

Making A Difference

HARRIS COUNTY
QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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2022



TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION



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

Cooperative Extension Program



Extension Education in Harris County

Howdy and Welcome to Harris County!

**OUR WORK MAKES
A DIFFERENCE.**
IN THE LIVES OF TEXANS AND
ON THE ECONOMY.

MISSION STATEMENT:

“Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service works daily to make Texas better by providing innovative solutions at the intersection of agriculture, natural resources, youth, and health, thereby improving the well-being of individuals, families, businesses, and communities through education and service.”

VISION STATEMENT:

“Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be the leader in providing science-based information and solutions in agriculture and health to every Texan.”

SHARED VALUES:

“We value People, Programs, and Partnerships.”

Cover Image: Courtesy of Buffalo Bayou Partnership, photo by Anthony Rathbun.

Aerial shot of the 14th annual KBR Kids Day at Tony Marron Park hosted by Buffalo Bayou Partnership. Harris County Master Gardeners provided one of the many free activities.

LET'S TALK:
A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension
Service - Harris County

Over the past year, our Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension staff have continued to step forward in unimaginable circumstances—facing the ongoing global threat of COVID-19 by bringing the best educational programs to communities daily. I have seen first-hand the late nights, early mornings, and weekends that staff have dedicated to protecting our youth and families' health and safety—while simultaneously balancing the same challenges of working from home and navigating childcare and virtual schooling.

To say the 2021 year was challenging is truly an understatement. COVID-19 has affected—and continues to affect—our community's wellbeing. The populations we serve for our respective agencies are continuing to experience barriers as they navigate their way through the pandemic. This first quarter report summarizes our programmatic achievements for the quarter, it demonstrates our resolve to promote the health and well-being of the youth, families, and communities we support each day.

I have always valued how our Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program staff rise to meet every challenge and opportunity. I thank them for taking that dedication to new heights this past year as they adapted to the challenges of a global pandemic and delivered uninterrupted service for the populations we served when they needed us the most.

Respectfully,

David D. Wright
County Extension Director – Harris County
Urban Program Director
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

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WELCOME TO HARRIS COUNTY

LILIANNA BAUERLEIN

MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM COORDINATOR

Lili attended West Chester University of PA where she graduated with a B.S. in Liberal Studies. Lili is originally from Pennsylvania but has lived in Houston for 3.5 years. For the past two years, Lili worked in the nonprofit sector at Houston Furniture Bank where she managed volunteers and helped low-income families receive furniture assistance. Lili is passionate about community engagement and hopes to apply her volunteer management skills to her new role as the Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator. For fun, Lili enjoys making art, visiting local museums, and thrift shopping!



AARON ZAVALA

4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Aaron is a graduate from Texas A&M University with a B.S. in Agricultural Leadership and Development. His passion is anything involving hunting and fishing or being outdoors any chance he gets. Ultimately, he strives to bring new opportunities to kids that may not know anything about outdoor activities (fishing). His background includes a diverse portfolio of work experience including being a ranch hand, a cashier at HEB, and an operator/data analyst at a bio-chemical plant.

Angler Education

BY AARON ZAVALA, HARRIS COUNTY 4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Since starting with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension - Harris County, new 4-H and Youth Development Program Assistant Aaron Zavala has been attending professional development, including most recently, Angler Education hosted by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He traveled to the panhandle for two days, where he attended classes with educational focus points on teaching fishing to youth and adults. This training was inclusive of not only putting a piece of bait on a hook, but also learning about aquatic ecology, fish identification, and updated rules/regulations. Recently, Mr. Zavala assisted Fort Bend County at their Outdoors Day, where they taught kids about outdoor first aid, fire safety with Fort Bend Hazmat, and ended the day by taking kids fishing. He looks forward to being able to bring these same experiences, plus more, to Harris County this Spring. He is currently working on a Spring Break Fishing Camp, packed full of fun events both benefiting youth and adults across the county while fishing. Stay tuned as more details and registration becomes available in weeks to come.





EXPLORING OUR CONNECTED WORLD: 4-H ECOLOGY

by Jaden Kelly, Harris County 4-H Agent

In the Spring of 2021, the Harris County 4-H department developed a new 4-H lesson series called 4-H Ecology. This 5-week program used hands-on activities to explore ecology: the branch of biology that deals with the relationships of organisms to one another and to their environment. After a successful pilot program with the Women's Home Boys and Girls Club, Harris County introduced this course to the 4th and 5th graders at Davila Elementary School.

This Fall, ninety-eight 4th and 5th grade students from Davila Elementary School completed the 4-H Ecology program. Here, students gained new knowledge of the interdependence between people and nature as well as career opportunities available in this growing field.

From tall trees to small bees and everything in-between, this program has the goal of inspiring today's youth to recognize that we are a part of a system much larger than ourselves.

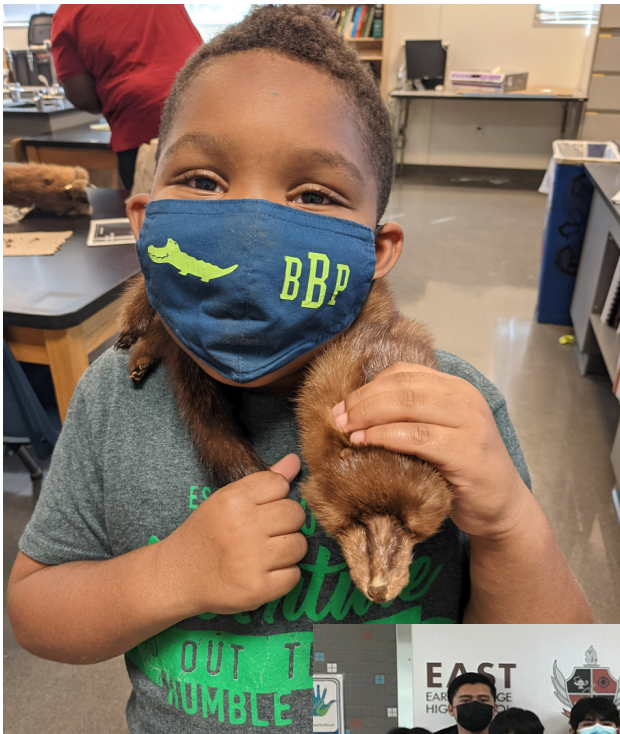


Empowering the Next Generation

by Zachary Giblin, Harris County Urban Youth Development Agent

This November, Harris County 4-H held an Annual Leadership Conference with East Early College High School in Houston's East End and its 4-H members.

The conference informed and allowed 4-H members time to explore qualities of good leadership and helped them decide which leadership qualities they can build on, as well as understanding the fundamentals of parliamentary procedures used to conduct meetings. Additionally, attendees participated in project workshops including food and nutrition, wildlife and ecology, and robotics.





Harris County 4-H

LIVESTOCK PROJECTS

BY STEVEN FREDERICK, HARRIS COUNTY 4-H LIVESTOCK COORDINATOR



Ryan Smee – Heritage 4-H – Overall Supreme Heifer



Kayle Soto – La Porte 4-H – Champion Senior Showmanship



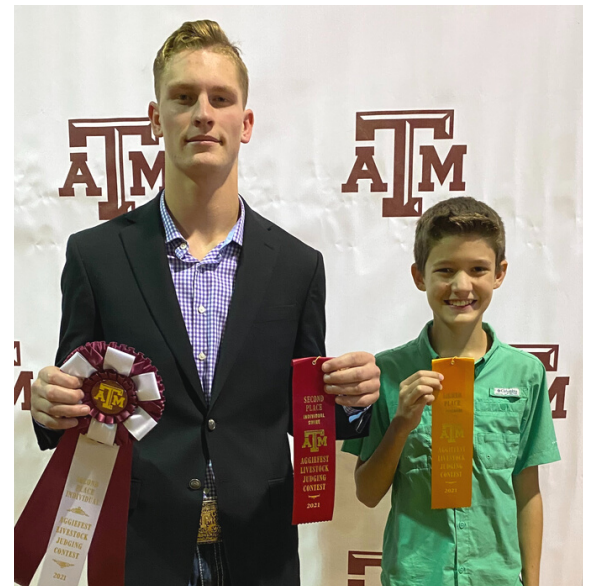
Royce Martinez- La Porte 4-H – Reserve Lightweight Division



Turkey pick-up on November 10, 2022 –

Youth will have the experience to spend a few months on their turkey projects before taking them to the major shows like San Antonio, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, and Rodeo Austin. Livestock projects earn money and scholarships to help return to the show in the next year or use for college.

Members from Harris County 4-H participated in the **2021 Aggiefest Livestock Judging Contest** and the Horse Judging clinics held in College Station, Texas on October 30, 2021. Youth participated from all across Texas and we had two individuals place in the swine category.



Kale Sustaire, left, and Dawson Sherrouse, right. Humble 4-H.

The Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Calf Scramble Progress Show

was held November 6 - 7, 2021, in Brenham, Texas at the Washington County Fairgrounds. Youth had the chance to practice with their calf scramble project to get an idea on where they stand before returning to the 2022 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. It gives youth the opportunity to practice grooming their livestock, take some ring time, and get to know what to expect from the judge that will be evaluating for both breeding and market characteristics.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

BRAIN GAMES FOR MENTAL ACUITY

BY AMANDA KRIPPEL,
HARRIS COUNTY FAMILY
& COMMUNITY HEALTH
AGENT

On October 15th, Harris County Family and Community Health Agent Amanda Krippel produced a Brain Games for Mental Acuity program that was conducted through a multi-disciplinary lifescaping series. Participants gathered for a quick presentation on memory which was followed by a Jeopardy Brain Game that consisted of five categories ranging from Wacky Wordies, Anagrams, Word Connections and more! Each player was given the opportunity to answer or pass thus earning points and bragging rights. Each participant received a memory brain teaser and two brain games books to keep their brains engaged and active.



SEAS THE DAY FALL SENIOR EVENT

BY SONJA DAVIS,
HARRIS COUNTY FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENT

All Aboard! The fun ship SS Harris County Family & Community Health set sail on November 10th for the "Seas the Day" Event at the Prairie View A&M University Northwest Houston Center welcoming over 40 seniors who enjoyed engaging sessions on Phone Scams, Medicare, Master of Memory, Line Dancing, Rocking to the Beat, Fall Container Planters, Tech Hour, and let's not forget the infamous cruise photo. The event was a coordinated effort between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Prairie View A&M University- Continuing Education, PVAMU-Cooperative Extension Program, Target Hunger, and United Healthcare.

Agents Sonja Davis, CEA-FCH, Amanda Krippel, CEA-FCH, Kristina Brown, EA-BLT, Lora Jorgensen, EA-BLT, TeAnna Reed, EA-FCH CEP, Clara Walker, EA-FCH CEP, Waller County, Leticia Hardy CEA-FCH, Fort Bend County, Paul Winski, CEA-HORT, Shannon Dietz, CEA-ANR, Susan Hubert, Administrative Assistant, Darra Cunningham, Community Relations, dedicated volunteers Jane Jackson, Deloris Helaire, Chiquitia Stueart, Donna Brownlow, Edna Navarro, Kathy Denton, and local Harris County 4-H members worked hard to make this a memorable event for the seniors.



CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT WITH SCARED STRAIGHT

*by Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program
Family & Community Health Agent Alfredo Alberto*

At Forest Brook Middle School, Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program (PVCEP) hosted a Character Development program class with special guest Reginald Gordan, Founder and President of the esteemed HBO show Scared Straight and Beyond Scared Straight. I became acquainted with Mr. Gordan through Mr. Darrel Sims. Mr. Sims cofounded the K.E.Y.S (Keep Enriching Youth Success) of Houston, a non-profit organization that began servicing youth, but has since expanded and is now providing services to include adults and families.

Both Mr. Gordan and Mr. Sims spoke to our 6th, 7th and 8th graders about the realities of the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems.

Mr. Sims shared with the students, "if a person don't like their parents or teachers telling them what to do then guess what, they are really going to hate prison". Mr. Gordan spoke to the students about when a person is locked up, "the cells were small, food is terrible and the only hope a person has is family". Mr. Reginald had many stories and examples of how incarceration was the worst place anyone could ever end up.

We ended the class emphasizing the importance of character and how the students should show pride in their school, respect their parents and teachers, and above everything else practice showing each other love. That was the reason why he showed up that day. Mr. Sims and Mr. Gordan's purpose and passion aligns well with Extension Professional Alfredo Alberto and the creed that reads, "We believe in our own work and in the opportunity we have to make life useful to humanity."



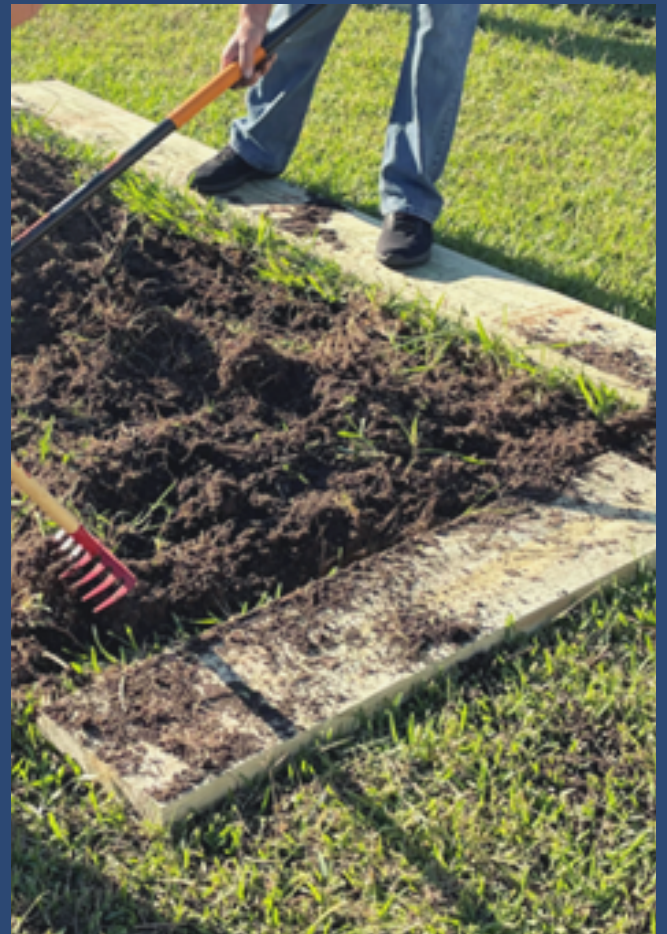
Character Development with Scared Straight President and Founder Reginald Gordan at Forest Brook Middle School December 1, 2021

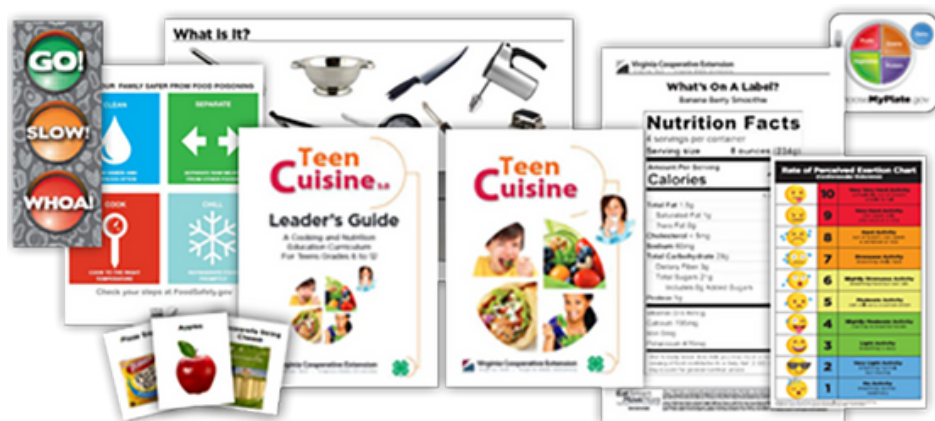
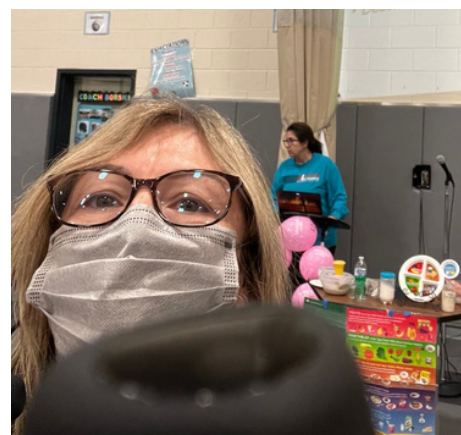


GROWING AND NOURISHING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Harris County Better Living for Texans Agents Lora Jorgensen and Kristina Brown partnered with Park Lakes Elementary School and The Woodlands Church Atascocita to revitalize the school garden in preparation for kicking off a Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities (GNHC) adult gardening program in October, and for a Learn Grow Eat & Go (LGEG) youth gardening program to begin in January!

Approximately 40 people including school & church families, staff, and volunteers, gathered on Saturday October 15th to repair the wooden raised beds, pull weeds, and fill with fresh soil. The Woodlands Church donated refreshments for the event, as well as lumber and soil for the beds. The GNHC program currently has a crop of fall vegetables growing in two of the garden beds, including kale, broccoli, collards, brussels sprouts, and kohlrabi. Elementary students will be filling in additional beds when they begin the LGEG series in the spring semester!





REACHING TEENS WITH NUTRITION GUIDANCE

by Harris County EFNEP Agent Khadija Ghaffar

EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) has reached out to youth audiences from K - 12th grades. Recently there has been a push to focus more on the middle and high school audience, realizing that this age level is when youth become more independent and start making their own decisions on what to eat. The guidance for making healthy nutrition decisions, learning basic culinary skills, and focusing on reading nutrition labels becomes obvious and urgent. EFNEP has realized this need and adapted Virginia Cooperative Extension's "Teen Cuisine" curriculum for EFNEP audiences.

Harris County EFNEP educator Ms. Ana Hernandez connected with Middle College High School at HCC Fraga - Houston ISD campus to provide our "Teen Cuisine" curriculum to their 9th graders. She was able to enroll 40 students in our program. The students enjoyed learning with hands-on activities, fun physical activity breaks and learning simple, easy, and nutritious recipes with our EFNEP approved videos.

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

**EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAM**



PLANTING MICROGREENS AT BUFFALO BAYOU KIDS DAY

by Brandi Keller, Harris County Horticulture Agent

Kids love to get their hands dirty! And what better way to do so than while planting seeds that they can take home and watch grow into something edible? Microgreens are nutritious seedlings of certain herbs and vegetables that, once germinated, grow quickly. They are then cut within a few weeks and can be eaten on their own, in salads, or mixed in with other food.

On October 23rd, Harris County Master Gardeners provided one of the many free activities available at the 14th annual KBR Kids Day at Tony Marron Park hosted by Buffalo Bayou Partnership.

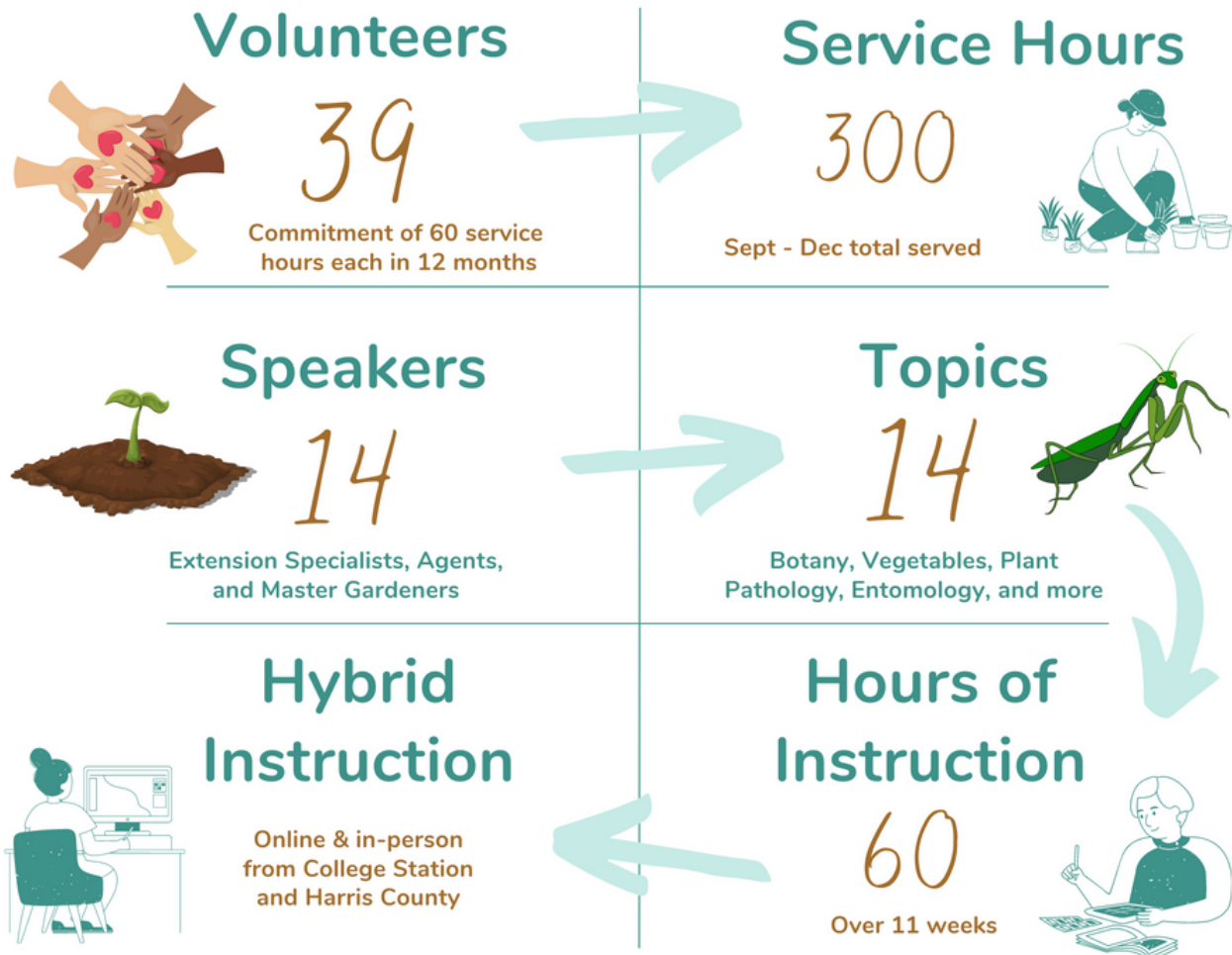
The Master Gardeners guided planting and distributed 278 take-home microgreen kits to kids that were wearing Halloween costumes, face painting designs, or carrying items from their plunder at another activity table.

Volunteer, Jo Ann Stevenson, said that some kids had experience planting seeds, but others did not. The excited looks on their faces were very heartwarming. It was a great day for families to enjoy being together outdoors.



2021 Master Gardener Volunteer Training

AgriLife Extension - Harris County



2021 MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER TRAINING

by Brandi Keller, Harris County Horticulture Agent

For the second year in a row, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has experimented with a new way to offer the Volunteer Training. Last year, we offered a fully online version of the training. This year, in order to accommodate varying levels of comfort, half the class was in-person and the other half streamed the training online.

Members of the community volunteer for various reasons. They volunteer to increase their knowledge and experience in horticulture, to make friendships with like-minded people, or to interact with the public.

But, they all volunteer because they want to share their knowledge with the community. This is the foundation for our program.

Those we train commit to completion of the training and 60 service hours within a year at Extension-approved activities. Activities occur throughout the four precincts and include youth programming, plant sales, Ask a Master Gardener tables, educator cylinder garden programs, various lectures, demonstration gardens, and more.

Best of luck to the 39 new volunteers that will serve as Harris County Master Gardeners!

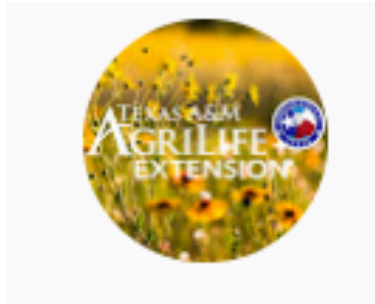
A YEAR OF VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

BY PAUL WINSKI, HARRIS COUNTY HORTICULTURE AGENT

The Home Grown

Online Lecture Series

was created as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic to mitigate the decline of educational outreach, and to capture the growing online presence by residents. The series allowed the Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) Unit of Harris County to continue education despite the newness of the technology. The live virtual lecture series has been attended by 4,195 people from May 2020 through November 2021 with topics that focus on ag literacy, horticulture, and gardening relevant to the urban resident. Lectures are under an hour and allow for interactive participation. Viewers include Harris County residents but extend nationally and internationally. Additional outreach components have been added to the series, such as a YouTube Channel, a monthly newsletter, and a podcast. The team has built a robust assortment of outreach appropriate for the urban setting. The formats encourage exploration between each and strengthens the Extension brand in the community.



LIVE EVENTS

Live presentations are cost effective (free) and positions AgriLife Extension as leaders in the community.

- 52 virtual programs have been delivered with 4,195 participants since May 2020.

YOUTUBE CHANNEL

The archive of past presentations makes it a valuable resource for the public, county agents, and volunteers. The videos are easily searchable on Google.

- 745 subscribers with 8,438 views on Harris Horticulture YouTube Channel since July 2020.
- Increased accessibility: Live viewers re-watching, other registered emails, the newsletter list, or those that find us organically and subscribe.



NEWSLETTER

To optimize the growing list of emails from registrations, a monthly newsletter is published.

- 17 editions of the newsletter have reached 71,476 individuals since August 2020.
- 3 agents contribute one story every month on corresponding lecture topics or seasonal inquiries from the public, such as the February freeze effects on plants.

PODCAST

The agents interview committee members, volunteers, A&M specialists, experts in the field, and various organizations to share their expertise and stories, strengthening those relationships. Listeners can then learn from targeted conversations like they are sitting there with us on a more personal level.

- Our Home Grown Podcast can be downloaded from any podcast listening app, such as Apple Podcasts or Spotify.
- 8 monthly episodes have been published since May 2021 with 778 downloads.
- 69% of the downloads were from a mobile phone, indicating education on the go.



2021 SOUTHEAST TEXAS AG SUMMIT

by Shannon Dietz, Harris County Agriculture & Natural Resources Agent

A comprehensive overview of Southeast Texas production agriculture featuring academic and industry experts headlined the 2021 Southeast Texas Ag Summit held on September 30th-October 1st at the Baytown Community Center.

The two-day event focused on issues and economic outlook of major agricultural commodities produced throughout the Southeast Texas region, plus educational tracks on beef cattle production and management, range and pasture, conservation management, and farm safety.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension faculty along with industry experts were on hand to teach classes and provide the latest research-based information to participants in the following areas: Beef Cattle Production and Management, Pasture and Range Management, Conservation of Natural Resources, and Farm Safety and Management.

Current Texas Department of Agriculture pesticide license holders received continuing education units that went towards their license recertification.

FFA members and advisors from Goose Creek ISD provided assistance and attended classes as well.

Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner, Mr. Adrian Garcia, was in attendance on the first day. Commissioner Garcia opened the summit, sharing greetings to the group on behalf of Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo and the Harris County Commissioner's Court. He spoke on the importance of access to agriculture in all forms for the people of Harris County and the role that Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is playing in educating people throughout the state of Texas on being more food secure.

Closing out the first day's activities, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo International Grill Team was on hand to serve a delicious BBQ meal for everyone in attendance.

Mr. John Moseley, Chief Commercial Officer with the Port of Houston delivered the closing address, providing information on the importance that the port plays both domestically and internationally to farmers and producers throughout SE Texas and the state by shipping produce across the world.

Thanks to our sponsors for contributing to the success of the event including Harris County Farm Bureau, Corteva AgriScience, WOWCO Tractor and Equipment & Kubota, Pig Brig Traps, Shoppa's John Deere, Washington County Tractor, Harris County Soil and Water District, USDA – FSA Harris County Office, Capital Farm Credit, Texas Department of Agriculture, Stay Tuff Fencing, Ag Workers Insurance, Purina, Katie Prairie Conservancy, McCoys Building Materials, Wildlife Habitat Federation, Helena, HogStop, and HogEye.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Click on listings for more information.

Home Grown Lecture Series –
Basic Grafting Techniques
February 03 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 pm
Online/Microsoft Teams
[Click to Register Here](#)

Home Grown Lecture Series – Tomatoes
on the Patio
March 03 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am
Online/Microsoft Teams
[Click to Register Here](#)

Harris County Master Gardener
Tomato Plant Sale
February 19 @ 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
HCMGA Demonstration Gardens
1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd.
Houston, TX 77034
<https://hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales/>

Harris County Master Gardener
Fruit Tree Sale
March 19 @ 9:00 am - 1:00 pm
HCMGA Demonstration Gardens
1202 Genoa Red Bluff Rd.
Houston, TX 77034
<https://hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales/>

Cooking Well for Healthy Blood Pressure
3-week series
Feb 24, Mar 3 & 10 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Weekley Community Center
8440 Greenhouse Rd, Cypress, TX 77433
[Click to Register Here](#)

Home Grown Lecture Series – Starting
Plants from Cuttings
April 07 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am
Online/Microsoft Teams
[Click to Register Here](#)

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.

IN COOPERATION WITH ...

Lina Hidalgo,
Rodney Ellis,
Adrian Garcia,
Tom S. Ramsey,
R. Jack Cagle,

Harris County Judge
Commissioner, Precinct 1
Commissioner, Precinct 2
Commissioner, Precinct 3
Commissioner, Precinct 4

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TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

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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 AGRI LIFE EXTENSION



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