

Getting Ready for the Cool Season Vegetable Garden

by Paul Winski, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture

The summer heat will be subsiding soon, and it is time to start planning your cool season vegetable garden. You can plant a diversity of crops and harvest throughout the late fall and winter. Here are some tips for you to have a great growing season.

Garden Location

- Receives 8+ hours of sunlight.
- There are several cool season crops like beets and carrots that perform well in partial shade.
- Growing area with good drainage, consider raised beds if you are not already using them.
- Add compost to help recharge the soil after your summer crops.
- A nearby water source.

Container Gardening

- Vegetables can easily be grown in containers if you have limited space.
- Large containers: you will be more successful if you use larger containers (half whiskey barrel for example), it holds a larger volume of soil and will not dry out as quickly. Make sure that there are holes in the bottom of the pot.
- Use a good potting soil mix, a peat-based mix is fine. Do not use soil from your garden.
- Container grown vegetables may need to be watered more often since the plants will have a limited root zone for growth.

Broccoli/Cabbage/Cauliflower/Brussel Sprouts

- Prefers full sun.
- Plant healthy, vigorous plants.
- Apply 2-3" of mulch around the plants.
- Incorporate 1-2lbs of 10-20-10/100ft² or 30'row at planting.
- Spacing between plants: 18-24", depends on variety
- For additional information on growing cole crops: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/EHT-067.pdf>

Getting Ready for the Cool Season Vegetable Garden, cont.

by Paul Winski, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture

Carrots

- Direct sow seed from October through February.
- Can be grown in partial shade.
- Not sure how much to plant: consider 5-10' of row/person in the house.
- Incorporate 1 cup of 10-10-10 / 10' row and mix into the top 3-4" of soil.
- Thin seedlings when tops are 4" tall to 4" centers.
- Most varieties can be harvested in 70-80 days.
- For additional information on growing carrots: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/EHT-035.pdf>

Radishes

- Direct sow seed from October through February.
- Tolerates partial shade.
- 10' row will provide enough radishes for a family of 4.
- Incorporate 1 cup of 10-20-10 / 10' of row and mix into the top 3-4" of soil.
- Thin seedlings when roots start expanding. Pull every other plant.
- Most varieties can be harvested in 4-5 weeks.
- For additional information on growing radishes: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/vegetable/files/2013/09/EHT-042.pdf>

Other crops to consider for cool season production

- | | |
|----------------------|------------|
| • Collard Greens | • Kohlrabi |
| • Swiss Chard & Kale | • Garlic |
| • Beets | • Leeks |
| • Lettuce | • Peas |
| • Spinach | • Turnips |
| • Onions | |

For additional resources and factsheets on these and other fall vegetables, please visit the Aggie Horticulture website. <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/>

Harris County Vegetable Planting Calendar: <http://counties.agrilife.org/harris/files/2019/03/Vegetable-Planting-Chart-2019.pdf>

Purple Martin Roosts Prepare for Migration

by Brandi Keller, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture



Purple martins are one of the birds that homeowners happily welcome to their yards by erecting a house just for their species. These seasonal birds are cavity nesters, and with the decline of adequate dead trees left standing, gourds and purple martin houses provide a suitable habitat for breeding. They do quite well in close proximity to humans, which make them a perfect bird for Harris County.

Purple martin scouts can appear in January/February. Once they finish nesting, they will start congregating, from near and far, in mid to late summer.

Fun Facts

- Largest member of the swallow family
- Roost departures can appear on radar
- Can fly more than 40 miles per hour

Resources

[Purple Martin Conservation Association](#)
[Houston Audubon PM Watch Parties](#)
[Texas Parks & Wildlife Link](#)



While we would love to brag that our purple martins are eating all the mosquitoes, these birds, generally, hunt at higher elevations: 150-500 feet! Instead, they enjoy moths, beetles, dragonflies, butterflies, wasps, cicadas, and other flying insects. This is why they are called aerial insectivores.



August 2021



In August/September, purple martins from around the country come together. At select sites, they gather each evening by the hundreds of thousands to partake in a dramatic migratory roost. Houston Audubon estimates around 500,000 birds swirl, fly, and drop into a handful of trees to sleep together for the safety in numbers at this roost located near Willowbrook Mall. As seen here, they huddle so closely together that there are more feathers than leaves visible. Roosting is a social bonding experience that prepares birds for their long flight to South America. Check out the link above to join Audubon at a Watch Party.

To register for "Growing Microgreens" talk - Click [HERE](#).

6 Soil Health Principles for Regenerative Cattle Ranches

by Shannon Dietz, Harris County Extension Agent, Ag & Natural Resources

You might have heard the term “Regenerative Agriculture” being thrown around in conversation at the local feedstore or co-op lately and aren't 100% sure exactly what it means. The term is fairly new but has a long history here in Texas and native prairies of America. Regenerative agriculture basically means “bringing together a set of agriculture practices whose primary objective is to naturally enhance soil quality. In other words, to restore the fertility of diseased or exhausted soils.

The four basic regenerative farming practices aim to improve the well-being of our environment by increasing soil fertility, biodiversity, water retention and cleanliness, and soil carbon sequestration.

Why should we include regenerative agriculture? Basically, the significant loss of the world's fertile soil and biodiversity, along with the losses of indigenous seeds, pose a mortal threat to our future survival. According to soil scientists, at the current rates of soil destruction (i.e. decarbonization, erosion, desertification, chemical pollution) within 50 years, we will not only suffer serious damage to public health due to a qualitative degraded food supply brought on by diminished nutrition and loss of trace minerals, but we run into the possibility of literally no longer having enough arable topsoil to feed ourselves. Without protecting and regenerating the soil on our 4 billion acres of cultivated farmland, 8 billion acres of pastureland, and 10 billion acres of forest land, as a country we will not be able to continue our role in helping to feed the world or keep global warming in check.

The key to regenerative agriculture is that it not only “does no harm” to the land but actually **IMPROVES** it by using technologies that regenerate and revitalize the soil and the environment.



Regenerative agriculture leads to healthy soil capable of producing high quality, nutrient dense food while also improving, rather than degrading land, ultimately leading to productive farms and healthy communities and economies.

The six soil health principles are:

1. Know your context
2. Cover the Soil
3. Minimize soil disturbance
4. Increase diversity
5. Maintain continuous living plants/roots
6. Integrate livestock.

For more information on these six steps read this article published by the Noble Research Institute who is playing a leading role in educating farmers and ranchers about this important matter.

<https://www.noble.org/regenerative-agriculture/6-soil-health-principles-for-regenerative-cattle-ranches/>



The Home Grown Podcast!

The Home Grown podcast is presented by the Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) Unit of the Harris County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office. The series provides information on urban agriculture / horticulture / gardening and ag literacy. The program focuses on topics that are relevant to the urban gardener.

Episode #1

In Episode 1 we'll be talking to the Harris County Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agents: Paul, Brandi and Shannon. Get to know your agents and learn about their passion for the Home Grown series and extension.

Episode #2

A visit with Bill Barr - mentor, friend and plant propagator/plantsman extraordinaire. Bill is now retired, but his knowledge of plant propagation, the nursery industry and plant introductions is all-encompassing. Bill provides insight on his career and other aspects of the industry.

Episode #3

In this episode, Brandi Keller visits with Harris County Master Gardener, William Isbell. As a driving force with a few projects in the Master Gardener program, Will shares experiences as a volunteer and educator, current programs happening in Harris County, and a few plants he favors for the Houston heat.

Episode #4

In this episode, Shannon talks with Janna Roberson, the executive director of Urban Harvest in Houston, TX. Urban Harvest is a non-profit working in the community to bring fresh produce through their farmers markets, community gardens and educational outreach. The organization has been creative in addressing food security and food desert issues. Urban Harvest has a well-deserved reputation as a leader in the local Houston food movement.

How do you access the podcast?

Click anywhere on the image or logo below or go to <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1791415>. You can also search "Home Grown" where ever you find your podcasts.



Our County Extension Agents

Horticulture

Paul Winski

Brandi Keller

Ag/Natural Resources

Shannon Dietz



HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES

JULY - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2021

THE LATEST & GREATEST IN BEDDING PLANTS FOR 2022

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

July 1, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

GARDEN HUMMINGBIRD SAFETY

Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Horticulture

July 15, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

COOKING SAFELY OUTDOORS

Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural
Resources

August 5, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

**New
Date!**

FALL VEGETABLE GARDENING

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

August 19, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

GROWING MICROGREENS AT THE WINDOWSILL

Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Horticulture

September 16, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

ENHANCING YOUR DISHES WITH FLAVORED BUTTERS

Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural
Resources

September 17, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

TO REGISTER FOR THIS FREE ONLINE SERIES,
PLEASE VISIT
[HTTPS://HOMEGROWN2021Q3.EVENTBRITE.COM](https://homegrown2021q3.eventbrite.com)

THE MEMBERS OF TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE WILL PROVIDE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES, EDUCATION, AND EMPLOYMENT TO ALL PERSONS REGARDLESS OF RACE, COLOR, SEX, RELIGION, NATIONAL ORIGIN, AGE, DISABILITY, GENETIC INFORMATION, VETERAN STATUS, SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY AND WILL STRIVE TO ACHIEVE FULL AND EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY THROUGHOUT TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE..

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
HARRIS COUNTY

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES

OCT - NOV - DEC
2021

REGISTER AT:
[HOMEGROWN2021Q4.
EVENTBRITE.COM](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/homegrown2021q4)

CREATING A COMBINATION PLANTER

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

October 7, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

SAUSAGE MAKING 101

Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural Resources

October 21, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

CITRUS TREES FOR YOUR LANDSCAPE

Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County Extension
Agent-Horticulture

November 4, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

RAINWATER HARVESTING

Teresa See - Harris County Master Gardener

November 18, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

SO YOU WANT TO BE A RANCHER?

Shannon Dietz - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural Resources

December 2, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

MAKING HOLIDAY PLANTS LAST

Brandi Keller - Texas A&M AgriLife County
Extension Agent-Horticulture

December 16, 2021 - 10:00 a.m.

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Upcoming In-Person Programming

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Lifescaping Series

PLANT FORWARD CHARCUTERIE	1:00 P.M.-3:00 P.M. September 17, 2021	FREE
PRESERVING THE HARVEST	1:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M. September 24, 2021	\$30
GRILLING LIKE A TEXAN	10:00 A.M.-12:00 P.M. October 08, 2021	\$25
BRAIN GAMES FOR MENTAL ACUITY	10:00 A.M.-11:30 A.M. October 15, 2021	FREE
HERBARIUM INSPIRED ART	9:30 A.M.-11:30 A.M. October 22, 2021	\$25
FALL COMBINATION PLANTER WORKSHOP	9:30 A.M.-11:30 A.M. October 29, 2021	\$25

For more details and to register, please visit
<https://lifescaping2021.eventbrite.com>



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Upcoming: 2021 Ag Summit

You won't want to miss the 2021 Southeast Texas Ag Summit. Registration will be available now at TX.AG/SETXAGSUMMIT2021

This event will include a Welcome BBQ on Thursday evening with agriculture and natural resources industry leaders. The schedule for Friday includes educational classes with 5 CEUs available, door prizes, catered lunch, and more.



TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
SOUTHEAST TEXAS AG
SUMMIT
20 21
BAYTOWN, TX

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 1, 2021

Baytown Community Center
2407 Market St, Baytown, TX 77520

SCAN TO REGISTER NOW!
OR VISIT TX.AG/SETXAGSUMMIT2021

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:



SAVE THE DATE



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SOUTHEAST TEXAS AG
SUMMIT
20 21
BAYTOWN, TX

 **Register today!**
General admission: \$40
Couples admission: \$60

 **Continuing education topics include:**

- Beef Cattle Production and Management
- Pasture and Range Management
- Conservation of Natural Resources
- Farm Safety and Management

 **Get access to:**

- five continuing education unit credits pending TDA approval
- over 30 local and regional market vendors
- an agriculture trade show

Registration includes the Texas Bred and Texans Fed Barbecue on Sept. 30! For more information, contact Shannon Dietz at shannon.dietz@ag.tamu.edu.

For more updates, follow us on Facebook:

 **@HarrisCountyANR**



Contact Us

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Shannon Dietz - County Extension Agent - AG/NR - Shannon.Dietz@ag.tamu.edu

Social Media/Websites

Harris County Horticulture Facebook

Horticulture YouTube Channel

Harris County Master Gardeners Facebook

Harris County Ag & Natural Resources Facebook

Harris County AgriLife Website



If you would like to **unsubscribe** from the Home Grown newsletter, please email Susan Hubert at susan.hubert@ag.tamu.edu

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