

Home Grown Newsletter February 2022

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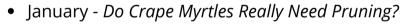
Many Thanks To the Readers! by Brandi Keller, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture

This spring will be our 2-year Anniversary of the Home Grown Newsletter. If you watch the Home Grown Lecture Series, you are familiar with the surveys sent out after each each talk. However, that survey does not reflect this monthly newsletter.

We ask you to complete a SHORT survey below to help us understand 1) how to better serve you and 2) how successful we are in providing relevant fact-based information. If you read rarely or often, we want to hear from you.

Survey Here

Twelve monthly editions were sent out as a seasonal resource. They are provided <u>HERE</u> for your reference. Topic highlights of 2021:



- February Seeds vs. Transplants
- March Tips for a Success Vegetable Garden
- April Sausage and the History of Grilling in Texas
- May Crawfish A Versatile Delicacy
- June Flowers in Your Lawn
- July Barklice: Not As Bad As You Think
- August Hummingbirds in the Garden
- September Getting Ready for the Fall Vegetable Garden
- October Can You Grown Microgreens? Yes You Can!
- November Unless You Soil Test, It's Just a Guess
- December Caring for Livestock During Winter Months



Soil Blocks and Seed Propagation by Paul Winski, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture

During my Home Grown lecture in January, "Starting Plants from Seeds", I received a few questions about the use of soil blocks as an alternative to plastic pots. Our Master Gardeners used them last year for starting their seedlings with great success, so I decided to dig a little deeper into the use of soil blocks.

So, what is a soil block? It is a molded block of soil used to start transplants. The blocks serve as both the container and growing media. One of the advantages of using soil blocks is they will reduce root circling which often occurs in plastic pots. The roots develop in the block but stop when they reach the edges of the block. This is good for the plant as it reduces transplant shock and allows the plant to establish quickly in the garden. Blockers are available in 34", 2" and 4" block forms. Seeds can be started in the ¾" and bumped up to either the 2 or 4" blocks before planting. There may be a few challenges with using soil blocks



- 1. Finding the right soil mix and moisture content to form the blocks and have them hold their shape. Some companies sell mixes that are specifically designed for soil block production.
- 2. Watering. During the germination stage misting will be necessary as there should be plenty of moisture in the block. Once the seedling starts to grow and root development is occurring, it is best to water the blocks from the bottom and allow the water to hydrate the blocks. Remove the excess water, do not allow the blocks to sit in it for a long period of time as it may lead to disease issues. Overhead watering is not recommended as this can negatively affect the integrity of the block.

Soil Blocks and Seed Propagation, cont. by Paul Winski, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture

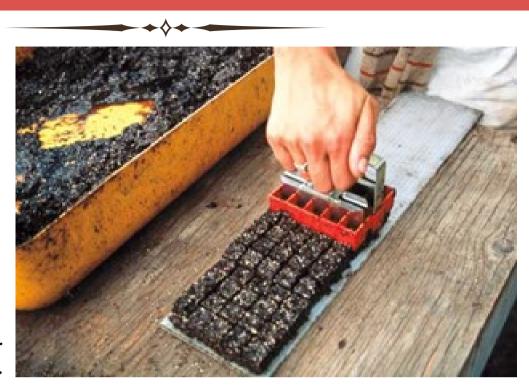


Figure 1: A ¾" blocker used for seed sowing.

If you are looking for a more sustainable approach to seed propagation, soil blocks may be an option. Here is a link some additional resources on soil blocks.

Penn State University: https://extension.psu.edu/programs/master-gardener/counties/susquehanna/penn-state-master-gardener-articles/making-soil-blocks



Figure 2: 2" blocks ready for the ¾" transplant.

February Tasks in the Garden by Brandi Keller, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture



The good news: we have less than a month before the danger of freeze and frost passes. The bad news: we still have a month (or less) until we are free of that risk. Until we are out of the woods, focus on these tasks in the garden and landscape.



Dr. Larry Stein, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service horticulture specialist, recommends these February tips.

- Continue to plant/transplant new trees and shrubs.
 The sooner they are planted, the sooner plants can initiate new roots before warm weather arrives.
- Woody ornamentals can be fertilized with 3-1-2 slow release fertilizer toward the end of the month.
- Complete pruning of fruit trees as they begin to bloom. Treat fruit trees with dormant oil prior to budbreak.
- Valentine's Day is the time to prune rose bushes and plant Irish potatoes.
- Pre-emergent herbicide needs to be applied and incorporated via water into your lawn to prevent spring weeds from germinating.
- Scalp your lawn toward the end of the month to remove any thatch layer that you may have to promote spring green up.

Vegetable Garden Plant Before March 1st

<u>Transplants</u>

- Broccoli
- Collards
- Brussels sprouts
- KaleKohlrabi
- Cabbage
- Leeks
- Cauliflower
- Bulbing onions (by mid-Feb)
- Irish potatoe (cut pieces)

Seeds

- Beets (into mid-March)
- Carrots
- Lettuce
- Spinach
- English & Snap (best by mid-March)



Sign up for the March 3rd "Tomatoes on the Patio" HERE.

Cattle Markets to Rebound in 2022

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



2022 is expected to be a better year than 2021 as far as the cattle market trends, according to multiple agriculture economists and market analysts from throughout the US.

With a strong demand for beef combined with strong export markets, cattle prices climbed higher in the final weeks of 2021 and those trends will expect to continue well into 2022.

John Nalvika with Sterling Marketing noted that the demand for beef both domestically and internationally combined with reduced cattle numbers, the result will push better cattle markets for the next couple of years.

When Texas and other Southwestern states experienced the multiyear severe drought in 2011, this led many ranchers to liquidate their herds. "We saw the largest beef cow slaughter in 2021 since the year of the drought in 2011.From 2011 to 2013, the drought pushed the beef cow herd numbers in 2014 to their lowest point since 1952.

Dairy cow slaughter was up 3% in 2021, bringing total cow slaughter to its highest point since 1996. The projected market for the 2022 beef cattle inventory should come in around at about 30.2 million head, or roughly 1 million head less than 2021. Nalivka says "The higher beef cow and heifer slaughter numbers we saw in 2021 mean reduced cattle numbers for 2022 and through 2024." Projected total cattle inventory for January 1 is around 91.25 million, down 2% from the beginning in 2021, the lowest since 2015.

It is reported that even if demand weakens somewhat, prices across the beef industry including fed cattle, feeders and calves will post big gains during 2022. This demand is emphasized by the continued demand for beef globally.

For more information on the 2022 cattle market and trends you can read here http://texasagriculture.texasfarmbureau. org/articles/agrilife-economist-cautiously-optimistic-on-cattle-markets-in-2022



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.

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.

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.

Episode #7

Shannon talks with Harris County Deputy Daniel Cline on this episode of the Home Grown Podcast.

Episode #8

Paul talks with Dr. Sonja Davis & Amanda Krippel (Harris County FCH Agents, Texas A&M AgriLIfe Extension)

Episode #9

Episode 9 is a follow-up to our Starting Plants From Seeds lecture. There were numerous questions posted during the talk and we simply ran out of time. Brandi sits down with Paul and presents those questions on seed propagation which we were not able to address.

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

2022 HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES



Lectures will be on the first Thursday of each month and include live demonstrations.

Register now so you don't miss one!

Winter

STARTING PLANTS FROM SEEDS

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

January 6, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

BASIC GRAFTING TECHNIQUES

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

February 3, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

TOMATOES FOR THE PATIO

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

March 3, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

Summer

IDENTIFYING PEST & DISEASE ISSUES IN THE GARDEN

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

July 7, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

SAFETY IN THE HOME GARDEN

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

August 4, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

ALL ABOUT MINT

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

September 1, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

Spring

STARTING PLANTS FROM CUTTINGS

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

April 7, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

HOME BUTCHER: MAKING BOUDIN

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

May 5, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

10 REASONS FOR YELLOWING LEAVES

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

June 2, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

Fall

PROPER PRUNING IN THE LANDSCAPE

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

October 6, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

HOLIDAY MEATS - NOT JUST TURKEY!

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

November 3, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

PLANTABLE CHRISTMAS TREE ALTERNATIVES

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

December 1, 2022 - 10:00 a.m.

Registration



homegrown2022.eventbrite.com



HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

2022 PLANT SALES

6 Sales - 2 Locations Including activities for families!

For more information go to: hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales/
Times for all sales - 9am-1pm or while supplies last.

SOUTHEAST SALE

Genoa Friendship Garden 1210 Genoa Red Bluff Houston 77034 <u>Map for Directions</u>

February 19th-21st Tomato Sale

March 19th-21st Fruit Tree Sale

April 16-18th
Spring Vegetables &
Peppers Sale

May 14-16th Perennials & Herb Sale



Online & in-person sales!
Online sales begin Feb 7th

NORTHWEST SALE

Weekley Park 19110 Longenbaugh Cypress 77433 <u>Map for Directions</u>

February 5th
Fruit Tree & Tomato

April 9th
Spring Perennial,
Veggie & Herb Sale

In-person only!











Contact Us

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

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.