Calendar of Events

April 2012
2 4-H Spirit Night @ Good Luck Grill
9 4-H Recordbook Workshop
11 Pesticide Application Training & Exam
14 Bird Friendly Landscapes Seminar
14 East Austin Garden Fair
19 How To Construct a Compost Bin Seminar

May 2012
17 Preparing the Landscape for Summer Seminar
24 Small Business Workshop
28 Memorial Day Observed—OFFICE CLOSED

June 2012
5-26 Healthy Food, Healthy Families (Tuesdays)
13 Beneficial Bugs in the Garden Program
18 4-H Food Challenge Workshop
30 Garden Photography Seminar

July 2012
3-17 Healthy Food, Healthy Families (Tuesdays)
4 Independence Day Observed—OFFICE CLOSED
11 Pesticide Applicator Training & Exam
14 Good Bugs/Bad Bugs Seminar
19 How to Build & Install Drip Irrigation Seminar
23-25 Youth Leadership Program

Character Counts in 4-H

The 4-H Character Counts curriculum is being used in after-school programs in about 30 Austin area schools as part of the Travis County 4-H CAPITAL program. “This curriculum uses a framework centered on basic values called the Six Pillars of Character,” said Lydia Domaruk, AgriLife Extension Agent for Urban Youth Development. “Those six pillars are trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship.”

Domaruk said each after-school class implements seven lessons annually – one course at the beginning of the fall semester which presents an overview of the program, followed by six additional programs throughout the year, each focused on a different pillar of character.

In January and February combined, 4-H CAPITAL instructors taught 32 Character Counts sessions, totaling 62 hours of instructional time and serving 425 Travis County youth.

“I have seen evidence of the lessons from the Character Counts curriculum working on students in my after-school program,” said Catherine Swan, a 4-H CAPITAL staff member who presented the program at Overton Elementary School. Swan said she saw how the lessons helped one of her students be less disruptive and argumentative and show more respect and caring to her fellow students.

Urban Animal Science Banquet Honors Students

About 120 students, parents, and school personnel attended the Travis County 4-H CAPITAL 2012 Urban Animal Science Banquet on the evening of March 8 at Sanchez Elementary in Austin.

“Our guest speaker was Guadalupe Velasquez, principal of Allison Elementary,” said Julie Z. Ansley, Animal Science Coordinator for 4-H CAPITAL. “Mr. Velasquez has brought the animal science program to four schools and we have worked with him throughout his career with Austin ISD. He talked about his childhood and his own experiences and the lessons he learned while he was in 4-H showing animals.”

Dolores Sandmann
County Extension Director
Texas AgriLife Extension
Travis County

Message from the Director:
April is National Volunteer Month! Volunteers are a valuable asset of the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Our volunteers in Travis County help us:

- Ensure that our educational programs are relevant.
- Expand the delivery of our educational programs and activities.
- Interpret the value of AgriLife Extension to others.

In 2011, 1,269 Travis County residents participated as volunteers with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service. It was estimated that they gave over 36,500 volunteer hours back to our communities. These hours were valued at over $760,500 thousand dollars.

Our sincere thanks goes to our Leadership Advisory Board, Master Gardeners, 4-H Adult Volunteers, Financial Literacy Volunteers, Master Wellness Volunteers, Texas Extension Education Association members, and our many Program Area Committees and Task Force members that assisted with planning and conducting our many educational events throughout the year.

THANK YOU,
Dolores Sandmann
AgriLIFE Task Force Addresses Crazy Ants

With the recent discovery of Raspberry Crazy Ants in Travis and Williamson counties, AgriLife Extension Integrated Pest Management Specialist Wizzie Brown has been asked to head up a task force to address this invasive species.

"Crazy ants don’t sting and to most don’t pose a real health risk, but they are extremely prolific," Brown said. "For example, in areas around Houston where they have been discovered, crazy ant populations have grown into colonies of millions and millions, displacing many native ant species."

Brown said the task force already consists of integrated pest management experts from Travis County, the city of Austin, area universities and the local pest control industry.

“Of our goal is to help educate people on how to identify these ants and where to report their sighting so we can know where they are and track the growth of these populations,” she said. “This is an invasive species and we’re still learning about their biology, behavior and control.”

Brown said the crazy ant population in Travis County was discovered by a local pest control operator who soon will accompany to the Spicewood area near Lake Travis to provide any advice or control product needed.

“I discovered another colony of crazy ants myself near Round Rock of FM6406 when doing fire ant control in that area,” Brown said. “Now we’re incorporating crazy ants along with the fire ant control. We’re hoping to have the same success with crazy ant management as we’ve had with the fire ants, but they are a different species and require a different means of control.”

For more information, check out our website at: http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/rasberry.html

MEET THE STAFF: Amy Harris, County Extension Agent-Family & Consumer Sciences

Amy Harris joined AgriLife Extension - Travis County as the Family & Consumer Sciences Agent on March 1, 2012. Before taking this position she worked for Texas AgriLife Extension as an FCS Agent in Guadalupe County. Amy has worked in the area of Nutrition and Education for over 20 years. Her experience includes work as a Community Dietitian, Facility Director, and Corporate Weight Loss Manager. Amy is also proud to be a veteran of the United States Army. She holds a B.S. in Dietetics from Iowa State University and obtained a master’s degree in Agricultural Sciences from Texas A&M University, Kingsville.

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