

Happy New Year!

A new year brings a new Home Grown Lecture Series!

Last year, we provided the year's schedule all at once. This year, the schedule will be created for each quarter. Below are the topics for January through March. Remember, you can sign up for all three now. Your feedback after each lecture is extremely important to us and is the only cost for these educational programs. Thank you!



Good Luck, Paul Winski!

Paul has served as horticulture agent for the green industry in Harris County for almost ten years. As of January 3rd, he is the new Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Green Industry Program Specialist. Although he is leaving his role with Harris County Extension Service, he will continue to help agents around the state with his expertise.

We greatly appreciate Paul's contribution to Harris County residents for his service, knowledge, mentoring, and leadership.

Coming Soon:

Groundcovers for the Landscape

January 5, 2023 - 10:00 a.m.

[Register Here](#)

Backyard Poultry Fundamentals

February 2, 2023 - 10:00 a.m.

[Register Here](#)

Top "T" Questions: Tomatoes, Turf & Trees

March 2, 2023 - 10:00 a.m.

[Register Here](#)

2023 Vegetation Management Conference - Cypress

Monday, January 23, 2023

<https://2023VegManCypress.eventbrite.com>

2023 Vegetation Management Conference - Baytown

Friday, January 27, 2023

<https://2023VegManBaytown.eventbrite.com>

Effects of December Freeze Event

by Brandi Keller, Harris County Extension Agent, Horticulture

Now that the late December freeze has passed, we have witnessed delayed browning and dropping leaves. There may be many questions out there on whether your specific tree or shrub will survive, but the same holds true as from Winter Storm Uri: you have to wait and see... and do not prune.

What makes this freeze event different from the last?

- Our landscape suffered a significant drought over the summer. Despite rain in the fall, woody shrubs and trees are still dealing with the effects and this could magnify freeze damage.
- There was no gradual hardening off with cool temperatures. The shock from warm weather to cold may affect plants differently than Winter Storm Uri.
- Home cultural care include many variables: soil moisture at time of freeze, proximity to house, location of afternoon sun, intensity of wind, and if freeze protection measures were taken.

Signs of freeze damage: deflated-looking leaves drooping to the ground, discolored leaves (brown or black), bark splitting, and branch dieback.

What can I prune back now?

In short, only prune plant material that has turned mushy. Leave everything else until the spring.



Herbaceous plants

Damage may appear as mushy tissue on foliage and stems, as die-back to the ground (hardy roots will re-grow), or as a complete plant loss. Only remove mushy, slimy tissue. After letting it dry out a few days, add mulch in case of another freeze event.



Semi- and tropical

Certain tropicals will turn to mush. Clean up to prevent fungal issues from making their way downward to healthy plant parts. Try not to prune into healthy tissue. Woody tropical stems that don't turn gooey, like hibiscus, should be left until spring.



Woody shrubs/trees

Do not prune unless it's a safety issue.

Pruning will encourage growth and this may set them up for further freeze damage since it's only January. In addition, leave perennial shrubs like oleander and plumbago until spring,



Turfgrass

Warm season grasses have been browning since the freeze. Give them time to grow again in the spring. Do not attempt to force growth, especially by applying fertilizer. The time to fertilize lawn is in April.

What about palms?

Wait to prune fronds until the last chance of frost. Browning fronds provide winter protection in case of another temperature drop. Palms will take longer to display effects of freeze, so be patient.

Register for "The next talk....," [Click HERE.](#)

The Importance of Soil Testing

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

Soil testing is a quick and accurate method to determine the relative acidity of the soil (pH) and the level of several essential nutrients (phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, sodium, sulfur, manganese, copper, and zinc) needed for proper plant growth. The test results will help in the selection of plants, soil prep, and fertilization. Most importantly, it will help you in avoiding OVER FERTILIZATION which can stimulate excessive plant growth and the likelihood of disease. When these excess nutrients are applied and not used by plants, these generally run off in surface waters during storms or leach into groundwater. By applying the correct grade and amount of fertilizer, you can avoid unnecessary pruning and have healthier, more productive plants.



Understand soil-test report terms – Each soil sample is classified according to humic (organic) matter content. The classes are:

Min – Mineral Soil, low percentage of humic matter, target pH is 6.0.

M-O - Mineral-organic soil, medium percentage of humic matter, target pH 6.0

ORG – Organic Soil, high humic matter content, target pH 5.0

pH – soil pH is the measure of the active acidity (hydrogen (H)) in the soil solution.

Ca and Mg % - both calcium (Ca) and magnesium (Mg) are shown as percentages of CEC (cation exchange capacity). Soil calcium is seldom low enough to limit plant growth as it is the most common cation in the soil.

Soil samples may be taken at any time of the year, but never after amendments have been added to the soil. If you take soil samples for the same area in following years, try to perform the tests at the same time of the year for most accurate analysis.

The soil report will always make a recommendation for the NEXT growing season, so test should be performed several months before planting or fertilizing. For a cool season lawn, submit samples the previous summer and for a warm season lawn, submit samples in the fall or winter. For a Spring vegetable garden or flower bed, submit your samples in the fall or winter.

The accuracy of the soil test analysis depends on the quality of the soil sample. Always scrape leaves, mulch, and other debris from the soil surface before collecting the sample. For established lawns samples should be from a depth of 4 inches, vegetable gardens and flower beds 6 to 8 inches and for trees and shrubs need a depth of around 6 to 10 inches.

For more information on conducting your own soil test you can refer to the website <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/> or <http://soiltesting.tamu.edu/files/soilwebform.pdf> If you have further questions, you are welcome to email me at Shannon.dietz@ag.tamu.edu

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. Check out our latest episodes below.

Episode #19

County Extension Agent Shannon Dietz interviews Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan (Dr. M), Associate Professor and Extension Specialist for Special Populations at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. With 16 years of experience, her areas of expertise include mental health literacy education and Dr. Mahadevan is a certified Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) for Adults instructor.

Episode #18

Shannon is sharing the importance of Texas Agriculture in planning your holiday meals. He also speaks with special guests Kristina Brown, Better Living for Texans Agent and Registered Dietician, along with Cindy George, who is currently working on her master's in public health and an intern with Texas A&M AgriLife in the Harris County Office.

Episode #17

Brandi interviews Jaime Gonzalez, Houston Healthy Cities Program Director for The Nature Conservancy. Jaime talks about his history with various organizations and how they all blend to create a rich story of experiences that can be shared with diverse communities on nature, health, and Houston.

Episode #16

Paul talks with Becky Bowling and her position as an urban water specialist in Texas. They'll discuss how education is evolving to better prepare city & county governments, the green industry and homeowners for developing sustainable landscapes.

Episode #15

Brandi interviews Bryan Kratish, Manager of Outreach Services with the Harris County Public Library System. They discuss the partnership with the Master Gardener Green Thumb Gardening Series and the library system's creative programming to reach more county residents.

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" wherever you find your podcasts.



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

05
JAN

10:00 - 11:00 AM

Groundcovers for the Landscape

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



02
FEB

10:00 - 11:00 AM

Backyard Poultry Fundamentals

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



02
MAR

10:00 - 11:00 AM

Top "T" Questions: Tomatoes, Turf & Trees

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

**Lectures are free & presented on Microsoft
Teams. Please register at:**

<http://HomeGrown2023A.eventbrite.com>



Contact Us

Paul Winski, County Extension Agent
Horticulture - Paul.Winski@ag.tamu.edu

Brandi Keller, County Extension Agent
Horticulture - Brandi.keller@ag.tamu.edu

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



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.