most of these insects. No control information. Extension publication E-213 covers Earwig insects. With their pincers and distinctive shape, earwigs are one of the most commonly noticed soil-inhabiting garden arthropods. While earwigs are rarely serious pests, you will want to know more about these interesting insects. Pillbugs are covered in Extension Publication ENT-1006 an under-appreciated garden pest, that is also one of the most common arthropods in gardens and landscapes. Don't underestimate the damage pillbugs can do to some garden plants.

We also have some good insect control publications. EEE-00006 is Extension publication titled "Water wands: Using water to control small insects and mites on vegetables. The publication covers how some vegetable pests can be controlled without pesticides by simply blasting them off the plant with water. Effective and fun. Understanding common house and garden insecticides is covered in Extension publication ENT-4002. This is a useful guide to understanding insecticide classes, formulations and application terms. Identifies low-impact insecticide choices, and gives examples of trade names. Also available is a low-impact insect control for everyone leaflet. The leaflet covers low-impact insecticides which are products that pose especially low risk to people, pets and non-target insects. This leaflet explains the low-impact concept and give examples of products as close as your nearest grocery store or garden center. Have a wonderful week. M.V.

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