

Leadership Advisory Board

Travis County

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Joe Morris
Jerry Naiser
Mary Ann Neeley
Manda Rash
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Lydia Steinman
Lupe Velasquez
Nate Walker

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

July 2014

- 4 Independence Day Observed - OFFICE CLOSED
- 7-28 Step Up & Scale Down Program (Mondays)
- 10 4-H Junior Leader Rally & Recordbook Judging
- 16 Forward Farming: Business 101
- 17 Professional yoU! Workshop
- 19 Raising & Managing Bees
- 21-23 Youth Leadership Program
- 23 Forward Farming: Marketing
- 30 TEEA Christmas in July
- 30 4-H Club Officer Training

August 2014

- 4-25 Step Up & Scale Down Program (Mondays)
- 15 4-H Awards Banquet
- 16 Insect Visitors in Your Garden
- 21 Practical Weed Control
- 23 District 4-H Conference
- 28 Leadership Advisory Board (LAB) Meeting

September 2014

- 1 Labor Day Observed - OFFICE CLOSED
- 13 Backyard Basics
- 26 Science of Ag Expo



In Cooperation With...

TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

Samuel T. Biscoe
County Judge

Ron Davis
Commissioner, Precinct 1

Bruce Todd
Commissioner, Precinct 2

Gerald Daugherty
Commissioner, Precinct 3

Margaret Gomez
Commissioner, Precinct 4

CONTACT US

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Travis County
1600-B Smith Road
Austin, Texas 78721

TEL: 512.854.9600
FAX: 512.854.9611
E-mail: Travis-TX@tamu.edu
Web: travis-tx.tamu.edu

EDITORIAL TEAM

Paul Schattenberg, Editor
Communications Specialist

Dolores Sandmann
County Extension Director

Irma Marquez
Office Supervisor

Angela Reyes
Administrative Assistant

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and the Prairie View A&M University Cooperative Extension Program are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.



Making a Difference

SUMMER 2014

in Travis County

2014 Inside Austin Gardens Tour

Held every 18 months, the Inside Austin Gardens tour highlights horticultural best management practices for Central Texas homeowners and gardeners. The 2014 tour was held on May 3rd, and focused on water-conserving techniques for various garden styles.

The home landscapes of five Travis County Master Gardeners were on display, showcasing a range of gardening challenges and teaching tour-goers how to address them, said Daphne Richards, AgriLife Extension Horticulture Agent. "One garden featured a well-established landscape in full shade—quite a challenging situation to deal with, so choosing the right plants is important. Another garden was only a few years old and highlighted the contemporary trend of incorporating succulents and xeriscaped beds into hot, sun-baked areas of the yard to decrease landscape irrigation. In keeping with the goal of public education for the tour, each plant in every garden was labeled, and a list of plants was made available for tour-goers," Richards said.

In conjunction with the tour, the demonstration garden at the Travis County Extension office is also manned by volunteers who conduct a result demonstration field day on water conservation in the landscape. Demonstrations on installing and managing drip irrigation systems, building wicking beds, composting, use of mulches, and recommended plants were held. A total of over 2,600 people toured all 6 locations, with one garden having almost 600 visitors during the 6-hour tour. Almost 350 participants toured the Extension garden and took part in the demonstrations activities.



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

Message from the Director:

As part of the national eXtension online learning network (www.extension.org), **Ask an Expert** (<https://ask.extension.org>) offers a portal for clientele to submit questions to extension agents and specialists on a wide variety of topics. The eXtension online platform has been around for almost a decade, and **Ask an Expert** was launched in 2006. In the eight years from 2006 to 2013, a total of 153,987 questions were answered nationwide. In 2013 alone, 48,008 questions were answered—over 30% of the eight-year total. Texas receives almost 10% of all questions, more than any other state in the nation.

In Travis County, the majority of questions received are home gardening, horticulture, and pest related. In 2013, Travis County horticulture agent, Daphne Richards, and Extension IPM Specialist, Wizzie Brown, answered 196 total questions. Also, Daphne Richards was listed by eXtension as sixth in the Top Six Experts in Texas for answering the most questions state-wide. For the first five months of 2014, from January to May, 162 questions have been answered by the horticulture agent and entomology specialist in Travis County. **Ask an Expert** is a great resource for the public, making it easier for people to access research based information when seeking an answer to their questions. Recently, Extension in Travis County has added a direct link to **Ask the Agents** on our website, so that clientele get their questions sent directly to our local experts quickly.

Best Wishes,
-Dolores Sandmann



4-H'ers, volunteers and parents had a great time competing, participating in workshops and building friendships at the annual 4-H Roundup, which was held in College Station, June 9-13, said Cory Talley, AgriLife Extension Agent for 4-H. A total of 14 youth and 15 parents and volunteers attended from Travis County. "This year's theme was created by one of our own 4-H members, Trent Warwick, *Ignite 4-H -- Spark Leadership, Fuel Change*," Talley said.

Five Travis County youths earned \$23,500 in scholarships from the Texas 4-H Foundation, San Antonio Livestock Exposition and the Wallrath Foundation, she noted. Recipients were Mary Louisa Angly of Spicewood and Madeline Jones, Cullen Tuggle, Brandon Masi, and Meredith Masi all of Pflugerville.

Consumer Decision Team Wins FIRST!

"In addition, four Senior 4-H members competed in the Consumer Decision Making Contest, placing first and earning a trip to the national contest to be held next year in Denver," Talley said. Team members consisted of Trent Warwick, Meredith Masi, Anna Dolliver and Collin Warwick. The team also placed second in the "Reasons" category with Trent Warwick being the sixth-place high individual overall

and Collin Warwick being the second high Individual in Reasons. "This contest is designed to teach kids to observe, compare and make consumer decisions based on facts," Talley said. "4-Hers use their consumer knowledge to rank similarly based products to fit a given scenario. Kids learn to organize their thoughts and to defend their decisions in oral reasons."

Collin Warwick, who also participated in public speaking, placed fifth with his speech "Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happy Meals."

Six youth also competed in the Agriculture Product Identification Contest at this year's roundup, Talley said. "In this event, youth are required to identify a designated Texas agriculture product and then answer a question related to the product." She said the Intermediate team of Erica Masi, Martha Dolliver and Colby Warwick placed second, with Erica Masi and Martha Dolliver tying for fourth place high Individual and Senior team member Anna Dolliver receiving fourth-

place overall within that age group.

In the Photography Judging contest, the Intermediate team of Will Whitaker, Anna Swartz, Emily Swartz and Kaitlin McCauslin earned first place, with Will Whitaker being the second-place high Individual.

The Travis County Senior Team, consisting of Sarah Johnson, Sofia Ramirez, Collin Warwick and Trent Warwick, took third place for the Leaders 4 Life Program. "Leaders 4 Life equips youth in conducting high quality leadership and parliamentary procedure training and service learning activities," Talley said.

She said six youths also competed in the Healthy Lifestyles Invitational where they learned the importance of physical activity, proper hygiene, dental care, healthy snacking, vaccinations, sleep and how to reduce disease and illness. The Intermediate team of Erica Masi, Martha Dolliver, Mason Kelley and Colby Warwick placed ninth in the invitational.

"All of these 4-H members did a great job of representing their clubs and of representing Travis County," Talley said.



Water Conservation in the Drought

In order to address the continuing need to conserve water in the home landscape, Extension in Travis County offered a series of five workshops, one per month from February to June, on Water Conservation in the Drought, said Daphne Richards, AgriLife Extension Horticulture Agent. Topics covered included Building and Maintaining Healthy Soils, Drip Irrigation, Rain Water Harvesting, Water Conservation in Lawns, and Alternative Irrigation Methods. Taught by Daphne Richards and Master Gardener experts, each program was two hours and offered extensive time for individual questions. A total of 101 people attended one or more classes in the series.

Testing to Certify Agricultural Pesticide Applicators

In an effort to provide better service for Texans, Agriculture Commissioner Todd Staples has announced convenience testing to certify agricultural pesticide applicators and weights and measures service technicians will soon be available at 22 sites across Texas. The new exam system increases access for candidates who must pass a certification examination before being issued a pesticide applicator or service technician license.

TDA has contracted services with PSI Services LLC to administer exams necessary to license agricultural pesticide applicators and service technicians in 22 sites across the state. Additionally, examination sites will be open most days from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Exams will now be scheduled on a date and time that best fits the applicant's schedule.

"Extension offices will continue to offer the training, but will no longer provide the testing with a Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) Inspector. Trainees will now take all pesticide exams at a contracted testing facility, **PSI Exams**. If you currently have your pesticide license, this won't affect you. However, if you don't obtain your CEU credits and let your license expire, you will have to re-train and take your exam at a PSI Exam Center in Austin or at another location," said Julie Ansley, Agriculture/Natural Resource Extension agent.

Pesticide applicators will not experience an increase in the cost to take an exam for the first time, and the fee for the service technician exam will actually decrease. Another benefit of this exam process is the automation of exam scores, thereby improving turnaround time for an applicant to receive a license.

The new convenience exams will begin June 1, 2014. For more information, contact **TDA** at 800-TELL-TDA (800.835.5832). For exam sites go to the PSI Exam website: <https://candidate.psiexams.com/>

Juniper Budworm Infesting Trees

People may have noticed their Ashe juniper trees, commonly called cedar, turning brown. This most likely is being caused by juniper budworms. There was an outbreak of these insects in 2002 and there was no longer term damage caused to the Ashe juniper trees. It is unknown what will happen to the trees from the current outbreak.



Juniper budworms are a yellowish-green to green caterpillar with a brown head capsule. The caterpillars feed on Ashe juniper foliage and build silken tubes on the branches of the trees. The silken tubes are typically on the tips of branches and are where the insect pupates. Adult moths are a mottled brown color and blend well with the dead Ashe juniper foliage. Adults rest on the host plant during the day and do not move unless disturbed.

In rural areas, it may not be feasible to manage the juniper budworms, especially on large parcels of land. Individual landowners may choose to treat prized trees on their property. Infested branch tips can be removed by hand. Do not drop the branch tips on the ground, but instead, place them into a bag and dispose of them.

If a pesticide treatment is desired, look for active ingredients such as Bacillus thuringiensis var., kurstaki, azadirachtin (neem) or spinosad. Products will work best on smaller caterpillars. When using pesticides, read and follow all label instructions.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600.

MEET THE STAFF: Irma Marquez, Office Supervisor

Irma Marquez has been with Travis County for 22 years; and is now the Office Supervisor at the Travis County-Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

As the office manager, she oversees the general office operations, handles purchasing needs, assists with budgets, acts as liaison to HR, and manages the administrative support staff. With her knowledge of the County SAP travel/mileage and timesheet system. She also assists all personnel with completing necessary paperwork for AgriLife Extension and Travis County.

Irma attended Texas State Technical College and in her free time enjoys singing, taking classes at Whole foods and playing with her two cocker spaniels: Buddy and Riley.

