

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

Call it a surprise or a big tease, either way the scattered showers that hit the area last Thursday were not expected at all and if you got some of these showers consider yourself lucky and perhaps you may want to extend your luck by probing the Texas lottery games. We are almost done with August and our chances of rainfall and temperatures below the 100 degree mark should start to take over our weather pattern. Greeting to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

**Update on 4-H Enrollment**

Even though 4-H enrollment has technically started as of August 15, 2019 you may NOT be able to enroll just yet. Many 4-H charter applications are still under State 4-H Office review and that is why the clubs you want to enroll in DO NOT SHOW UP IN THE SYSTEM. We will notify you when the clubs are approved and you may then enroll at that time are you can check the 4-H connect website from time to time to see if the clubs have been approved. Our recommendation is that you wait until after September 1<sup>st</sup> to complete your 4-H enrollment for the 2019-20 4-H year. Thank You for your patience and welcome to 4-H.

**Funds available for entrepreneurs in Ag Innovation Challenge**

The American Farm Bureau Federation, in partnership with Farm Credit, has opened online applications for the 2020 Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge. In its sixth year, the Farm Bureau Ag Innovation Challenge is a national business competition for U.S. food and agriculture startups. Entrepreneurs will compete for \$145,000 in startup funds. Launched in 2015 as the first national competition focused exclusively on rural entrepreneurs, the competition continues to provide an opportunity for U.S. startups to showcase business innovations in food and agriculture. Startup funds for the Challenge are provided by various sponsors. Competitors can apply online at <http://fb.org/aginnovationchallenge> by midnight Eastern Standard Time on Sept. 30. Detailed eligibility guidelines, the competition timeline, videos and profiles of past challenge winners are available at <http://fb.org/aginnovationchallenge>. Good luck if any of you apply.

**Tip of the Week: August Is Time For Fall Gardening**

Recent temperatures and dry conditions have no doubt taken its toll on your spring garden. By now many of you have removed your dead tomato, squash and other vegetables from your spring garden and are contemplating on what to do this fall. Zavala county as most of Texas, it is possible to have a fall vegetable garden also, but it will need to be managed somewhat differently than a spring garden. If your spring garden was successful before the brutal heat of recent days, the same location should work well in the fall. When planning a new garden, keep in mind that vegetable crops must have at least 8 hours of direct sun each day and should be planted where the soil drains well.

If you're using an established garden area, pull out all plant material—the remains of your spring crop and any weeds that have grown up in the garden. Don't put plant residue from a spring garden into your compost bin because it is likely to be contaminated with insects and disease pathogens. After removing the grass, shovel the garden area to a depth of 10 to 12 inches. Rototillers will not penetrate adequately, but they can be used to loosen and mix shoveled areas. Spread 1 to 2 inches of coarse, washed sand and 2 to 3 inches of organic matter on the garden surface and till it into the soil to improve the soil's physical quality. The soil will need to be improved over time rather than in just a season or two. If you are building a raised bed garden, don't skimp on the soil. Use weed-

free loam or sandy loam soil.

Adding fertilizer is the next step. You have two options:

- Apply 1 pound of ammonium sulfate (21- 0-0) per 100 square feet (10 feet by 10 feet) before planting. Then sprinkle 1 tablespoon of ammonium sulfate around each plant every 3 weeks and water it in.
- Or, apply 2 to 3 pounds of a slow-release fertilizer (19-5-9, 21-7-14, or 25-5-10) per 100 square feet of garden area. Apply 1 tablespoon of ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) around each plant every 3 weeks and water it in. This second method should produce a more abundant harvest, especially with hybrid tomatoes and peppers. Do not add too much ammonium sulfate, and do not put it too close to the plants. It can seriously damage them.

Fall crops generally do better when started from transplants than from seed. Transplants should always be used for growing tomatoes and peppers. The trick to establishing healthy transplants during late summer is to make sure they have plenty of water. Transplants in peat pots or cell packs with restricted root zones require at least 2 weeks for their root systems to enlarge enough to support active plant growth. Until that time, they may need to be watered every day or the plants will be stunted or even die. However, too much water is just as harmful as not enough. Soaking-wet soil will cause root rotting and subsequent stunting or death. So check the soil moisture by feeling the soil before applying water. If the soil balls together, it still has enough water; if not, apply water.

Fall vegetable crops are categorized as long-term and short-term crops. The duration of these crops depends on the date of the first killing frost and the cold tolerance of the vegetables. Group the plants according to their frost tolerance. Plant long-term, frost-tolerant vegetables together. Frost-tolerant vegetables include beet, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrot, cauliflower, chard, collard, garlic, kale, lettuce, mustard, onion, parsley, spinach and turnip. Also, plant short-term, frost-susceptible vegetables together so that they can be removed after being killed by frost. Frost-susceptible vegetables include bean, cantaloupe, corn, cucumber, eggplant, okra, pea, peppers, Irish potato, sweet potato, squash, tomato, and watermelon. Although many varieties of garden vegetables are available, only three or four varieties of any one vegetable are well suited or adapted to the Zavala County area. Choose the varieties that are proven to do well in our area. To select the varieties to plant in Zavala county go to

[https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg\\_variety/](https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/publications/veg_variety/) then click on the pull down menu and select Zavala County then click search by county. This will take you to the vegetable selection site. Then from the drop down menu click on the vegetables you want to plant and a list of varieties will be given to you. Of course if you want to do it the old fashion way contact the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and we will be happy to provide you with a list of vegetable varieties that do best in our area. Have a happy fall gardening week! M.V.

August 19-23, 2019.

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