

**News From Your County Agent**  
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**Zavala County**

We are almost to the end of August and the tropics have been super quiet this year, temperatures are at 100 degrees, no chances of rain but fall is just around the corner. Greetings to all of you and as usual thank you so much for reading this week and may each of you have a very special, restful Labor Day Weekend.

**Zavala County 4-H Family Fun Camp Set For Saturday September 1**

New 4-H year kickoff event will take place this Labor Day Weekend. The Batesville 4-H Club, La Pryor 4-H Club and the Crystal City 4-H Club in cooperation with the Texas 4-H Center Staff at Brownwood will host a countywide 4-H family fun day this weekend. The event will take place on Saturday, September 1, 2018 at 1:00 p.m. at Bermea park in La Pryor. The event is FREE and will include games, group games, leadership and team building activities. The Zavala county 4-H County Council will be on site to provide 4-H enrollment information and other 4-H information and opportunities available to youth in Zavala County. Parents will also have the opportunity to learn more about 4-H and its mission. The team from the Texas 4-H Center in Brownwood are excited to bring this event to Zavala County. All 4-H families and none 4-H families that want to learn about the 4-H program are invited to attend. For more information regarding this fun event contact the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883. We hope to see you all there.

**25 Days Left For Deadline To Get Lamb and Goat Projects**

September the 22<sup>nd</sup> is the deadline for all Zavala County youth who plan to show a lamb or goat project in the 2019 Zavala County Junior Livestock show. Also on this date these animals will have to be officially entered into the show through the Zavala County lamb and goat validation process. All lamb and goat projects and the exhibitors are required to bring their animals to the Zavala County stockshow grounds on Saturday, September 22 and have their animals tagged and entries paid to be officially entered in the show. The validation process will begin with tagging of lambs at 9:00 a.m. and at 10:00 a.m. the tagging of goats will get underway. There will be a \$20.00 validation fee per family and a \$5.00 tag for each animal validated. There is no limit on the number of animals that an exhibitor can validate and there is no minimum weight requirements at validation. However, at show time in January an exhibitor can show up to 3 animals but no more than 2 animals of the same species and they can only sell one animal in the sale. If you need assistance in locating a lamb or goat project before this validation date, please contact the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 for more information.

**Tip Of the Week: September is Fall Gardening Time**

Since most of us have lost our tomato, squash and other vegetable plants in our gardens thanks to the extremely hot and dry conditions but you are still in the mood to do a little gardening, perhaps a fall garden is just what the doctor ordered. In south Texas the biggest obstacle to having a successful fall garden is overcoming the oppressive heat of late August and even into September. Of course this is just the time most Texas Gardeners need to start soil preparation and planting. If

you can get past the heat, the benefits of an autumn garden are many. First of all, you are able to extend the production and enjoyment to a second growing season. Secondly, once established a fall garden is a joy to manage as it matures and produces during those wonderful Indian summer days of autumn. Also, since the days are getting shorter many vegetable crops store more sugar and have better flavor than spring grown crops.

Once the decision to have a fall garden has been reached, a gardener must take action--drastic action. One must pull out some of those plants that have been nurtured from "babies" in the spring to monsters now. This takes courage and faith! It is recommend that all plants, weeds included, be removed except okra, cherry tomatoes and pole beans if the foliage is healthy. Large-fruited tomatoes may have some small ones still hanging on, but unless you have at least 20-25 good-sized fruit, pull them out--make green tomato relish or chow-chow. If you recall, the largest, best tomatoes you had this spring were the first ones produced. The tomato plant has gotten old, diseased, and damaged by insects; it will never produce an abundance again. Besides, it is too large to be manageable as far as insect and disease populations are concerned. Pull the old plants up and discard them. Give them to the garbage man. Don't try to compost insect and disease-ridden plants--spider mites don't compost!

Remember proper timing is probably the most important factor in successful fall gardening. Regardless of variety selected or cultural practices used, if a gardener does not do the right thing at the right time, any chances of success are diminished. The average first frost day for Zavala County is December 16 even though some sources indicate December 1<sup>st</sup> as the average first frost in Zavala county. With these dates in mind, a gardener can decide which frost-susceptible vegetables to plant, when to plant and whether to use transplants or seeds.

Fall vegetable crops are categorized as long-term and short-term crops. Duration of these crops is dependent upon when the first killing frost occurs and the cold tolerance of the vegetables.

Plant long-term, frost-tolerant vegetables together. Frost-tolerant vegetables include beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, chard, collards, garlic, kale, lettuce, mustard, onions, parsley, spinach and turnips.

Plant short-term, frost-susceptible vegetables together so that they can be removed after being killed by frost. Frost protection and the planting of a cereal rye cover crop are facilitated if such a grouping system is used. Frost-susceptible vegetables include beans, cantaloupes, corn, cucumbers, eggplants, okra, peas, peppers, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, tomatoes and watermelons.

With this in mind you will need to decide if you want to start your fall garden plants from seed or use transplants. Of course larger transplants will cost more but the ease of establishment may be worth the extra funds. What must be accomplished when using transplants is the rapid establishment of fall transplants. As hot and dry as the weather has been, some people think that transplanting is risky. Transplants WILL survive hot temperatures and full sun IF adequate moisture is available to the plant. "To the plant!" is the key phrase. Transplants in peat pots or cell packs with restricted root zones require at least two weeks to sufficiently enlarge their root systems so that active growth can begin. Until that time, gardeners must provide adequate, daily moisture or the transplants will either die or stunt to the point that fruit maturity will be delayed. Delayed maturity is what we need to

avoid! For more information about fall gardening please go to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service website at <https://agrifilextension.tamu.edu/browse/featured-solutions/gardening-landscaping/fall-vegetable-gardening-guide-for-texas/> . So the garden is tilled prepared and planted. Now it is time to crush some mint and fresh lemon into a glass of iced tea, find some shade and look forward to your second growing season as well as the first cool-front to slide down from up north. Good luck and have a happy fall gardening week. M.V.

August 27-31, 2018.

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