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For more information about these and other events, please call 512-854-9600 or visit our website:

<http://travis-tx.tamu.edu/>

Calendar of Events

April 2013

- 11 When and How to Fertilize Seminar
- 12 "Get Up, Get Green!" - East Austin Garden Fair
- 13 Care of Ornamental Trees Seminar
- 16 EarthKind Landscape Course
- 23 MarketReady Workshop

May 2013

- 4 WATER WISE WORKSHOP
- 9 Green Thumb Series - Building a Drip Irrigation System
- 11 Backyard Basics Open House
- 14 Pesticide Applicator Training
- 27 Memorial Day Observed—OFFICE CLOSED

June 2013

- 5 4-H Recordbook Workday
- 7 Webinar - Get Rid of Those Bed Bugs
- 10-14 Texas 4-H Roundup @ College Station, TX
- 13 Green Thumb Series - What's Eating my Plants
- 15 Composting and Soil Health

July 2013

- 4 Independence Day Observed—OFFICE CLOSED
- 22-24 Youth Leadership Program



PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY Cooperative Extension Program

In Cooperation With... TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

Samuel T. Biscoe
County Judge

Ron Davis **Sarah Eckhardt** **Gerald Daugherty** **Margaret Gomez**
Commissioner, Precinct 1 *Commissioner, Precinct 2* *Commissioner, Precinct 3* *Commissioner, Precinct 4*

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PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
Cooperative Extension Program

Making a Difference

SPRING 2013

in Travis County

Dinner Tonight! is Bringing Families Together

The percentage of the family food budget spent on away-from-home food has steadily increased since the 1970s and so has the amount of calories families consume, according to nutritionists and other health experts.

"When dining out, there is a tendency to choose foods higher in calories, and large portions have become more common," said Kate Payne, AgriLife Extension Volunteer Coordinator for Travis County. "In addition, many people become overwhelmed when they think of menu planning and preparing meals for themselves and their families."

To help address this issue, AgriLife Extension initiated the Dinner Tonight! program, which encourages family mealtime by providing quick, nutritious, cost-effective recipes to consumers through weekly video webcasts, blogs and Facebook.

"We are in the process of collecting email addresses from Travis County residents who are interested in preparing quick, healthy and cost-effective meals," Payne said.

She said residents may sign up at <http://bit.ly/10PNHoO> to receive a new Dinner Tonight! recipe by email each Wednesday. In addition, there are more than 200 free video webcasts of easy-to-prepare nutritious recipes available at healthyliving.tamu.edu under the Dinner Tonight! tab. Recipe groups include chicken, beef, seafood, pork, turkey, vegetarian, salads, soups, sandwiches, casseroles and slow-cooker.



Mexican Style Post Roast is one of the recipes available at Dinner Tonight!

Dinner Tonight! videos average three to five minutes and are produced in a similar manner as mainstream television cooking shows.

"The Dinner Tonight program and its videos and recipes provide an opportunity to bring people together in a fun environment to further our mission of teaching families about healthy meal planning and preparation," Payne said.



Dolores Sandmann
County Extension Director
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Travis County

Message from the Director:

I wanted to recognize our Travis County Commissioner's Court for receiving the **Extension in the City Award** that was presented on February 19, 2013 by Dr. Douglas Steele, Director of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Urban programs are a key component in the impact that Extension education makes on the well-being and prosperity of Texas residents. This award honors the Travis County Commissioners Court whose continued support of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service has significantly contributed to the success of our growing, vibrant outreach to urban audiences.

Court members recognized included:
-Judge Samuel T. Biscoe
-Commissioner-Precinct 1, Ron Davis
-Commissioner-Precinct 2, Sarah Eckhardt
-Commissioner-Precinct 3, Gerald Daugherty
-Commissioner-Precinct 4, Margaret Gomez

For more information about Extension programs in Travis County, please visit our website at travis-tx.tamu.edu.

Best wishes,

-Dolores Sandmann

Travis County Master Gardeners on “Ground” Floor of New Initiative



This quarter marked the beginning of Ground to Ground initiative, a first-of-its-kind partnership program between Extension in Travis County and Compost Coalition – a network of individuals, groups, and businesses working to divert organic “waste” from landfills.

“Ground to Ground is a citywide program that diverts nutrient-rich coffee grounds from landfills and puts them back to work in the yards, farms, and gardens of Travis County,” said Lindsay Razzaz, AgriLife Extension Horticulture Program Assistant, Travis County.

Travis County Master Gardeners play a key role in the program,” Razzaz said. Two Ground to Ground Captains’ Trainings were held in January to teach Master Gardeners about the program and how to assume a leadership role in its expansion. After training, participants volunteered as ‘Captains’ for each new coffee shop, serving as liaisons and providing important community outreach and education.

Ground to Ground’s emergence and growth is very timely, Razzaz explained, as both local and global attention has recently focused on reducing the amount of landfilled food product. For example, the Austin City Council declared 2013 the Year of Food Waste Prevention and Recovery, and in January, the United Nations launched a global campaign to end food waste.

“Working in cooperation with area businesses, community members are encouraged to take home free buckets of coffee grounds for their own gardening or landscaping use, and then return cleaned buckets to the participating business,” she said. “Grounds may also be taken to community garden drop sites across the city. Through community education and participation, this program reclaims and maximizes the use of this ample, valuable organic material.”

Used coffee grounds are an immediate and slow-release nitrogen source for plants. They contain phosphorus and potassium, as well as magnesium, calcium and other trace minerals not found in most commercial fertilizers. In addition, using grounds to fertilize reduces the chance of “burning” plants, polluting groundwater or killing beneficial soil organisms.

Ground to Ground supplies participating businesses with a bucket exchange system, marketing materials, employee training, and program support during the initial few months of participation. It also maps participating businesses online so residents can find free coffee grounds in their neighborhood.

Currently, 35 Travis County Master Gardeners serve as Captains for the 15 newest locations in the network. There are now 20 Travis County businesses, including coffee shops, restaurants, a coffee roaster, and a convenience store.



Photo: Setting-up a new Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf location.

In February, with the program still in an early start-up phase, Ground to Ground diverted over 1000 gallons of coffee grounds for use in residents’ yards and gardens.

“Coffee shop owners are very enthusiastic about Ground to Ground, saying that the program brings in

new business, dramatically reduces the volume of their landfill waste, and stimulates environmental consciousness among both consumers and employees,” Razzaz said. “School and community gardens now join residents in regularly picking up grounds from their neighborhood Ground to Ground coffee shop.”

Chicken Coop Tour Gives Attention to Small-Scale Poultry Production

More than 2,270 people from Travis County and the surrounding area participated in the “Funky Chicken Coop Tour” March 30, sponsored by All Kooped Up, Austin EcoNetwork, Buck Moore Feed and Supply, Callahan’s General Store, Coyote Creek Farm, Edible Austin and others.

“Participants learned about zoning in the city of Austin for poultry set-ups,” said Julie Ansley, AgriLife Extension agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Travis County. “Many local urban farmers who agreed to having their sites used as tour stops had pretty much fully self-sustaining operations, allowing participants to see more than chicken coops.”

She said tour sites also offered a view of vegetable gardens, goats and other fowl. The tour, which

began at Buck Moore Feeds and lasted for more than six hours, featured 14 stops in and around Austin. “Owners explained to the participants how they started, their HOA restrictions, construction, and codes,” Ansley said. “This event allowed people who had a small operation or were thinking about getting started to gain knowledge about challenges urban farmers face.”

Ansley added that 115 participants also attended a lecture presented during the tour by a local veterinarian about basic chicken health. “Nine booths were set up in a common area where tour participants could visit as they picked up their

tickets for the event,” she said. “It was a fun and educational event for learning the ins and outs of urban poultry production.”

Ansley also said that small-scale urban food production is one of the areas AgriLife Extension promotes and supports through its various programs.

“We realize that small-scale agricultural production, which includes backyard urban chicken production for eggs and meat, is becoming of greater interest as people strive toward more self-reliance in producing, preparing and preserving their own food,” she said.



Violet and Joe Alexander receive 4-H CAPITAL “Friend of 4-H” Award

Each year, the 4-H CAPITAL program of Travis County has outstanding volunteers and supporters that help make this program possible for our many youth participants. This quarter, 4-H CAPITAL was privileged to award its Friend of 4-H award to Violet and Joe Alexander.

“Friend of 4-H award recipients spend long hours making sure that our students have everything they need in order to succeed,” said Mellanie Mickelson, animal science coordinator for the 4-H CAPITAL program. “These supporters exhibit an amazing strength of character and selflessness in everything that they do and they are a large part of our program being a success year after year.”

Mickelson said the Alexanders have served the Travis County 4-H community for more than 30 years in numerous capacities.

“The Alexanders serve as advisory board members for three separate scholarship funds, as their passion is to ensure youth have an opportunity to attend college and 4-H events without a financial burden,” she said. “Joe Alexander is a board member of the Travis County Youth Show, is a former president of the board and member of the show’s Long-Range Planning Committee. Violet Alexander is a member of her local Texas Extension Education Association Club and serves on the Texas 4-H Foundation Board representing the association. She also serves as a superintendent for the Travis County Youth Show’s Youth Fair and is a member of the Travis County 4-H Program Development Committee.”

The Alexanders are dedicated to assisting with the 4-H CAPITAL Animal Science Program and advocate for youth as they walk across the auction stage at the annual youth show sale, Mickelson said. “They ensure that we have help moving the goats to the show grounds and provide a helping hand whenever and wherever needed.

She said together Joe and Violet Alexander embody the 4-H motto: ‘To Make the Best Better.’

“The 4-H program prides itself for its amazing volunteers and Joe and Violet Alexander are a true blessing to the Travis County 4-H Program and truly deserve the 4-H CAPITAL Friend of 4-H Award.”

Photo: Joe and Violet Alexander (center) with family

