

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

September is here and with it will come additional weather changes, including a more active hurricane activity as we saw with hurricane Dorian over the Labor Day weekend. Usually the peak hurricane development will take place in early September and will begin to decline towards the end of the month. I hope all of you had a good holiday weekend and are back to your regular routine. Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week.

Sorghum Growers Elections Will Take Place Soon-Filing Ends Next Week

Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Board will hold its biennial election on October 30, 2019. **Nominations must be filed with the Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Board by September 13, 2019.** The current terms of five (5) of the fifteen (15) board members will expire this year. One board member will be elected in the north district, one in the central district and 3 in the south district, which is the district in which Zavala county is located. Any person living within the counties in the south district who are engaged in the business of producing, or causing to be produced, sorghum for commercial purposes, is eligible to vote, including owners of farms, their tenants and sharecroppers, if such person is subject to paying the assessment that is collected on sorghum in Texas. Eligible voters in the districts may take part in the 2019 election.

Any person qualified to vote in the election may place his or her name on the ballot for nomination to represent the district in which he or she resides on the Texas Grain Sorghum Producers Board for a maximum term to six years. The nominee must certify that he or she is willing to serve if elected. The nomination form must be signed by the nominee and must have the signatures and complete mailing addresses of ten other eligible voters who reside in the district the person is seeking to represent. Nomination forms may be obtained from the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service by calling 830-374-2883 or coming by the office located at 221 North First Avenue in Crystal City or by email at Zavala@ag.tamu.edu. You can also get nomination forms directly from the Texas Grain Sorghum Board (TGSB) staff by contacting Morgan Webb at (806) 438-5994 or by e-mail at morgan@texassorghum.org.

Organizing and Running a 4-H Tech Changemakers Program

4-H and Microsoft are making it easy for communities to create a 4-H Tech Changemakers program with the ***4-H Tech Changemakers Guidebook***. The guidebook offers best practices and guidelines for youth/adult partnerships to plan, implement and evaluate a Tech Changemakers program in local communities.

The guidebook will help those seeking to implement the program learn:

- What to consider before starting a Tech Changemakers program, including recommendations on research and learning experiences to help prepare your group for project planning.
- Best practices on topics like project management, program promotion and mentoring.
- Lesson plans to fit your community's needs, covering skills like communication, information literacy, netiquette, privacy, social media and more.
- How to create an action plan framework to help you get the Tech Changemakers program started.

If you are interested in organizing and running a changemakers program I will be glad to go over the guidebook and obtain one for your use. For more information about this program contact the Zavala County office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service by calling 830-374-2883 or coming by the office located at 221 North First Avenue in Crystal City. This is a great opportunity for those youth that would like to do something else in 4-H besides raising animals as projects.

Tip of the Week: Get Last Years Poinsettia Ready To Bloom Again in Time for Christmas

I had a couple of folks call about an article I had some time last year around this year on the topic related to making Poinsettias bloom in time for Christmas. The caller said they had clipped the article but lost it, so I am providing this information for those of you who have kept your Poinsettias from last Christmas and want to challenge them to bloom again this year by Christmas. Poinsettias (*Poinsettia*) are generally easy to maintain, but it takes some effort to make them bloom a second time, but it can be done.

To grow them after the holidays, all you did was to treat them similar to other houseplants: You gave them bright light, allow them to slightly dry between watering, and feed them with a liquid houseplant fertilizer according to label directions. That's the easy part. The bracts (those are the leaves that look like flower petals) will eventually faded and fell off the plant and more than likely your Poinsettias grew but remained completely green all summer. Congratulations on keeping your poinsettia alive and kicking. Now getting the plants to re-bloom is the hard part. If you have your Poinsettias in pots, bring the pots indoors before nighttime temperatures fall below 50 degrees F. Temperatures should be no less than 55°F at night, but not more than 70°F. High night temperatures, coupled with low-light intensity, low nutrition, dry soil or improper photoperiod may delay flowering.

From the end of September through the end of October, the plants need 14-15hours of uninterrupted darkness daily, and nighttime temperatures around 65 degrees. This is the secret to triggering new flowers to form and for the bracts to change color. This means that every day at about 5 p.m. you'll need to cover the plants. Uncover them between 7 and 8 the following morning. Absolutely no light can penetrate the darkness. If you place a box over them, it must not permit light to enter. If you place plants in an extra bedroom, no light can enter the room beneath the crack of the door or through a window. Even car headlights shining through a window are enough to interrupt the required darkness. Greenhouse growers use thick black cloths to cover their poinsettia crops, blocking out all light from passing cars and nearby shopping centers. If you successfully carried out the darkness routine, by early November your plants will be developing color, and you can end the daily darkness ritual and set the plants in bright, indirect light. By the end of November, the bracts should be coloring up nicely, and you'll be able to enjoy them through the next holiday season. If all this seems like a lot of work, then it's time to change camps and leave poinsettias to the professionals, but if you are successful the hard work of this routine will give you the kind of satisfaction only a gardener could appreciate. Have a wonderful week. M.V.

September 2-6, 2019