

HARRIS COUNTY  
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE



## AGRILIFE EXTENSION EFFORTS DURING COVID-19

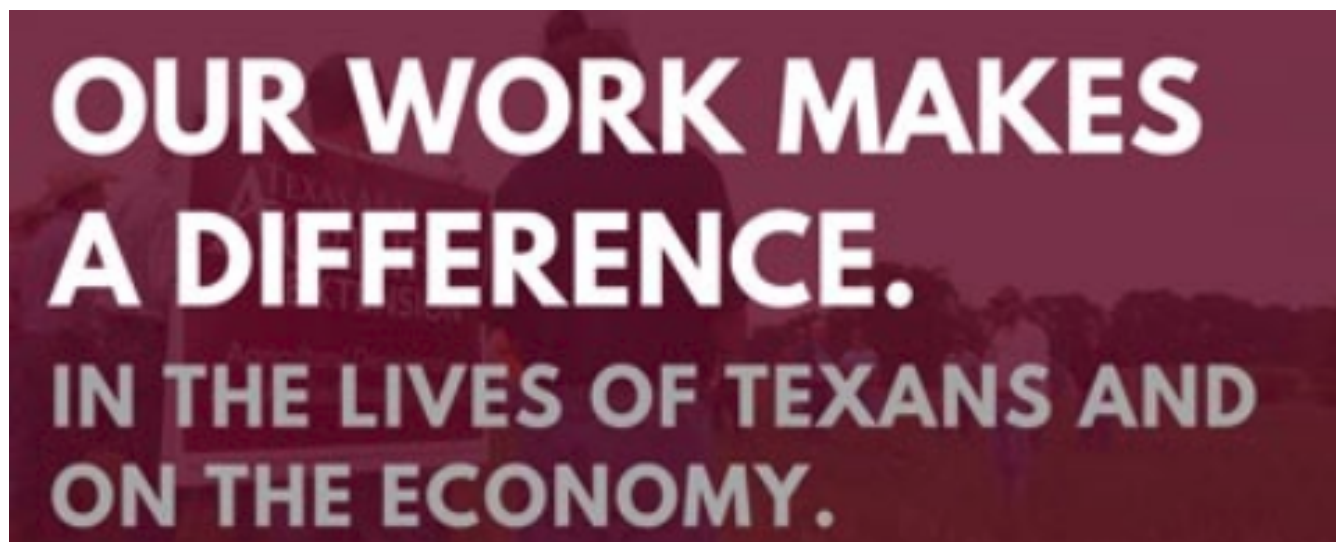
HOW EXTENSION EDUCATION CONTINUES DURING SOCIAL DISTANCING

ISSUE 2 • JULY 2020



# Extension Education in Harris County

*Howdy and Welcome to Harris County!*



**Vision:** Help Texans better their lives

**Mission:** Through the application of science-based knowledge, we create high-quality, relevant continuing education that encourages lasting and effective change.

**Capabilities:** We provide programs, tools, and resources local & statewide that teach people how to improve agriculture and food production, advance health practices, protect the environment, strengthen our communities, and enrich youth.

**Cover Image:** A ruby-throated hummingbird visits the tropical sage bloom for nectar. In the fall, these small birds, that weigh the equivalent of a postage stamp, gather energy from nectar-producing plants to make the journey across the Gulf of Mexico to South America. While some species migrate, others may winter over in our area from locations further north. This was discussed by Brandi Keller during the "Attracting the Right Wildlife to Your Garden" talk of the Home Grown Lecture Series, page 17.

# LET'S TALK: A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION



## Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Harris County

Thank you for taking time from your busy schedule to review our Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – Harris County quarterly newsletter. Our goal is to provide as much information as possible to keep our stakeholders, volunteers, families and youth informed about the educational programs we administer in Harris County.

There have been certain aspects of our lives that have undoubtedly slowed down, it has also been an unbelievably busy year in many other ways. We have all learned how to lead productive lives while in the midst of a pandemic, become more devoted in our efforts to acknowledge and appreciate our differences, and still find creative ways to transition our educational programs and meetings to a digital platform.

As we continue to move forward in life, know that our office is here to support you. Our mission "Through the application of science-based knowledge, we create high-quality, relevant continuing education that encourages lasting and effective change" is increasingly important to all people in the communities we serve and the responsibility that we have to fulfill it is not lost on any of our staff.

We hope that you have learned and engaged with us through our innovative virtual programs and you found the experience to be worthwhile!

Stay safe and be well!

Respectfully,

David D. Wright

County Extension Director – Harris County  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service





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## **UPCOMING EVENTS**



# AgriLife Extension offers online trainings to help local leaders navigate the federal funding process.

On April 23, 2020 Gov. Greg Abbott announced the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will provide a series of free online trainings to help local officials understand, acquire, and administer federal assistance available to the state of Texas and local municipalities to help recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Financial assistance available through the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and recently passed Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security, or CARES Act, will be instrumental in helping governments and municipalities recover from the economic devastation caused by the pandemic. AgriLife Extension will offer these trainings online to help local leaders navigate the federal funding process, and in turn, respond and recover as quickly and effectively as possible.

"Our local officials have done a tremendous job leading their communities throughout the COVID-19 response, and the state of Texas will continue to work alongside them and provide these leaders with the resources and support they need during this challenging time," Abbott said. "These online trainings will assist local leaders in efficiently navigating the federal funding process and ensure that our communities receive the financial support they need in a timely manner."

Patrick Stover, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor of Texas A&M AgriLife, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Director of Texas A&M AgriLife Research, College Station, said helping local governments better understand the CARES stimulus package is in keeping with AgriLife's mission and purpose. "We provide quality, relevant outreach and continuing education programs and services to benefit the people of Texas," Stover said. "In helping educate and inform local officials about how to obtain badly needed federal funding, we will be doing a service in helping communities throughout the state recover from this crisis."

Monty Dozier, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension Program Director for Disaster Assessment and Recovery, College Station, said AgriLife Extension agents will serve as an "information conduit and safety net" to help ensure anyone who is eligible knows how to apply for those federal relief funds.



ARTICLE ADAPTED FROM: [HTTPS://AGRILIFETODAY.TAMU.EDU/2020/04/23/GOV-ABBOTT-CHANCELLOR-SHARP-CHIEF-KIDD-ANNOUNCE-COVID-19-FEDERAL-ASSISTANCE-TRAINING-FOR-LOCAL-LEADERS/](https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2020/04/23/gov-abbott-chancellor-sharp-chief-kidd-announce-covid-19-federal-assistance-training-for-local-leaders/)



Harris County's very first Healthy Teens, Healthy Future graduates.

## EFNEP KICKS OFF VIRTUAL YOUTH CLASSES WITH NEW CURRICULUM

By Laura Holt, EFNEP Agent



In the wake of Covid-19, the Texas EFNEP staff have been very busy converting our existing nutrition curricula to digital formats as well as creating a few new ones. Among these has been the launch of "Healthy Teens, Healthy Future". This completely virtual, self-paced and interactive nutrition series consists of 6 lessons and an online pre and post survey that teens can work through at their own pace as well as having access to trained EFNEP Nutrition Educators should they need clarification or have burning questions. Each lesson contains valuable nutrition, food safety and physical activity tips as well as useful culinary skills practice and recipes.

To access Healthy Teens, Healthy Future interested parents, teachers, camp counselors, etc. can connect with an educator in their local community by visiting <https://efnep.tamu.edu/distanceedu/>.



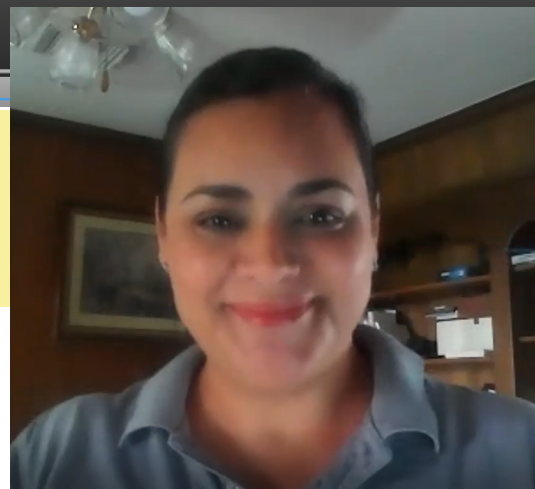


# TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

## What Questions Would You Like To Ask?

### Family & Community Health

By Amanda Krippel, Texas A&M AgriLife  
Extension Service-Harris County-FCH



## Master Of Memory Virtual Multi-county Partnership

Master of Memory is a six-lesson series to help older adults understand how memory works, identify ways to improve memory, and pinpoint things in everyday life that may affect memory. Harris County Family and Community Health Agent, Amanda Krippel, and Karen Lyssy, FCH agent in Calhoun County, spearheaded a multi-county Virtual Master of Memory series across the state of Texas with over 212 registered participants.

What makes this Master of Memory special is that each lesson is done by an agent from a different county thus making it a multi-county partnership. Agents include: JaShea Horn from Colorado County, Natalie Knesek from Lavaca County, Mike McBride from Montgomery County and Lori Schindler from Wharton County. With the support from Andrew Crocker, Extension Program Specialist of Gerontology and Health, Master of Memory was able to provide resources, tips and techniques to all Texans far and wide.



# BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

## Taking Part in Wellness Wednesday

By Lora Jorgensen, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Harris County - BLT

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Better Living for Texans (BLT) program is funded by the USDA's SNAP-Ed program, the Texas Department of Health & Human Services, and Harris County, to bring research and evidence-based nutrition, health, and wellness education to our community. In the spring of 2020, due to COVID-19 restrictions, BLT, like many other organizations, began to explore virtual delivery of educational programs. BLT Agent Lora Jorgensen joined with a team of Family and Community Health Agents to collaborate on "Wellness Wednesdays" to bring weekly one-hour live programs to Harris County residents.

Did you know that 1 in 6 Americans will experience a foodborne illness this year? The June 17th Wellness Wednesday topic was an excerpt from the BLT series "A Fresh Start to a Healthier You", entitled "Kitchen Safety- Avoiding Foodborne Illness". Thirty-one adult participants joined Lora and other AgriLife staff on an engaging and interactive Zoom presentation that provided information on how to stay safe from food poisoning. Lora provided participants with tips on grocery shopping and food prep, as well as USDA recommendations on how to properly chill, thaw, and store foods. After the presentation, all participants were emailed a colorful handout that summarized the program information.

inset photo: Lora Jorgensen



TEXAS A&M  
**AGRILIFE**  
EXTENSION



### Kitchen Safety

*Avoiding Food-Borne Illness*

Wednesday, June 17, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

Join us for the  
**#aMAYzingMeChallenge**  
during the month of May.  
Click on each day's  
description and it will link to  
a short video or resource  
that supports you in  
achieving the daily  
challenge. These  
challenges were developed  
by Family & Community  
Health agents to help YOU  
focus on what's important  
during the pandemic, while  
staying safe. We encourage  
you to share personal  
photos, videos or comments  
of your daily  
accomplishments by using  
**#aMAYzingMeChallenge**.

# #aMAYzingMeChallenge

SPIRITUAL SUNDAY	MINDFULNESS MONDAY	TASTY TUESDAY	WELLNESS WEDNESDAY	THRIFTY THURSDAY	PHYSICAL FRIDAY	SOCIAL SATURDAY
					1. Flexibility Friday	2. Host a virtual social hour.
3. Start a 30 days of gratitude jar.	4. Digital Detox	5. Taco Tuesday	6. MyPlate Debate	7. DIY Household Disinfecting Solution	8. 10K Steps	9. Watch Out with Friends
10. Personal Reflection	11. Mindful Eating	12. Tasty Summertime Treat	13. Focus on fruits and veggies.	14. Dining @ the Dollar Store	15. Bike it out!	16. Reconnecting Relationships
17. Sounds of Inspiration	18. One With Nature	19. Strawberry Smoothie Parfait	20. Go Lean with Protein	21. Penny Pinching Bread	22. Fun Friday Dance Off!	23. Family Mealtime
24. Motivational Minutes 31. Tight Tonight	25. Mindful Living Coping with Stress	26. Waldorf Apple Salad	27. Go Whole, Go Low!!!	28. Canned, Fresh, or Frozen?	29. Don't be a Couch Potato.	30. Senior Saturday

To access the live links that have a short video or resource, click here:  
<http://counties.agrilife.org/harris/files/2020/04/aMAYzingMeChallenge-1.pdf>

# #aMayzingMeChallenge

Submitted by Dr. Sonja Stueart-Davis, Harris County Family & Community Health

During the 2020 pandemic, life for many has been turned upside down with working from home, homeschooling kids, and attempting to establish a new normal. During the month of May, District 9 Family & Community Health agents collaborated to develop the #aMayzingMeChallenge. The challenge included the following daily themes; Spiritual Sunday, Mindfulness Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Wellness Wednesday, Thrifty Thursday, Physical Friday and Social Saturday.

Each day, participants clicked on videos or educational resources to help them achieve the daily inspirational challenge. Continuing to focus on a pandemic can become overwhelming and the purpose was to invite individuals to focus on what matters and that's family, health, safety, and FUN. Individuals were encouraged to post pictures, comments, and videos of their family by using #aMayzingMeChallenge.



# Family & Community Health

Submitted by Dr. Sonja Stueart-Davis



## **MASTER WELLNESS VOLUNTEER INTERNS**

**2020**

Congratulations to the 2020 Harris County Master Wellness Volunteer Interns. They completed 40 hours of Master Wellness Volunteer training (online and face to face) and passed their exam! For the next year they will complete 40 hours of service. Pictured are Amanda Krippel, County Extension Agent-FCH, Kathy Denton, Crysbel Tejada, Patricia Rivera, Shaniece Cress, Shronica Randle-Holmes, Sonja Davis, CEA-FCH, and front row: Patricia Campo and Tracy Green. Not pictured is Ali Anum, Eva Schultz and Ashley Charles. They are all excited to share the knowledge gained to positively impact the citizens of Harris County.



**MASTER  
WELLNESS**  
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION







## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY HEALTH - COOPERATIVE EXTENSION PROGRAM

### ACTIVE PARENTING - TEENS IN ACTION CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

by Alfredo Alberto, Cooperative Extension Program-Family & Community Health, Prairie View A&M University

Over the course of this quarter we have provided the following leadership flagship program to schools in Harris County. Here are the top three sessions out of our six series where we cover:

**Survive and thrive:** a detailed lesson on the makings of a successful student and the building blocks of the 6 pillars of character starting with showing respect.

**Cooperation and Communication:** students dialogued about scenarios based on teen self-esteem barriers, how to avoid communication blocks, and how to use active communication skills in their role plays.

**Responsibility and Discipline:** students discussed why rules at home, school, and in society exist to protect them from harm. We defined responsibility, the excuses game, and good/bad consequences.

#### Above images, clockwise from top left:

-Cooperation and Communication exercise.

Students had to work together to flip the tablecloth over all while not touching the carpet. If a foot touched the surrounding carpet it became an automatic start over.

-Carl Wunsche High School - Spring ISD Harris County Senior Leadership, 1st Place Robotics and Stem for their district. A good handful of Skills USA student leaders took part in our program. (SkillsUSA is a partnership of students, teachers and industry working together to ensure America has a skilled workforce.)

-Northbrook High School Yes Prep Character Development Leadership Class graduates. Most of these young men came from in-school suspension (ISS), so to see three of them complete the class is a testament to their pursuit as restorative justice leaders.



# Harris County 4-H

## Record Book Training

Submitted by Brittney Ivey, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Harris County - 4-H

All year, youth from Harris County 4-H practice and learn about different project areas. To showcase their efforts, they keep record books. These records help to show off what they have done in 4-H for the current year and the past 3 years. It includes their 4-H story, activities, major project areas, leadership experience, community service, and their future plans. Each year, the youth can turn in record books on the county level to place and then move on to district level and state level record book contests.

To help 4-H'ers succeed in these contests, the county hosts an online training. All youth are encouraged to participate in the training and all who attend appreciate the information received. This year youth and adult volunteers participated in the training, which helped them create and submit their record books.

The session involved reviewing what a record book should look like, helpful hints about judges' expectations, and how to get your book to the next level. Training consisted of an online presentation and examples for the attendees to view. There were 11 adult volunteers and 23 youth participants. All expressed that they were equipped to have better books to turn in for judging. Harris County 4-H hopes to have more sessions in the future so that we can reach even more youth and encourage them to participate in Record Book contests. Our goal is to show 4-H'ers the importance of these books and highlight the possibility of obtaining scholarships for their future.





# CLASSROOM PROGRAMS GO ONLINE!

by Rashayla Johnson, 4-H/FCH Program Assistant



Due to COVID-19 disrupting the school year, program implementation was forced to go virtual. Rashayla Johnson, 4-H/FCH Program Assistant, spent 6 weeks with 6 students meeting each Monday and Friday on Microsoft Teams. Ms. Johnson implemented "Hatching in the Classroom" and "Path to the Plate" online and the students loved it! This was an opportunity for them to learn about nutrition and science through a non-traditional way. In this day and age, educators must reach the students in innovative, creative ways. The students enjoyed these two programs so much that they asked for copies of the PowerPoint slides!



During week three of the programming, we started incubating fertile chicken eggs as a part of "Hatching in the Classroom". We hatched 15 chickens. Students were excited to see the growth process of the embryo inside of the egg and then hatching!



During the Path to the Plate program, the students discussed the importance of reading nutritional labels, eating a balanced meal at every meal, and why farmers and ranchers produce livestock and crops a certain way. This group of students were very attentive and they will take what knowledge they gained to make better life choices.





Before going off for spring break, the Healthy Huskies and H2Grow 4-H Clubs within the Growing U program in Harris County had their last in-person program meetings before the COVID-19 pandemic. Harmony Science Academy-Katy learned the different metamorphosis stages while creating belts and bracelets. Then, they had a showcase to demonstrate their beautiful artwork and what they learned



# 4-H & YOUTH OUTREACH

by Jennifer Ramos, Program Assistant Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service 4-H Youth Outreach Programs

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, like many other schools, Harmony Science Academy-Katy and Hearne Elementary School did not go back to in-person learning. However, efforts were made to keep in touch from a distance and online learning experiences were provided within 4-H. Students joined several of the Junior Master Gardener Facebook Live sessions and checked in during program Zoom meetings. The Zoom meetings were great to check in on the students and go over 4-H at Home activities together.







The 3rd and 4th graders in Hearne Elementary School harvested fresh vegetables to take home along with a recipe to cook with their families. A third-grade student asked how fruits and vegetables looked in a garden, before reaching their plate. He was so surprised that he said, "Wow, this is how spinach looks like before being in a grocery store?" Students were excited to start their garden at home and could not wait to start including their vegetables in their home meals.



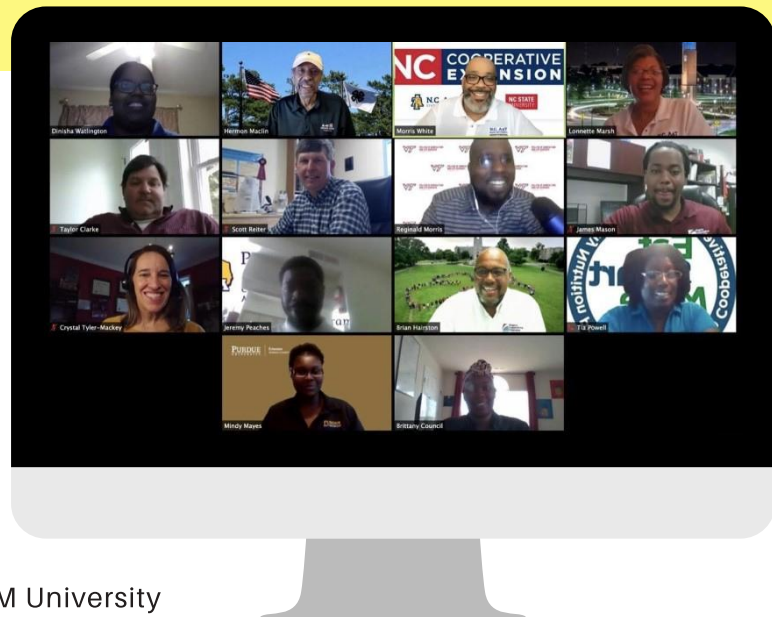


# Serving Your Community during COVID-19

## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION AT NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY PANEL DISCUSSION

Submitted by Te'Anna Donaldson, Prairie View A&M University  
Cooperative Extension Program - FCH

Prairie View A&M University's Cooperative Extension Program's Harris County 4-H Agent, Jeremy Peaches, and Family and Community Health Agent, Te'Anna Donaldson served on a panel hosted by North Carolina A & T University's Cooperative Extension. The panel discussion focused on how each participant's respective state's extension program conducted programs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Panelists provided insight into how agents, specialists, and program leaders utilized their experience of maintaining programs and services during natural disasters to help during this pandemic. Speakers offered advice on conducting extension programming for extension colleagues across the country while navigating natural disasters and pandemics.



During the panel discussion, agents Donaldson and Peaches shared PVAMU Extension's role during recent natural disasters such as the Texas wildfires in 2011 and Hurricane Harvey. The conversation included lessons learned from past natural disasters as well as how the coronavirus impacted stakeholders and clientele. Speakers emphasized the need for food security and how to help solve food system problems. The panel also included agents from Purdue University Extension, Virginia Cooperative Extension, University of Illinois Extension, and the University of Maryland. The information exchange provided tips, advice, and encouragement as we navigate through these trying times. Despite their location, extension professionals concluded that we're all in this together.



**PRAIRIE VIEW  
A&M UNIVERSITY**  
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE  
AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program



18 USC 707



# HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES

AGENTS: PAUL WINSKI, KIM PERRY, SHANNON DIETZ  
MASTER GARDENER COORDINATOR BRANDI KELLER

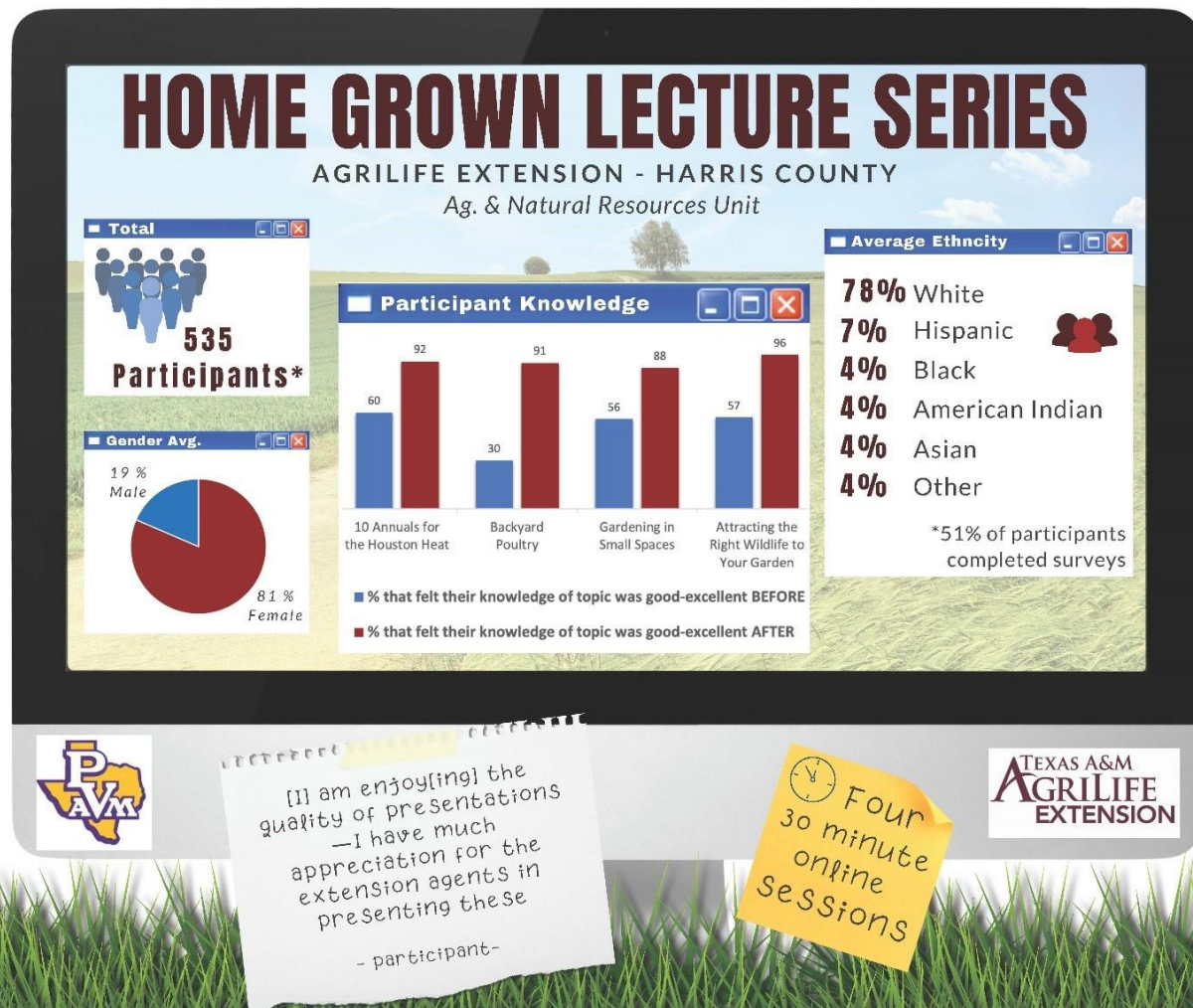
The Home Grown Lecture Series is a weekly educational session presented by the Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) Unit. With the work from home order in place for Harris County, the unit developed the Home Grown Series to help provide urban agriculture and horticulture information. This program focuses on topics that are relevant to the urban gardener.

The May online series included the following topics:

- 10 Annuals for the Houston Heat
- Backyard Poultry
- Gardening in Small Spaces
- Attracting the Right Wildlife to Your Garden

The presentations were held every Thursday in May at 10 a.m. online via Microsoft Teams. The Teams platform allowed for interactive participation between the attendees and the agents. There were 535 participants for May's lectures.

The online series will continue throughout the remainder of 2020.





Texas A&M AgriLife  
Extension - Harris  
County Horticulture



# Horticulture

## Using Facebook for Horticulture Outreach

By Paul Winski, Texas A&M AgriLife  
County Extension Agent-Horticulture

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Agents Involved:  
Paul Winski  
Kim Perry

MG Coordinator  
Brandi Keller

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension – Harris County Horticulture Facebook page has been in existence since March 2013. It has been a valuable tool to provide horticulture information to both the green industry and Harris County residents.

One facet which has been utilized during this time is the Facebook Live feature and the posting of instructional videos. Since the stoppage of face-to-face trainings due to COVID-19, the team has produced several videos and Facebook Live sessions to offer additional educational horticulture information.

The team has developed and posted 5 videos and has hosted 3 Facebook Lives reaching over 20,000 Harris County residents. The videos and Facebook Live allow us to provide training and information on topics that are relevant at that time. The use of this social media platform has improved our outreach into the community.

Follow us at  
<https://www.facebook.com/HarrisCountyHorticulture> to see the latest information in urban horticulture.





Paul Winski, Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension Agent-Horticulture  
during April 15 video on Monarch Caterpillar Life Cycle

April 8 How Much Lawn Fertilizer Do I Apply?

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2296854020609097>

April 14 Let's Talk Fruit Trees at the Edible Arbor Trail

[https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2492981484364449&ref=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2492981484364449&ref=watch_permalink)

April 15 Monarch Caterpillar Life Cycle

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2682434255212477>

April 22 Urban Gardens in Harris County

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=240566507037505>

April 23 Cool Season Plant Trials at Genoa Friendship Garden

[https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=840100943148165&ref=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=840100943148165&ref=watch_permalink)

May 7 Creating Your Own Combination Planter

[https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=259402611875904&ref=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=259402611875904&ref=watch_permalink)

May 11 Agave americana

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=827754357711721>

May 12 Golden Headed Weevil

[https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=272049803941815&ref=watch\\_permalink](https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=272049803941815&ref=watch_permalink)



# Harris County Master Gardeners

BY BRANDI KELLER,  
MASTER GARDENER  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR

With just under 250 Master Gardener volunteers in Harris County, in-person educational outreach drastically decreased with the onset of Covid-19. However, many volunteers were still eager to stay active and translate what they do online. Here are a few areas in which the Master Gardeners have stayed active serving residents throughout Harris County.

## Growing with Plants and Nature - Youth Activities Group

This group normally serves families with children under 12 years old. They met once a month for about an hour and a half covering a lesson, an activity, and a craft. Within two weeks of the stay-at-home order, this group had a Facebook page up and running to connect with over 20 members of the families that they normally served. This also allowed the group to grow their reach in the county. In addition to providing Extension information on Covid-19 Resources and Social Distancing with Children, they also presented seven

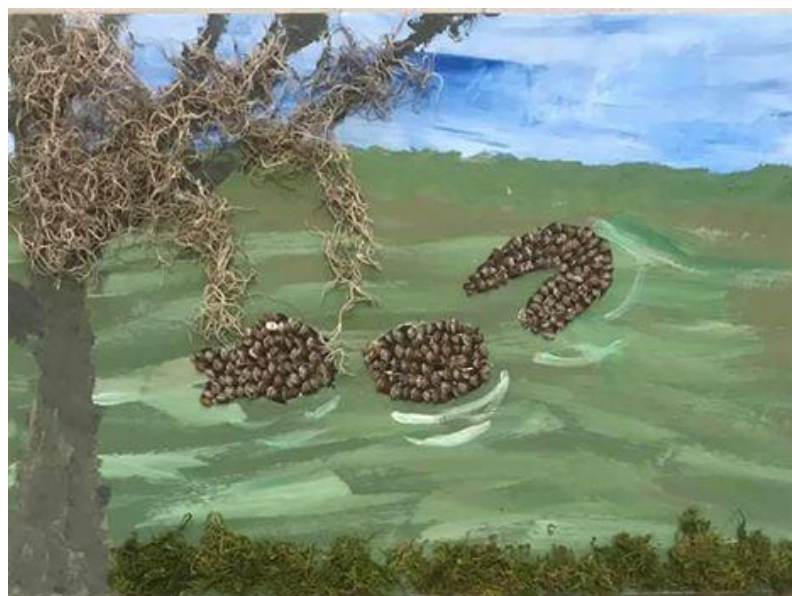
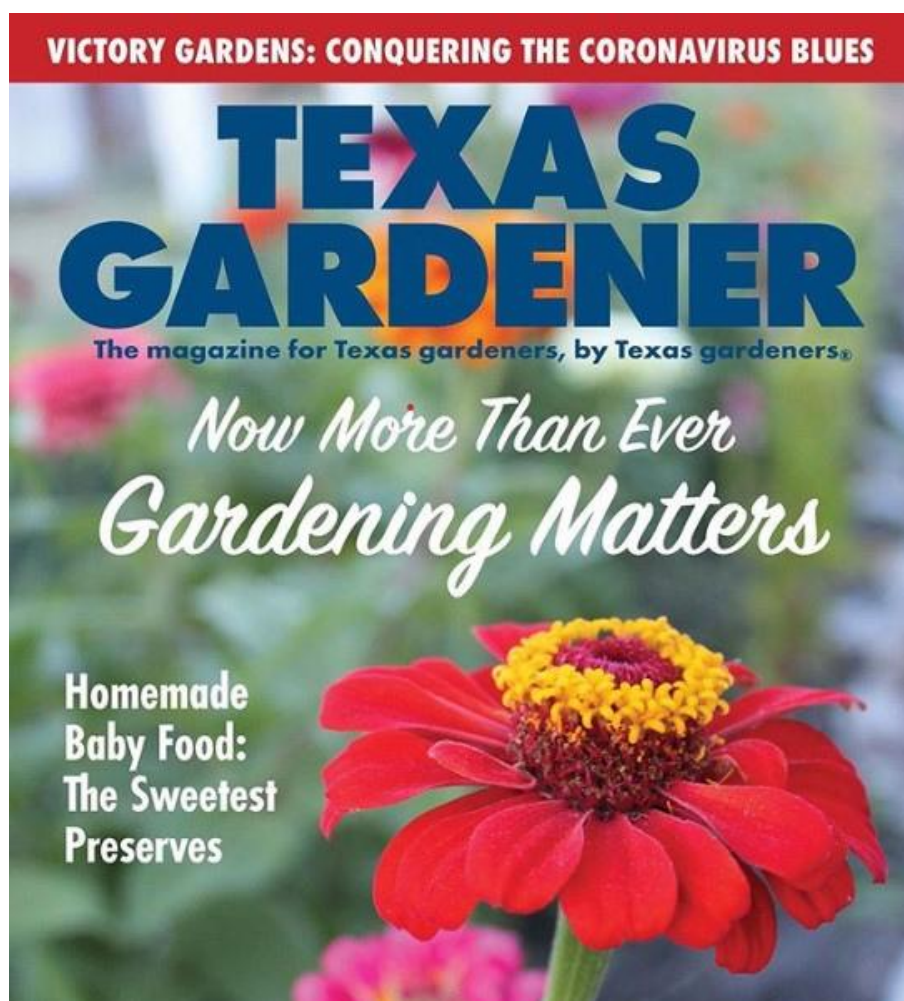


Photo caption: Master Gardener Youth Activities Group hosted a Nature Art Contest. One of the winning submissions was "Gator" by 7-year old Bailey.

instructional videos, including a "Scraps for Supper" video series that explored using vegetable scraps to re-grow new food, like celery, pineapple, sweet peppers, garlic, and romaine lettuce. This activity allowed families to utilize materials already found at home.

## Texas Gardener Magazine

The May/June 2020 Issue of Texas Gardener Magazine, which has a print distribution of over 14,000, included a two-page article by Harris County Master Gardener Program Coordinator, Brandi Keller. This article highlighted our Extension volunteer contribution within Hermann Park Conservancy's McGovern Centennial Gardens. Not only do these volunteers provide educational programs twice a month, which has been on hold the last few months, but they also manage 24 raised beds that contain vegetables, herbs, fruit trees and more.

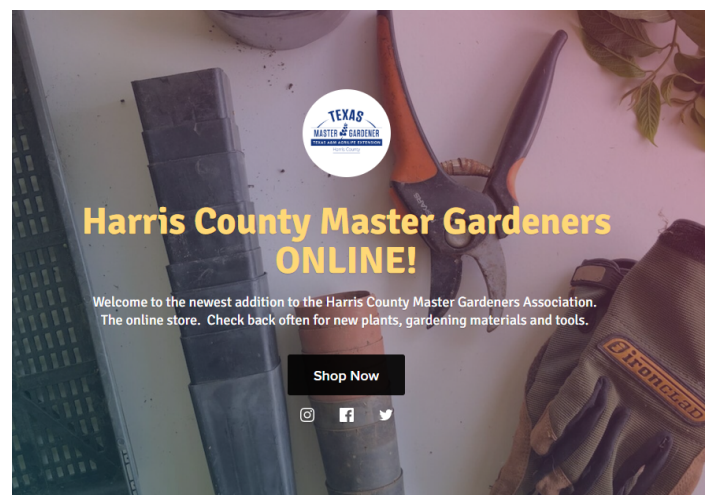
## Online Educational Reach Collaborations

Our volunteers have fostered relationships throughout the county in the last couple years, but the current pandemic has allowed Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to provide educational programming to the local community alongside those organizations. Between three Facebook Live events and two Garden & Nature Series YouTube videos in conjunction with Hermann Park Conservancy, we've reached over 21,000 residents of Harris County and beyond. One video on Edible and Landscape Gingers, in collaboration with Mercer Botanic Gardens, reached over 31,000 people on Facebook.



## Master Gardener Plant Sales Went Online

One of the ways the Master Gardeners support Extension is by having an Association to fund raise in order to support our programs. Almost 300 trees were left unsold from the annual Fruit Tree Sale. Master Gardeners assessed their options and quickly built an online store that would allow for a safe, convenient shopping experience from the comfort of home. Scheduled pick up days allowed customers to stay in their vehicle while Master Gardeners loaded their trees. In June, they made 119 online sales that equated to almost \$6,000. This effort was not only successful, but it will remain a part of future fundraisers, moving forward. To visit the Harris County Master Gardener Online Store, visit:<https://hcmga.tamu.edu/shop/>



## SATSUMA - OWARI



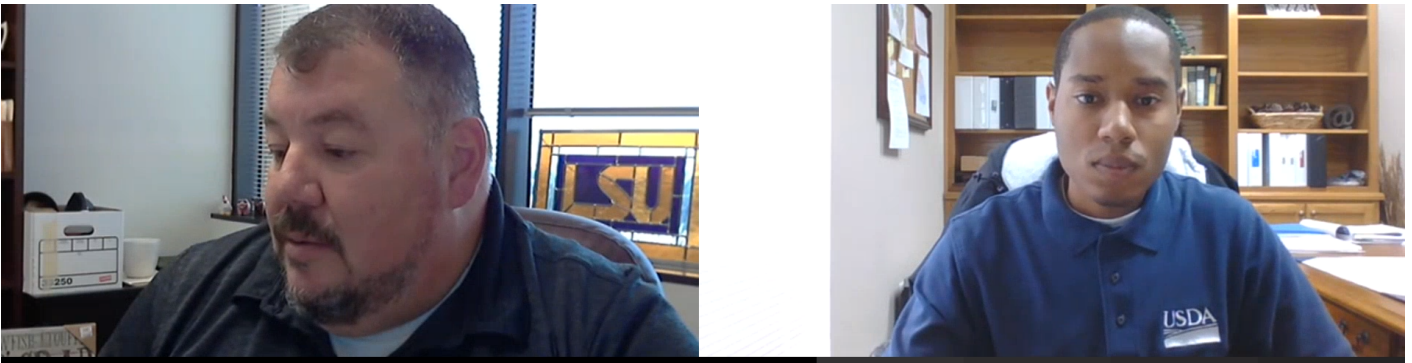
- Size: 6'-12' x 2'-6'
- Virtually seedless
- Ripens late November
- Ideal for smaller garden
- Drought tolerant
- Sweet juicy flesh
- Cold hardy to mid 20's



# Agriculture & Natural Resources

## CORONAVIRUS FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

BY SHANNON DIETZ, TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT-  
AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES



LEFT: SHANNON DIETZ, HARRIS COUNTY AG & NATURAL RESOURCES AGENT  
RIGHT: FARM SERVICE AGENCY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOSHUA COLEMAN

On Thursday, June 25th, the Harris County office of Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Services hosted an online webinar for farmers and ranchers dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. CFAR, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program is currently being offered to producers through the USDA office specifically dealing with guidelines on reimbursement and subsidy programs to help with offsetting expenses. The free webinar provided an overview of the CFAP program and offered clarification on the eligibility, pay limits and payment calculations for farmers affected by COVID-19. Harris County Ag and Natural Resources Agent, Shannon Dietz, organized the event which attracted over 25 attendees to the 1-hour lunch program.

Speakers consisted of personnel from the USDA office located in Houston, which provides services for Harris, Waller, and Montgomery Counties. Farm Service Agency Executive Director Joshua Coleman, Farm Loan Program Manager Irby McWilliams, and NRCS District Agent Karissa Graves were all on hand to provide information beneficial to agriculture producers. They explained the criteria, guidelines, and reporting that needs to be submitted by the late July deadline. All speakers participated in a question and answer panel at the end of the webinar which was free to attend. This was a joint program between Harris County Texas A&M Agrilife Extension, USDA, and NRCS.



# Sustainable Agriculture Program Rainwater Harvesting Virtual Workshop Program Topics

- ❖ Agricultural Water Conservation
- ❖ How to Harvest and Store Rainwater
- ❖ Benefits of Rainwater Harvesting
- ❖ Tank Storage and Management



## Rainwater Harvesting Workshop

by Kim Perry, Cooperative Extension Program-Agriculture & Natural Resources - Prairie View A&M University

On May 15, 2020, Kim Perry hosted a Rainwater Harvesting webinar presented by Ms. Nell Wheeler, owner of Metal Rain Tanks, LLC, in Houston, TX. Participants learned about the sustainable practice of how to harvest and store rainwater as well as the different types of containers and how each rain barrel is custom designed for single family residents or small businesses. Participants learned about the different designs available, the laws related to rainwater harvesting, the HOA in Texas, and the cost analysis benefits of saving money on the water bill. One of the key factors presented displayed how rainwater is an excellent source of water for ornamental plants, vegetable gardens, and landscape irrigation since it has no chemicals. This workshop was a way to continue to teach Texans about urban sustainability.



# IN COOPERATION WITH ...

Lina Hidalgo, Harris County Judge  
Rodney Ellis, Commissioner, Precinct 1  
Adrian Garcia, Commissioner, Precinct 2  
Steve Radack, Commissioner, Precinct 3  
R. Jack Cagle, Commissioner, Precinct 4

## **Making A Difference Quarterly Newsletter** Volume 20, Issue 2 July 2020

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION  
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# UPCOMING EVENTS

HARRIS COUNTY 4-H OFFICER TRAINING | JULY 30TH 8 AM - 2:30 PM

<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/brittney-ivey-22969147367>

CREATING SCHOOL GARDENS WORKSHOP | JULY 31ST 9 AM - 12 PM

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/creating-school-gardens-workshop-tickets-112850689450?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch>

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES | THURSDAYS IN AUGUST - 10 AM

<https://homegrown2020august.eventbrite.com>

GARDENING ON THE GULF COAST | WEDNESDAYS IN AUGUST & SEPTEMBER - 10 AM

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/gardening-on-the-gulf-coast-tickets-110043597362?aff=erelexpmlt>

WELLNESS WEDNESDAY HEATH SERIES | WEDNESDAYS IN AUGUST - 10 AM

<https://www.eventbrite.com/o/texas-aampm-agrilife-extension-service-harris-county-4691752973>

GREEN THUMB GARDENING LECTURE SERIES | IN CONJUNCTION WITH HCPL

Events hosted on Facebook Live @ <https://www.facebook.com/harriscountyp1>

August 18th at 11am – Container & Small Space Gardening

September 15th 11am – Q&A with Master Gardeners

October 20th 11am – Trees: Planting & Care

HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENER GROWING WITH PLANTS AND NATURE GROUP  
(YOUTH ACTIVITIES)

To register for these talks, please send an email to [ogd.harrishort@gmail.com](mailto:ogd.harrishort@gmail.com)

August 11th – “Flight of the Ladybug”

September 8th – “Plants that Survived the Dinosaurs”

October 13th – “While You Are Sleeping: The Lives of Nocturnal Creatures”

*We provide programs, tools, and resources -local & statewide- that teach people how to improve agriculture and food production, advance health practices, protect the environment, strengthen our communities, and enrich youth.*



# TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION



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