

News From Your County Agent
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According to weather experts by the time you read this week's column we should(the key word "should") be getting some amount of rain and then it should clear off by the weekend. There were a few what looked like rain clouds across the area on Sunday so maybe these experts are right. Our current temperatures may not indicate so but as of last Friday we are now officially in the fall season. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

BattleGround To Breaking Ground Applications Now Open

My Extension colleague B.J. Leggett Program Assistant with the Battle Ground to Breaking Ground Project with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has asked me to assist in getting the word out about this program. The BattleGround To Breaking Ground Entrepreneurial Project (BGBG-ET) is a FREE beginning farmer/rancher development program for veterans and other beginning farmers/ranchers designed to increase the number of sustainable farmer/ranchers in Texas. BGBG-ET provides:

- Business planning
- Hands-on learning opportunities
- Funding Resources education
- Mentorships
- Veteran Transition Services and so much more.

Applications are now open for the fall 2017 cohort. All application instructions are posted on the website! Simply go to <http://txagrability.tamu.edu/farm-ranch/> once here you can access the instructions, instructional webinar, and the application itself. Once you are on the website Download instructions for making an account on eXtension online. Open eXtension Online Follow instructions (linked in step 1) to create your eXtension Online account and access the BGBG Fall 2017 Interview course. There will be instructions once you access the BGBG Fall 2017 Interview course on how to complete the application. If you need assistance with this process, please contact BJ Leggett at (979)862.1926 or Erin Kimbrough at (979)847.6185 or Phyllis Varnon at 830-374-2883.

Two Rivers Ranch to Host Livestock Management Workshop

Two Rivers Ranch will be the location of the Livestock and Grazing Management workshop to be held next Wednesday October 4, 2017 beginning at 8:30 a.m. The ranch is located 14.7 miles south of Sabinal on FM 187. There will be a \$10.00 dollar registration fee which will include 2 CEU's for pesticide license holders(1 CEU in IPM and 1 General) plus lunch sponsored by Hondo Veterinary Hospital and Lyssy and Eckle feeds. Brad Pfeil, Ranch Manager and Kason Haby, NRCS, will discuss forage quality information collected from several buffelgrass fields and effects of management activities including prescribed burning and grazing intensity. Billy Griffin will demonstrate use of temporary electric fencing and discuss water considerations to improve grazing efficiency.

Participants will tour the historic Shudde Ranch owned by Gerry and Janelle Shudde. There Dr. Ron Gill, AgriLife Extension Livestock Specialist, will give an overview of the Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) program, discuss proper mineral supplementation and give a Low Stress Livestock Handling demonstration. Dr. David Galewsky, Hondo Veterinary Hospital, will discuss important cattle vaccinations in this region and show proper injection sites and handling. Participants are requested to bring a folding chair for the event. For more information about this event contact the Zavala

County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883. You are encouraged to RSVP by this week to Kason.haby@tx.usda.gov or call 830-741-0717.

Tip of the Week: Making Last Year's Poinsettias Bloom By Christmas

I had a couple of folks call about an article I had some time back related to making Poinsettias bloom in time for Christmas. The caller said they had clipped the article but lost it so I am providing this information for those of you who have kept your Poinsettias from last Christmas and challenge them to bloom by this Christmas. Poinsettias (*Poinsettia*) are generally easy to maintain, but it takes some effort to make them bloom a second time, but it can be done. To grow them after the holidays, all you did was to treat them similar to other houseplants: You gave them bright light, allow them to slightly dry between waterings, and feed them with a liquid houseplant fertilizer according to label directions. That's the easy part. The bracts (those are the leaves that look like flower petals) will eventually fade and fall off the plant. At this point, cut back the stems to just below the flowers and let them continue to grow.

Getting the plants to re-bloom is the hard part. It's likely that you won't be able to bring all 10 plants into flower again, simply because of space limitations. More than likely your Poinsettias grew but remained completely green all summer. At the end of If you have your Poinsettias in pots, bring the pots indoors before nighttime temperatures fall below 50 degrees F. Temperatures should be no less than 55°F at night, but not more than 70°F. High night temperatures, coupled with low-light intensity, low nutrition, dry soil or improper photoperiod may delay flowering.

From the end of September(this weekend) through the end of October, the plants need 14-15 hours of uninterrupted darkness daily, and nighttime temperatures around 65 degrees. This is the secret to triggering new flowers to form and for the bracts to change color. This means that every day at about 5 p.m. you'll need to cover the plants. Uncover them between 7 and 8 the following morning. Absolutely no light can penetrate the darkness. If you place a box over them, it must not permit light to enter. If you place plants in an extra bedroom, no light can enter the room beneath the crack of the door or through a window. Even car headlights shining through a window are enough to interrupt the required darkness. Greenhouse growers use thick black cloths to cover their poinsettia crops, blocking out all light from passing cars and nearby shopping centers.

If you successfully carried out the darkness routine, by early November your plants will be developing color, and you can end the daily darkness ritual and set the plants in bright, indirect light. By the end of November, the bracts should be coloring up nicely, and you'll be able to enjoy them through the next holiday season. If all this seems like a lot of work, then it's time to change camps and leave poinsettias to the professionals, but if you are successful the hard work of this routine will give you the kind of satisfaction only a gardener could appreciate. Have a wonderful week. M.V.

September 25-29, 2017.