

## Results from the 2021 Kale & Swiss Chard Trial by Paul Winski, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture

A kale and Swiss chard trial was planted in October 2020 at the Christ the Good Shepherd (CGS) Church Garden in Harris County Precinct 4 and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Genoa Friendship Gardens (GFG) in Precinct 2. Six varieties of kale and 7 varieties of Swiss chard were evaluated at both sites. The demonstration provides an opportunity to evaluate the performance of these plants.



**Kale trial at CGS.**

### Objective

- Confirm garden performance and production of this varieties under our growing conditions.
- Demonstrate that kale and Swiss chard can be produced under sustainable practices with minimal pesticide inputs.



### Materials and Methods

- CGS: 12 plants (3" potted liners) of the kale and Swiss chard varieties (Table 1) were planted in October 2020.
- GFG: 6 plants of each variety were planted in October 2020
- Trials beds were amended with 3" compost and tilled to a depth of 4-6"
- Drip irrigation system was used to provide water during the trial.
- A 3" layer of native mulch was applied after planting.
- Once production started, foliage was harvested weekly, weighed, and donated to local food pantries.
- Frost blankets were placed over the trial during the February Freeze at both sites.
- In addition, varieties were evaluated for any pest or disease problems.
- Plants were harvested from January through May.

# Results from the 2021 Kale & Swiss Chard Trial, cont.

by Paul Winski, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture

**Table 1. Trial varieties**



Variety	Type
Black Magic	Kale
Redbor	Kale
Red Russian	Kale
White Russian	Kale
Scarlet	Kale
Winterbor	Kale
Rhubarb Supreme	Swiss Chard
Charbell	Swiss Chard
Bright Lights	Swiss Chard
Barese	Swiss Chard
Fordhook Giant	Swiss Chard
Peppermint	Swiss Chard
Rhubarb	Swiss Chard

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- The best kale producer at both sites was Winterbor followed by White Russian (Table 2).
- The top Swiss Chard producers was different at the 2 sites. Charbell was the leader at CGS while Fordhook Giant was the top producer at GFG (Table 3).
- During season, there was some snail damage on the Swiss Chard. There was also some powdery mildew on the kale towards the end of the season.
- Bolting: only 1 kale plant (Black Magic) bolted during the trial. The rest of the plants in production never bolted. We had to terminate the trial in May because the beds were needed for summer planting.



# Results from the 2021 Kale & Swiss Chard Trial, cont.

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**Table 2. Kale production by variety**

Variety	GFG (lbs)	CGS (lbs)
Black Magic	3.23	9.81
Redbor	7.08	6.16
Red Russian	13.2	15.26
Scarlet	2.69	6.35
White Russian	18.19	24.33
Winterbor	27.39	36.44
<b>Totals</b>	<b>71.78</b>	<b>98.35</b>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Master Gardener Trials Team at the Genoa Friendship Garden and Christ the Good Shepherd Church.



**Swiss Chard trial bed at GFG**

## CONCLUSIONS

The performance of all varieties in this trial was impressive. Production was good, the plants are easy to grow, and their production continued into the early heat of spring. The varieties also have excellent ornamental qualities which allow them to be incorporated into the cool season landscape.



**Table 3. Swiss Chard production by variety**

Variety	GFG (lbs)	CGS (lbs)
Barese	7.13	16.63
Bright Lights	6.22	22.69
Charbell	12.67	26.5
Fordhook Giant	13.11	13.9
Peppermint	12.2	11.73
Rhubarb Supreme	8.92	23.64
Ruby Red	7.13	13.94
<b>Totals</b>	<b>67.38</b>	<b>129.03</b>

# Growing Tomatoes in Containers

by Brandi Keller, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture



Now that the last freeze date for Harris County has arrived, we can properly focus on our tomatoes. They are easily grown in containers for smaller spaces, patios, and balconies. Check out the basics here, then head over to our Home Grown talk on container tomatoes.



## Containers

There are many options, just be sure it has drainage holes (or holes can be drilled) and is large enough to support a healthy root system. A few cultivars will tolerate a smaller pot, such as a window box. A 5-gallon is the minimum, but 15-gallon is ideal and holds more water.



## Planting Media & Fertilizer

Use a well-draining potting soil. Store bought is generally suitable. To make your own, mix equal parts potting soil, peat moss, and perlite. Add a slow release fertilizer to the medium. Liquid fertilizer can be used after first fruit set



## Transplants

March means it's time to plant transplants and not seeds. Choose healthy looking plants. Check over and under leaves for insects, holes, or disease symptoms. Avoid weak plants that have become leggy. If there is an option, choose one not fruiting yet.



## Sunlight & Water

Tomatoes require at least 6 hours of direct sunlight. Pots dry out quickly. Proper watering habits are important. Frequency will depend on your site and container. Avoid letting soil dry out regularly, deep water to leach out soluble salts, and do not water leaves.



## Pests & Harvesting

Monitor plants for pests. The same problems with in-ground tomatoes can occur in containers. If critters are a problem, fruit can be harvested when it starts to blush. Do not let tomatoes fall to ground or rot. This will encourage more critters.



**Roasted Cherry Tomatoes**  
Wash, dry, toss in olive oil with salt, pepper and other spices. Roast for 400° for 25 minutes or until soft. Try not to eat at once!

**Register for March 3rd "Tomatoes for the Patio" to learn more [HERE](#).**



# Growing Tomatoes in Containers

by Brandi Keller, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture



## Patio Choice

Grows up to 18" tall and wide. Choose pot to support width. Produces up to 100 fruits per plant.



## Bush Early Girl

Grows up to 2 feet tall with 6-7 oz fruit. Perfect for slicing. A 10- to 15' gallon container is recommended.

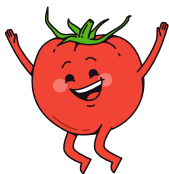


## Tiny Tim

This dwarf cultivar is small enough (up to 15" tall) to grow in a window box or tabletop container.

Determinate tomatoes perform best in containers. They only grow to a certain height with fruit that ripens in a short timeframe. However, if adequate sunlight or space for roots to grow is not provided, plants may be shorter, taller, or produce less fruit.

**Companion planting** is not an exact science and tends to be more anecdotal than tested in research. However, there may still be potential benefits of neighboring plants. Compatible options include marigolds, chives, basil, parsley, and nasturtium.



## Resources:

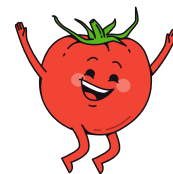
[Harris County Recommended Varieties](#)

[Easy Gardening - Tomatoes](#)

[AgriLife Extension Q&A - Tomatoes](#)

[Vegetable Gardening in Containers](#)

[Tomato Problem Solver](#)



**[Register for "Tomatoes for the Patio" - Click HERE.](#)**

# Agricultural Safety: Preventing Injuries

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

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Most farm injuries and fatalities are preventable when you adhere to safe operating practices. Click [here](#) to read more from University of Georgia Extension's article on general guidelines for improved safety on the farm. Web resources for further recommendations and information are provided.

[https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201255\\_4.PDF](https://secure.caes.uga.edu/extension/publications/files/pdf/B%201255_4.PDF)



The article by Professor Glen C. Rains, Biological and Agricultural Engineering, UGA Extension, covers agricultural safety in the following areas:

- [Proper Clothing](#)
- [PTO Safety Tips](#)
- [Tractor](#)
- [Emergency Preparedness](#)
- [Highway Transportation](#)
- [Field Operations](#)
- [Fire](#)
- [Grain Bins](#)
- [Livestock Handling \(Cattle\)](#)







We're taking the Home Grown Series on the road for a **LIVE EVENT!** Join us as we'll be offering topics to help make you a better gardener.

**DATE/TIME:** Sat, April 9, 2022 - 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

**LOCATION:** Trini Mendenhall Community Center  
1414 Wirt Road, Houston, TX 77055

**TICKETS:** \$20

**REGISTRATION:** [HGroadshow2022.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/HGroadshow2022-tickets-28444444444)

## SUCCESSFUL HERB COMBINATION CONTAINERS

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

Herbs are so versatile in combination with each other and annuals. Learn which ones grow well together based on culinary themes and water requirements.

## WHAT TO GROW? RESULTS FROM HARRIS COUNTY PLANT TRIALS

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

Find out which plants are the top performers in our flower and vegetable trials.

## GARDENING 101

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

Attendees will learn the importance and basics of fertilizers, location, and soil. Get the best out of your garden whether you're a beginner or experienced gardener.



# 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

Meet 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

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

## Episode #4

Shannon talks with Janna Roberson, the executive director of Urban Harvest.

## Episode #5

Paul talks with Robert Grove, the general manager of the greenhouse operation at the Brookwood Community.

## Episode #6

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

Brandi sits down with Paul and presents those questions on seed propagation which we were not able to address during the Starting Plants From Seeds lecture.

## Episode #10

Shannon interviews Kay Wolfe, County Executive Director, USDA Farm Service Agency for Harris, Waller and Montgomery Counties. Shannon and Kay talk about the benefits of signing up as a producer with the Farm Service Agency for disaster recovery funds as well as the educational benefits farmers get by being part of the agency.

## 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

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

[homegrown2022.eventbrite.com](https://homegrown2022.eventbrite.com)





# HARRIS COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS 2022 PLANT SALES

**2 Locations**  
**Including activities for families!**

For more information go to: [hcmga.tamu.edu/plant-sales/](https://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  
Map for Directions*

**March 19th-21st**  
**Fruit Tree Sale**

**April 16-18th**  
**Spring Vegetables &  
Peppers Sale**

**May 14-16th**  
**Perennials & Herb Sale**

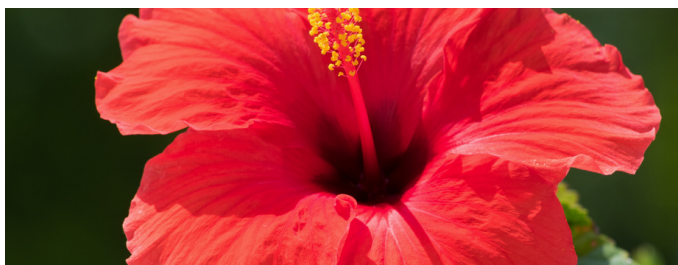


***Online & in-person sales!***

## **NORTHWEST SALE**

*Weekley Park  
19110 Longenbaugh  
Cypress 77433  
Map for Directions*

**April 9th**  
**Spring Perennial,  
Veggie & Herb Sale**  
***In-person only!***





# 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](mailto: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.*