

News From Your County Agent
By Marcel Valdez, CEA-ANR
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Zavala County

Nothing like being awoken by loud thunder and lightning at 3 in the morning to usher in much needed rain in our area. When it was all said and done the county average according to reports received averaged from .9 tenths to an inch and a quarter in some parts of the county which is the most we have had in quite some time. By the time morning came it was nice and cool, the soil was wet, birds and other creatures were happy to get a drink and everyone seemed to be in a better mood, I think rainfall caused this kind of behavior change. We can continue to hope for more April showers to get us ready for the hot summer ahead. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

2019 South Texas Agriculture Symposium For Zavala Agriculture Producers Available Next Week

Uvalde will be a host site for the 2019 South Texas Agricultural Symposium titled “Staying Current in the Changing Times”. The event will be transmitted live to Uvalde in a webinar format from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension center in Corpus Christ. This valuable program will be held on Tuesday, April 16th at the Uvalde Fairplex Dry Frio room in Uvalde. Registration will be held from 7:15-8:00 a.m. and the program will begin at 8:00 a.m. There is a \$10.00 registration fee to attend which will include breakfast and refreshments. There will be 2 CEU’s provided to licensed pesticide applicators who attend. One CEU will be in the IPM category and the other will be 1 CEU in General. Please bring your pesticide applicator license to receive your CEU credits and certificates.

Dr. Megan K. Clayton, Associate Professor and Extension Range Specialist-Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be the program moderator. Some of the topics which will be presented include Feral Pigs: A problem with solutions! By Dr. Maureen Frank; Drought Insurance: How to make dry weather work in your favor presented by Mac Young. Dr. Joshua McGinty will present the topic Hemp: A new worthy enterprise or will it “mellow” out? These are just a few of the timely topics that will be presented at this meeting. The event will wrap up at 12:15 p.m. An optional opportunity for producers who have not received the mandatory Auxin training can stay and receive this training from 1 to 3 p.m. This optional Auxin training will be conducted by Dr. Joshua McGinty and licensed applicators will receive the 2 laws and regulations CEU’s for the Auxin specific training. If you are planning to attend this event please RSVP as soon as possible to the Zavala County Extension office at 830-374-2883

Reminder-Private Water Well Screening Next Week

Do you have your own water well? Have you had it screened lately? if this is your case then you might want to consider participating in our multi-county water screening event coming to you soon. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is hosting a water well screening on April 18, 2019 at the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 221 N 1st Ave in Crystal City, to give area residents the opportunity to have their well water tested.

Results will be available on April 19th after 4:00 p.m. at the County Extension Office. The screening is presented by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. "Private water wells should be tested annually," said John W. Smith, AgriLife Extension Program Specialist. "It is very important that only sampling bags from the Zavala County AgriLife Extension office be used and all instructions for proper sampling are followed to ensure accurate results."

I suggest that area residents who want to have their well water screened, pick up a sample bag and sampling instructions from the Zavala County AgriLife Extension office (830-374-2883). The cost is \$15 per sample and samples must be turned between 8 and 9 a.m. on April 17th. Samples will be screened for common contaminants, including fecal coliform bacteria, nitrates, high salinity and presence of hydrocarbons.

The presence of fecal coliform bacteria in water indicates that waste from humans or warm-blooded animals may have contaminated the water. Water contaminated with fecal coliform bacteria is more likely to also have pathogens present that can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea or other symptoms. Water with nitrates at levels of 10 parts per million is considered unsafe for human consumption, nitrate levels above 10 parts per million can disrupt the ability of blood to carry oxygen throughout the body, resulting in a condition called methemoglobinemia. Infants less than 6 months of age and young livestock are most susceptible. Salinity as measured by total dissolved solids will also be determined for each sample. Water with high levels may leave deposits and have a salty taste, and using water with high levels for irrigation may damage soil or plants. For more information about this valuable program contact the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883. Remember free water collection bags and instructions may be picked up at the Zavala county office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 221 N 1st Ave in Crystal City, Texas.

Tip of The Week: Growing Roses In South Texas

The first call Monday morning was from a local resident wanting information about pruning, watering, fertilizing and in short growing BIG roses in South Texas. The success of growing roses in South Texas is relatively simple however the size of the roses you grow depends on this care and most importantly the variety of roses you have or you are planning to grow. This week I will address the question I received regarding rose care because the topic of planting roses is a whole separate article.

Roses may be the flowers of love and romance, but there's nothing romantic about spindly canes sporting spider mites, beetles and mildew instead of beautiful flowers. Just as romance sometimes needs a little helping along, so do your roses. The bonus in keeping roses watered, fertilized, mulched and pruned is that the resulting healthy plants are less susceptible to pest attacks and give your beautiful flowers to enjoy.

Fertilization: When and with what to feed roses is very important in rose care. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension recommends that you feed the modern, repeat-bloom rose varieties first in the spring right after pruning which is now in Zavala County. Next, feed when they have developed flower buds, and then again about two months before the first frost which is usually the first week in

December for our area. Use a commercial rose food or a general-purpose fertilizer like 10-10-10 or 5-10-10 for the first two feedings. A formulation like 0-10-10 is best for the last feeding before frost. Apply the rose food as well as the water-soluble and foliar fertilizers available according to the manufacturer's directions. The older varieties of roses that only bloom once a year should be fertilized one time in early spring.

Watering: Adequate soil moisture is indispensable to the vitality of roses. Seldom can you rely on the natural rainfall to be adequate, especially in the Zavala county area. The rule-of-thumb is 1 inch of water each week, but the actual frequency of watering will depend on your soil and climate as well as the age of the plant. The goal is to slowly water until the soil is soaked 12 to 18 inches deep. Soaker hoses or a hose with a bubbler attachment are inexpensive solutions and keep water from splashing onto foliage and spreading diseases.

Pruning: Pruning controls the size and shape of roses and keeps the modern varieties blooming repeatedly all summer long, as they flower on new growth. The supplies you'll need include a good, sharp, curved-edge pruning shears; long-handled lopping shears; a small pruning saw; plus a pair of leather gardening gloves. Well-established varieties of modern rose bushes such as hybrid teas, floribundas, and grandifloras should receive a major pruning each spring just as the buds begin to swell. Harsh pruning makes bigger, but fewer blooms. And, there is no report that anyone ever killed a plant with a pair of pruning shears.

All that's needed otherwise during the growing season is to remove and destroy any diseased foliage or canes and to dead head, or remove the faded flowers, cutting their stems just above the first leaf with five leaflets. Most old-fashioned and species roses as well as the climbers that bloom only once a year flower on wood from the previous year's growth. They are pruned right after flowering. Practically all rose plants are budded on a special root, or understock. Occasionally you may find a sucker, or shoot, growing from this root stock itself. These sucker canes can usually be identified by the different leaf size and coloring. Remove sucker growth by cutting the canes off as close to the root stock trunk as possible. For more information about rose care contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883. Another good source of information about nothing but roses is the American Rose Society which can be found on the internet at <https://www.rose.org/>. Have a great week. M.V.

April 8-12, 2019

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.