

Success With Combination Planters

by Paul Winski, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture

Combination planters and hanging baskets are a great way to add color to any area of your landscape. They can provide a much-needed accent or pop of color to your patio, balcony, or entry way. There are many pre-made combinations available at retail, but if you are thinking of designing your own planter, here are some tips to help improve your success.

- **Soil:** Use a good potting soil that will provide an ideal environment for the plant's roots. Remember the mix needs to provide air space and have adequate water holding capacity. Using garden soil is not a good choice for your planter.
- **Containers:** Containers are available in all shapes, sizes, and materials (plastic, terra cotta, fiber). Select a size that will be large enough to accommodate the number of plants that it will hold. Please make sure that the pot has enough holes in the bottom to allow for proper drainage.
- **Plant Material:** Avoid pairing plants with different light and water requirements. If the planter is going to be placed in the full sun, avoid using shade-loving plants since they will not thrive under the high light conditions. Likewise, avoid mixing dry-loving plants like succulents into a combination with plants that need watering on a regular basis.



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- **Planter Maintenance:**

1. **Water:** Apply water as needed. As the plant combination starts to grow and fill-in, more water will be required. The number of plants in the container, the size of the container and the material it is made from will have a direct effect on the frequency of watering. When you do water insure you are applying the water to the soil in the pot and not just wetting the foliage.
2. **Fertilizer:** Don't forget about applying fertilizer, especially when the plants are actively growing. I look to apply a slow-release fertilizer to the soil surface which allows for nutrients to be released throughout the season. Liquid fertilizer applications also work well, with the nutrients readily available for quick uptake by the plants.
3. **Grooming:** As the planter matures, some deadheading, pruning, or thinning may be needed to keep your combination fresh-looking.

Good luck with designing your own combination planter this fall and unleash your creativity. If you need additional information about combination planters, check the program recording on our YouTube Channel.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmIhsYf4bJEHqUIFb2vVpkQ>



Master Gardener Plant Sales

by Brandi Keller, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture



Have you been to a Harris County Master Gardener Association Fruit Tree Sale? If not, you are in luck. They are going back to in-person sales this February!

Each year, Master Gardeners host sales that raise funds to support Texas A&M AgriLife Extension in its mission of educating the public about horticulture. Some of the programs that are supported are cylinder gardening, youth activities, Genoa Friendship Gardens, and other educational outreach within Harris County.

Since our region is unique for the state of Texas, Master Gardeners select the best varieties of fruit trees, vegetables, and ornamental plants for our area.

Save the Date!

February 5th - Fruit Tree Sale
at Richard and Meg Weekley Park

February 21st - Tomato Sale
March 21st - Citrus Sale
at Genoa Friendship Gardens

More info on these sales can be found at <https://hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales/>



Persian Lime



Ruby Rio Grapefruit



Meyer Lemon



Arctic Frost Satsuma



Washington Navel Orange



Dancy Tangerine



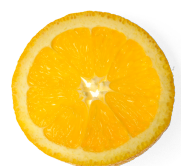
Kaffir Lime



Eureka Lemon

Resources:

[2021 Master Gardener Fruit Tree Sale Inventory](#)
[Recommended Fruit & Nuts for Harris County](#)
[Home Fruit Production - Citrus](#)
[Harris County Master Gardener Facebook Page](#)



Watch "Citrus in the Landscape" after Nov 4th - Click [HERE](#).

Soil Test This Fall- Unless you Test, It's just a Guess!

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

With the increase in retail prices of Nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) fertilizers roughly double in price from those a year ago, hay producers and farmers should consider this time to take and obtain soil samples during this time of the year for Spring production. These tests will offer fertilizer recommendations within the tested areas, hopefully maximizing profit potentials for the 2022 growing seasons.

To get a representative sampling of available soil nutrients, you need to do some background work to prepare for the sampling process.

AgriLife Extension Service recommends taking one composite sample for every 10 to 40 acres, keeping in mind that separate samples should be taken when you have the following:

- Areas with different soil types
- Areas with different land uses or fertilizer uses
- Areas with different terrains



When taking your soil sample, there are just a few, easy steps to follow to get the most accurate analysis for your site.

- Take a sample from 10 to 15 different areas
- Use a shovel, soil sampling tube or auger for best results
- Clear the grass and clippings from the surface

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If you prefer to improve the nitrate-nitrogen analysis, samples may be air dried before sending to the lab in College Station. DO NOT USE HEAT to dry samples, AIR DRY ONLY.

If you have soil sample bags from my office, you can submit your sample in this package or other suitable pint container (or pint Ziploc bags) Never use old vegetable cans, tobacco cans, glass containers, etc. If you are submitting multiple samples, you should label your containers as #1, #2, etc. that match with your map of where the samples are collected from.

If you would like to receive soil sample bags from my office, you can contact me via email at Shannon.dietz@ag.tamu.edu with the number of bags needed along with your mailing address and I will get those out to you.

For more information on soil sampling along with the soil sample information form that is required for each sample, you can visit <https://soiltesting.tamu.edu/webpages/forms.html> and then click on soil submittal form. You should expect a result back from the lab in about 4 to 6 weeks depending on the current volume being processed. Keep in mind, when submitting samples in the Spring, the turn around can go much longer because of the number of garden samples being submitted.

Again, don't guess on this important investment! Test now to be able to prepare your fertilizer plans for 2022. All amendments won't be readily available in the soil, so the earlier you can prepare and take action, the better off you will be for the growing season.

For the proper steps in taking a soil sample, watch this informative video produced by the Noble Research Institute https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_U9Z3fy0Ig



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 Winski, Brandi Keller and Shannon Dietz.

Episode #2

A visit with Bill Barr - mentor, friend and plant propagator/plantsman extraordinaire.

Episode #3

In this episode, Brandi Keller visits with Harris County Master Gardener, William Isbell.

Episode #4

In this episode, Shannon talks with Janna Roberson, the executive director of Urban Harvest in Houston, TX.

Episode #5

In this episode, Paul talks with Robert Grove, the general manager of the greenhouse operation at the Brookwood Community in Brookshire, Texas.

Episode #6

In this episode, Brandi visits with Diana Foss, Urban Biologist for Texas Parks and Wildlife. Aligning with National Bat Week, Diana talks about our local bats, the Waugh Street Bridge colony, and how they are friends to agriculture by consuming pests.

How do you access the podcast?

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



Harris County
Extension Agents
Horticulture
Paul Winski
Brandi Keller
Ag/Natural Resources
Shannon Dietz

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION
HARRIS COUNTY

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES

OCT - NOV - DEC
2021

ALL LECTURES ONLINE

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

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.

TEXAS A&M
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Contact Us

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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



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. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service, or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office prior to the meeting to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.