

News From Your County Agent
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Zavala County

Another touch of fall filled the air after a cold front marched its way to our area over the weekend bringing some hopes of rain which was not as much as wind and very cool temperatures for this time of year. Guess what? Looks like we are expected to get another cold front over the weekend so we shall see. Of course folks in the Midwest are still having to dig themselves out of snow and winter weather-in April, this is crazy. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension To Host Land Stewardship Conference

The Texas Water Development Board reports San Angelo's average annual rainfall as 21.3 inches; that's 13.27 gallons per square foot a year or 578,037 gallons per acre. How to make the most of that water, not only to grow forage but also to water livestock and wildlife in a semi-arid climate, will be among several topics discussed May 3-4 during the Bennett Trust Land Stewardship Conference in San Angelo's McNease Convention Center, 501 Rio Concho Drive.

The first day starts at the convention center with breakfast and registration at 8 a.m. followed by the ranch water presentations and talks on livestock guardian dogs, agricultural law issues, prescribed fire, individual brush management practices and ranch rainwater harvesting. Afternoon topics will include Edwards Plateau geology, integrating livestock and wildlife, and introduced grasses for the region. The day's activities will end with dinner and entertainment. The second day will start with a 7:30 a.m. breakfast followed by a ranch tour designed to demonstrate the previous day's educational efforts. Stops at the Head of the River Ranch and Duff Ranch will include examples of livestock/wildlife compatibility, discussion on water resources, individual plant treatment and prescribed fire, and a look at introduced grasses. More information on the trust and conference is available at <https://agrilife.org/bennetttrust/or> by contacting Josh Blanek, AgriLife Extension agent in Tom Green County and event coordinator, at 325-659-6523 or j-blanke@tamu.edu. or Marcel Valdez, Agrilife Extension agent in Zavala county at 830-374-2883.

Reminder Steer Tag Orders Due This Week

All potential 4-H and FFA steer exhibitors are reminded that major show steer tag orders are being taken and ordered this week at the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. There will be only one tag order for Zavala County for these tags. Steer exhibitors that plan to show a steer project in any major show in Texas must have their steer projects validated with an official state steer validation tag. Those of you that will show a steer project in Zavala County ONLY and will not show outside of Zavala County DO NOT need to order a state validation tag. Validation fee for Steers \$15 per head if ordered from April 1-April 20. Both major show and county show steers will be validated on Saturday June 23, 2018. For more information on ordering tags or the steer project validation process contact the Zavala county office of the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

Tip of the Week: IPM In The Home Garden

As I promised you last week we will discuss a few tips and other information regarding the use of Integrated Pest Management(IPM) in the home garden. So what is IPM? IPM is an ecosystem-based strategy that focuses on long-term prevention of pests or their damage through a combination of techniques such as biological control, habitat manipulation, modification of cultural practices, and use of resistant varieties thus reducing the need of heavy uses of pesticides in the home garden.

When you have a home garden, you're growing a food supply for pests and people alike. Watch out for pests

that can damage your garden including bugs, diseases, animals and weeds. Once you know your pest, these quick tips may be helpful. Using IPM techniques can reduce the need for pesticides in the long term. To prevent future pest problems, consider taking some proactive steps to pest-proof your garden: Select the right plants for the location; consider their needs for water and sun. Select disease-resistant varieties when certain diseases keep coming back. Water plants at ground level; wet leaves are more susceptible to disease. Remove dead plant material before spring; it can harbor diseases. Consider testing the soil for nutrients and minerals to plan fertilizer needs. Proper care and watering will produce healthier plants, which are better at resisting diseases and tolerating insects. Inspect your plants regularly in order to detect problems early.

Additional cultural practices for effective IPM success in your garden include: Water in the morning so plants have time to dry before the cool evening. Drip irrigation systems prevent foliage from getting wet when watering;

Space plants properly and thin young vegetables to a proper stand. Overcrowding causes weak growth and reduces air movement, resulting in increased insect and disease problems; Keep down weeds and grass. They often harbor pests and compete for nutrients and water. Leaf and other organic mulches are extremely effective for weed control, as are inorganic weed mats, plastic, and other fabrics; Rotate your garden plot, if you can. Do not grow the same kind of produce in the same spot each year. Use related crops in one site only once every three or four years; Avoid injury to plants. Broken limbs, cuts, bruises, cracks, and insect damage are often the site for infection by disease-causing organisms; Stay out of the garden when the plants are wet with rain or dew to prevent spreading diseases; Do not use tobacco products, such as cigarettes or cigars, when working in the vegetable garden. Tomato, pepper, and eggplant are susceptible to a mosaic virus disease common in tobacco and may be spread by your hands; Remove and dispose of infected leaves from diseased plants as soon as you observe them; Keep old sacks, baskets, wooden stakes, decaying vegetables, and other rubbish, which may harbor insects and diseases, out of the garden and Inspect plants for egg clusters, beetles, caterpillars, and other insects as often as possible. Hand-pick as many pests as you can. Avoid sprays until the population of insects has reached a critical threshold level. If you reach the critical level where insecticides are needed to help control harmful pests, be sure to follow the label and use the products only as indicated on the label.

The most effective and most important of all practices is careful observation in the garden. Many serious disease or insect problems can be halted or brought under control early by the gardener who knows what to look for and regularly visits the garden for trouble-shooting. Good luck and have a wonderful IPM gardening week. M.V.

April 16-20, 2018.