

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

Can I just cut and paste last week's intro to my weekly news column since the weather has not changed much since last week. The only change is that we had a slight chance of rainfall late Monday night and early Tuesday morning but was not able to report if any of us got any rain since these chances were to take place before press time. If you got some then be thankful you got some and keep hoping for the rest of us to get some soon. Greetings to all of you and thank you for reading this week.

Zavala County Lamb and Goat Orders Due Soon

It is that time of year and the 4-H/FFA Sheep and Goat Validation of Texas program is requesting that validation orders be made for Lambs, Goats, Breeding Sheep and Breeding Goats. In preparation for the sheep and goat validation season. The Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will begin taking orders for these animals beginning Wednesday, August 01, 2018 and will close the placement of orders on August 20, 2018. The cost for each tag is \$15:00 and payment must be made before the order is placed with the state office. If families will **ONLY** show in the Zavala County Junior Fair in January they are **NOT** required to order these tags. These tags are for animals that will be shown outside of Zavala County in a major show in Texas. For more information regarding the state lamb and goat validation please contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

Zavala County To Participate in Statewide Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus mosquito Surveillance Project

Mosquitoes are the deadliest animals on Earth. Obviously not due to their sheer size, but due to the numerous deadly diseases they are able to carry and transmit. Until recently the only major disease of concern to impact Texas directly has been West Nile Virus but with the inevitable introduction of Zika virus to the continental United States many entomologist in Texas and the Department of State Health Services have joined forces with the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Service to look into the population status of the two species of mosquitoes that can transmit Zika. Data from the early 2000's shows both species to be distributed throughout various counties in Texas but more recent data is needed.

To conduct the surveillance to identify population locations for Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus, ovitraps will be distributed to the county agents throughout Texas. The county agents will then place the ovitraps in various locations (5) throughout their county in areas associated with humans. (The targeted mosquitoes are human biting and live with 300 yards of humans). Five locations will be chosen in the county. Five ovitraps (cups) will be placed at each of the five locations, within walking distance from each other but not overlapping. Cups will be placed out on Monday afternoons and picked up on Thursday mornings.

This surveillance project will be conducted in Zavala County during the month of August. The traps will be conducted weekly until the correct species are identified or until the season is over, whichever comes first. As soon as the correct species have been identified the county will no longer need to run traps. If you live in an area where mosquitos are a problem and you would like to

participate in this project contact the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

Tip of the Week: Xeriscape May Be The Answer During Drought

An adequate supply of high quality water has become a critical issue for the future prosperity of Texas. Booming populations have increased the demand on the state's already limited supply of high quality water. In addition, seasonal fluctuations in rainfall and periodic droughts have created a feast-to-famine cycle in Texas. In urban areas of Texas about 25 percent of the water supply is used for landscape and garden watering. Much of this water is used to maintain traditionally high water-demanding landscapes, or it is simply applied inefficiently.

In an attempt to reduce the excessive water use, the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is educating Texans in Xeriscape landscaping, quality landscaping that conserves water and protects the environment. This concept is a first-of-a-kind, comprehensive approach to landscaping for water conservation. Traditional landscapes may incorporate one or two principles of water conservation, but they do not utilize the entire concept to reduce landscape water use effectively.

Xeriscape landscaping incorporates seven basic principles which lead to saving water: *Planning and design, *Soil analysis, *Practical turf areas, *Appropriate plant selection, *Efficient irrigation, *Use of mulches and appropriate maintenance.

By incorporating these seven principles, you can help preserve our most precious natural resource-water. Xeriscape landscapes need not be cactus and rock gardens. They can be green, cool landscapes full of beautiful plants maintained with water-efficient practices. The same green Texas-style landscape which we are accustomed to can be achieved and still conserve water. Creating a water-efficient landscape begins with a well-thought-out landscape design. Sketch your yard with locations of existing structures, trees, shrubs and grass areas. Then consider the landscape budget, appearance, function, maintenance and water requirements. Local landscape architects, designers, nurserymen and county Extension agents can help in this decision making. Implementing your landscape design can be done gradually over several years.

Xeriscape landscaping, quality landscaping that conserves water and protects the environment, is the most exciting concept to hit the landscape industry in decades. The term Xeriscape was coined in Denver, Colorado in 1978. Whether called Xeriscape, water-wise or water-smart landscaping, landscape and water industry professionals throughout the nation have embraced landscape water conservation through education. Texas has more than 20 educational projects currently active. Demonstration gardens and tours, seminars, television programs and design contests are just a few of the methods used to make the Xeriscape concept familiar throughout Texas and the nation.

For a list of outstanding grasses, vines, groundcovers, perennials, shrubs, trees and water saving native plants for Texas Xeriscapes contact the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883.

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