



Practicing collaboration and innovation to advance the unique interests of urban counties in Texas

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

Extension in the City

January 2023
Quarterly Newsletter

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

Practicing collaboration and innovation to advance the unique interests of urban counties in Texas



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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.”



John South Spirit of Extension Award

The John South Spirit of Extension Award is given in honor of retired County Extension Agent Agriculture and Texas A&M Regents Fellow, John South, which recognizes a Program Area Committee member or an individual who provides exemplary service in the design and deliver of educational programs which enhance the quality of life for the people of Tarrant County. The 2022 John South Spirit of Extension award was presented to the one and only Extension Cheerleader, Ms. Eleanor Tuck.

ET joined the Tarrant Master Gardener Association in 1997 running and hasn't slowed down since. According to our volunteer system, since 2013 ET has given over 5,400 hours of her time to educate the public and volunteer for the Master Gardener Program in Tarrant County, with an average of 500 hours per year. So, you can only imagine how many hours she has completed since 1997! She leads the charge in assisting our office to cover phones, was once the lead phone trainer, and any needs that may arise.

ET is a District Representative for our State Master Gardener Association, has served on the state awards committee for many years, and has been a part of the Speakers Bureau. She has literally written the book on the history of the TCMGA! Honestly, it would be quicker to talk about committees and events she hasn't helped with since '97! She keeps everyone organized and has been a cheerleader for the new Home Horticulture Agent since day one. She's an absolute spitfire and I know Eleanor does not need any recognition for what she has done over the years, but she is a very special and very beloved member of the Tarrant County Master Gardener Association as well as the AgriLife Extension office. Many MGs consider her to be the backbone of the organization. We truly do not know what we would do without her generous heart and soul or her truly amazing peanut brittle! Few embody the Spirit of Extension quite like Eleanor Tuck!

SAM HOUSTON STATE UNIVERSITY'S WALL OF HONOR AWARD

On November 18, 2022 – our very own David Wright had his name placed on the Sam Houston State University's Wall of Honor. David received this award for his life-long commitment to youth development and for demonstrating to everyone the value of the experiences and education gained at Sam Houston State University and the School of Agricultural Sciences.

Said Dr. Doug Ullrich, Professor, Agricultural Education at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas – "David has dedicated his life to Urban Development and has countless certifications focusing on leadership and youth development. He has been awarded over \$7.1 million dollars through local, state, and national foundations and government entities since 2008. Throughout his professional life he has focused on youth development with an emphasis on Urban Youth and youth in under-represented populations. Because of his innovative program development, he became the County Extension Director of Harris County and then more broadly the Urban Program Director for all 7 Urban Counties in Texas. It is easy to see how David has become a leader in his chosen profession and he has well represented our university and agriculture program. I am honored to add David Wright to our Wall of Honor."

Congratulations, Mr. Wright, on this well-deserved honor!



CONGRATULATIONS TO A JOB WELL DONE

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD - SAM WOMBLE



The Texas County Agricultural Agents Association (TCAAA) Professional Excellence Distinguished Service Award is presented annually by the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) to County Extension Agents in each of the fifty states and only recognizes 2% of members annually. The Distinguished Service Award is the highest award that a County Extension Agent can receive from NACAA.

Recipients are selected by their district peers based upon outstanding professional growth, program effectiveness, leadership ability, loyalty to Extension work, and community involvement. Recipients must have 10 years or more of outstanding Extension service and have been a NACAA and TCAAA member.

Congratulations to our very own Sam Womble for receiving this prestigious award this year. Sam has worked for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for 25 years. His commitment and dedication to agriculture is evident through his result demonstration work and educational programs in beef and forage production, rangeland ecology, and wildlife management. Sam is also a strong advocate of the 4-H and Youth Development program and has witnessed firsthand the positive influence it can have on people and their families.



DISTINGUISHED COORDINATOR AWARD - DAVID RODRIGUEZ



The Distinguished Coordinator Award recognizes outstanding contributions to an Extension Master Gardener program. Distinguished Coordinator Awards are granted once per individual who has served 10 or more years in an Extension Master Gardener coordinator position.

Recipients must exhibit an exemplary professional attitude (promote collegiality, seek ongoing professional development, demonstrate commitment to Extension Master Gardener program mission), demonstrate measurable impact for programming efforts, demonstrate initiative in developing new and creative programming to meet community needs, collaborate with community and institutional partners, and collaborate with colleagues on a state, regional, and/or national level.

Congratulations to our very own David Rodriguez for receiving this prestigious award this year. David has worked for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service for 16 years. His commitment and dedication to horticulture is evident through his Earth-Kind Landscaping environmental stewardship practices, Texas Superstar field trials, and Master Gardener and Junior Master Gardener programs. David is also a well-known celebrity in Bexar County and guest stars on a local radio station every Saturday answering horticulture questions from listeners.



YOUTH GARDENS PROGRAM

The Bexar County Youth Gardens Program is one of many programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, which is designed to provide educators, volunteers, and community leaders with an innovative method for using gardens as outdoor classrooms. The program has provided seasonal and advanced educator trainings, as well as special activities and events to teach adult leaders, students, and the community how to plan, build, and maintain a thriving and sustainable classroom and/or community garden.

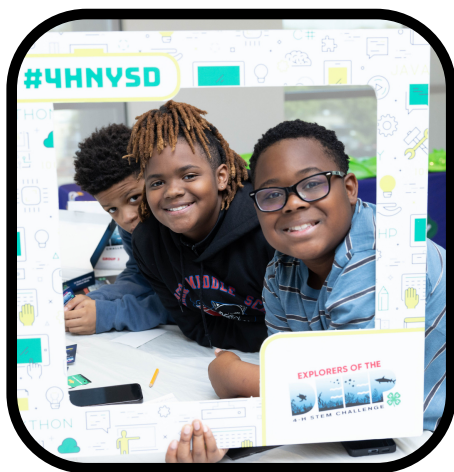
The program strives to create an environment that promotes agricultural and natural resource awareness while helping students develop an appreciation for nature, learn about food science, develop interpersonal skills, and enhance classroom learning with practical hands-on experience.

Three times a year Andres Villagran, Youth Outreach Educator, organizes a comprehensive Spring, Fall, and Summer Advanced Leadership educator training with an average of 125 educators participating in each training made possible by the San Antonio Livestock Exposition, Inc. The San Antonio Livestock Exposition, Inc. is a volunteer organization that emphasizes agriculture and education to develop the youth of Texas.

Educators that participate in this opportunity are supplied with seeds, plant material, gardening supplies, fertilizer, compost, trees, and the Junior Master Gardener curriculum which is aligned with TEKS and S.T.A.A.R. examinations. Bexar County Master Gardeners deliver subject matter expertise such as "Rain Water Harvesting" that supports Landscape Stewardship through Water Conservation. In addition, each school is given an opportunity to enroll in the Junior Master Gardener Program, which has had more than 10,000 students actively participate in the program each year. They also have an opportunity to apply for a mini-grant to attend advance trainings and receive additional gardening supplies throughout the year.

Finally, our volunteer support group, the Bexar County Master Gardeners, and the Youth Gardens Program assist with the Children's Vegetable Garden.





15TH ANNUAL 4-H STEM CHALLENGE

During the Texas State Fair, held in Dallas, TX, youth from Duncanville ISD applied their knowledge, creativity, and innovation to learn about science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) topics during the 15th annual 4-H STEM Challenge. The theme, Explorers of the Deep, focused on ocean exploration, marine science, and the impact of climate change on our oceans.



A recent survey commissioned by National 4-H Council showed that 84 percent of teens would like to be involved with shaping the future of our environment. Ocean exploration and research help scientists, policymakers, communities, and individuals prepare for and adapt to changing ocean conditions, many of which result from climate change – making this a perfect theme to teach youth how to get involved, no matter where they live.

During the 2-hour session, students and Dallas County Extension Agents engaged in conversations about the Earth's oceans and how they connect with our climate. Under the leadership of Kristen Wells-Lewis, Prairie View A&M CEP 4-H Agent, Dallas County Extension was proud to provide hundreds of youth with essential STEM skills. It is exciting to open them up to a new world of possibilities with this year's theme of ocean exploration. In Dallas, the 4-H STEM Challenge Day was supported by the State Fair of Texas. We also thank our national partners—Bayer, Corteva, Nickelodeon, and the universities involved in designing this year's challenge.



Dallas County welcomes our new 4-H Agent!

2023 brings new human capital to the AgriLife Extension family. Elver Pardo has over 17 years of progressive experience in the university system. Elver brings Dallas a broad understanding of 4-H youth development, having worked as a 4-H Agent in Florida and 4-H Specialist in Missouri. He has expertise in the areas of leadership, career exploration, and grant implementation programming. Elver is recognized for his invaluable knowledge and experience in multicultural environments. He has a unique perspective on culture, access, diversity and inclusion, and his experience in creating outreach programs to reach diverse populations. Elver is a native of Colombia, South America, with a master's in Education Human Services and psychology degrees.

EL PASO HEALTHY SCHOOLS SUMMIT

On November 10, 2022, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) Agent Luz Waters presented at the El Paso Healthy Schools Summit – Action for Healthy Kids. A presentation was given to school district employees regarding adult/youth classes offered to the El Paso community. Demonstrations of healthy snack options and food safety were also provided. Furthermore, this summit offered an opportunity to network with community organizations and school officials and extend outreach to limited-resource families and youth.

EFNEP's agent is a member of the El Paso Healthy Schools Coalition, a group dedicated to working with families and schools to address the child health crisis and prepare children to be healthy in body and mind. As part of the Whole School, Whole Child, Whole Community model, the El Paso Healthy Schools Project was established to improve children's health in El Paso by strengthening the health and wellness infrastructure, policies, and practices.

As part of EFNEP's commitment to providing nutrition education to families and youth with limited resources, we continue to partner with the various school districts and community organizations throughout El Paso County. Participants learn about healthy eating, meal planning, shopping on a budget, food safety, and the importance of physical activity.



PECAN PRODUCTION IN EL PASO COUNTY

Joel Arce- Integrated Pest Management Agent, El Paso and Hudspeth Counties

Pecans are a major agricultural commodity for El Paso County with over 17,000 acres in production. El Paso produces 45-50% pecans in the state and 80-90% of the improved pecan varieties in Texas. While growing conditions are favorable, pest pressures such as the pecan weevil can have a destructive effect on this economically important crop. In addition, monitoring of the pecan nut casebearer (PNC) is an additional concern due to the added cost of treatment in an already shrinking profit margin.

As of 2020, pecan weevil awareness programs have provided information to producers including the biology, emergence, management, and damage that they can cause and how they can assist with the monitoring of pecan weevils. These programs were presented in multiple counties in West Texas. Since then, over 20 pecan weevil programs have been conducted with over 500 participants.

The annual PNC flight poses additional issues. Time and labor costs to routinely check traditional PNC traps is becoming troublesome and new trapping technology is emerging to help combat these issues. The "smart traps" work similarly to the traditional traps but there is a solar panel powered camera inside the trap that take a photo of the inside of the trap and uploads the image to an app. In 2022, a total of 90 "smart traps" were placed in El Paso County and an additional 50 traps were placed to determine the smart traps' durability and if they performed as well as the traditional traps. Data collected from this new technology looks promising as an alternative way to monitor this pest.



FAMILY FUN & LEARNING!

AG'TIVITY BARN AT THE FORT BEND COUNTY FAIR

An annual highlight of the Fort Bend County Fair is an agriculture awareness event hosted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and Texas Farm Bureau, appropriately called the "AG'tivity Barn." A variety of educational exhibits feature agriculture through school tours during the day and open-to-the-public browsing in the evenings. Exhibits/tour stops include ag commodities such as beef, poultry, rice, corn, and pecans along with other topics such as bees, wildlife, nutrition, and physical activity. Focused on 4th grade, six area schools toured the 2022 AG'tivity Barn with 604 students and 53 adults rotating through stops during a 4-hour period. Additionally, 109 students and 10 adults participated virtually with a series of videos on the same topics. The entire Fort Bend County Extension staff contributed to the success of the event including county funded staff along with AgriLife and Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension staff. Survey results from teachers indicated 44% rated the experience as "Good" and 56% rated it as "Excellent." When asked to share learning concepts students gained, teachers mentioned "Students were interested in stations with live animals"; "Eating with color, cotton, corn and rice"; "Learning the importance of farming on their daily lives"; and "The many different kinds of pecans and the information on the cow and its history."

NATIONAL 4-H WEEK

National 4-H week was commemorated at the Fort Bend County Commissioners Court meeting on October 4, with 4-H agent Danielle McLure and two 4-H members from local clubs presenting thank-you gift baskets to court members. County Judge K. P. George signed a National 4-H Week Proclamation.



PECAN HARVEST FESTIVAL

The City of Richmond's annual Pecan Harvest Festival was held on November 20th. Horticulture Agent Boone Holladay served on the planning committee and coordinated the pecan education area where he, FBC Master Gardeners, and Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Agriculture agent, Dr. Abdul Hakeem, answered questions and provided facts about growing and harvesting pecans and other crops. Danielle McLure, 4-H agent, was also at the festival along with 4-H volunteers selling pecans for their annual fundraiser and recruiting for 4-H membership and support. The event drew close to 2500 area residents during the 5-hour event.

YOUTH CULINARY EXPERIENCE WORKSHOP

Family and Community Health Agent Leticia Hardy collaborated with Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Program Aid Krystal Wilcox to conduct a "Healthy Living Youth Culinary Experience." This 2 -day, 2.5-hour each day, workshop was held on December 5th and 6th. Eleven (11) at-risk juvenile probation students enrolled in the FBC Transitions GED Program participated. Thirteen (13) adult volunteers assisted in implementing the workshops. Donations from the FBC Food Bank helped offset food costs. Participants received bags of groceries for their family valued at \$29.00 each. Topics included creations that could be sold for a profit as an "edible arrangement"; knife safety and proper cutting techniques; meal planning; calculating food costs; and nutrient functions. Results indicated: 80% of the participants had no previous meal planning experience; 100% were able to identify food groups as a result of the workshop; and 90% reported that they would continue eating healthy meals.



House Plant Presentation at the Chinese Community Center

Harris County Master Gardeners present:

Introduction to Houseplants 室内植物介紹

By Margie DiGiacomo and Chevvy Tang,
Master Gardeners
Translated by Nicole Zhao, Master Gardener
Adapted from: Paul Winkler & Deb Caldwell

Light
Light intensity affects stem length, leaf size and color, photosynthesis and flowering.

- Window Lighting – North provides lowest, East, West, South has highest
- Grow lights compensate for poor natural lighting.

光線
光照強度影響莖長、葉子大小和顏色、光合作用和開花

- 窗戶照明——北面最低，東面、西面、南面最高
- 植物生長燈可以彌補自然光不足的問題



On December 14th, the Harris County Master Gardeners gave an "Introduction to House Plants" lecture to members of the Chinese Community Center. Presenting horticulture topics to community centers, garden clubs, and schools is not uncommon for the Master Gardeners. In 2022, the Harris County Master Gardener Speakers Bureau gave a total of 55 presentations. The House Plant presentation in December however was the first of its kind as it was presented in both English and Mandarin. Each PowerPoint slide listed English and Mandarin translations. At the beginning of the presentation, audience members received a copy the Harris County Vegetable Planting Chart, which had been translated to Mandarin. In addition to the translated PowerPoint slides and vegetable planting chart, there were two Master Gardeners who presented. Margie DiGiacomo spoke to the audience in English while Chevvy Tang presented in Mandarin. Audience members at the Chinese Community Center were able to hear a Master Gardener presentation in Chinese and ask follow-up questions in their spoken language.

The Harris County Master Gardeners are excited to expand their reach to diverse audiences and look forward to planning their next presentation at the Chinese Community Center in 2023! If you are interested in requesting a Master Gardener speaker for your organization or event, please email Lili Bauerlein, Master Gardener Coordinator, at Lilianna.bauerlein@ag.tamu.edu.

Each year the Tarrant County AgriLife Extension team hosts an interpretation luncheon and volunteer awards reception to close out the year and celebrate AgriLife's big wins. The 2022 event was held on Thursday, December 8 at the Tarrant County Plaza building with nearly 70 in attendance. The following awards recipients were recognized by the Tarrant County team.

Darlene Myatt Friend of Children Award

Named after a former Extension Agent for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP), Darlene served the Tarrant County Community for nearly 40 years, providing youth nutrition education programs across all of Tarrant County. Darlene received numerous awards during her career for her impacts and outreach with the EFNEP program, including the Texas A&M University System Regents Fellow Service Award, the highest system award. In honor of her retirement in 2017, the Darlene Myatt Friend of Children award was created to recognize an individual or organization who reach our youth in Tarrant County by dedicating their time, talent, and treasure to teaching children, using dynamic enthusiasm, and loving leadership in Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.



This year, the Darlene Myatt Friend of Children Award was presented to the Master Gardener Intern Class of 2022. This class of 16 amazing individuals came together to tackle a large project, the Outdoor Learning Environment at Alice E. Carlson Elementary School. With the help of the Intern Coordinators Cheri Mills and Craig Holland, along with the Intern advisors, this group of volunteers rolled up their sleeves and spent 654 hours to ensure an outdoor space for children to unplug, learn about their environment, and enjoy the natural world.

Friend of Extension

The Friend of Extension award is presented to a person, business, or organization and is designed to recognize truly outstanding support and involvement in Extension efforts. A Friend of Extension has consistently exhibited leadership, initiative, excellence and helped enrich Extension programs within Tarrant County.



For the last 126 years, the goal of the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo has been to be the most authentic western lifestyle experience anywhere. Leading into the 2022 FWSS, the Cowboy and Kids committee decided it was time to incorporate some of the basic agricultural education into their school program that has reached over 200,000 youth during the last 20 years. Through a partnership with AgriLife Extension, AgVentures was born and was able to reach more than 8,000 Tarrant County youth in the three weeks leading up to the rodeo! We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to partner with Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo and are looking forward to many more years of collaboration.

Tarrant County Director's Award

The director's award is presented each year at the discretion of the County Extension Director and acknowledges a key individual or partnering agency for providing exemplary support for Extension educational programs and support of Extension volunteers. This year's recipient is a unique group of Tarrant County employees who we have termed the Tarrant County ARPA team. This team of Tarrant County departments recognized the outreach and impact of Extension programming and awarded the office with nearly \$700,000 in Federal Relief Funds to assist with programming efforts for youth STEM education and gardening, nutrition and food resource management. The collaboration and assistance of these Tarrant County departments is greatly valued and appreciated.



GARDENING SERIES FOCUSES ON TRAVIS COUNTY'S ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY

During the early days of 2020's pandemic shutdown, Daphne Richards, Travis County CEA-Horticulture, began looking for ways to connect with new audiences. A partnership with the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Department's Asian American Resource Center (AARC) led to the development of an extensive educational program. What began in March 2021 as a monthly one-hour Zoom "garden chat," quickly blossomed into an entire series, complete with hands-on workshops and simultaneous translation into Mandarin. The first "garden chat" had a total of six participants, but word spread quickly, and more participants began to join in. The initial series consisted of three sessions, hosted by CEA-Richards, and Travis County horticulture program assistant Sheryl Williams. In 2022, the series was greatly expanded, and sessions were taught by two Travis County Master Gardener volunteers of Asian descent.

A total of thirteen sessions were held in 2022, covering a wide variety of basic gardening topics. In May of 2022, the program moved to in-person sessions, which were held at the AARC, a facility that is dedicated to community residents of Asian heritage. At the conclusion of the 2022 series, an intergenerational celebration was held, with three generations of participants joining together to create bird feeders from household items and celebrating with a meal together.

Travis County Master Gardener Corena Hur, a native Mandarin speaker, says that she is thrilled to be able to utilize her language skills while sharing her love of gardening with the community. Sixteen programs have been held so far, with a total of 391 participants for the entire series (March 2021 to December 2022). Travis County Master Gardeners are currently hard at work planning the next series, which will be held monthly at the Asian American Resource Center in 2023.



BEXAR COUNTY

County Judge Peter Sakai
Commissioner Rebeca Clay-Flores
Commissioner Justin Rodriguez
Commissioner Grant Moody
Commissioner Tommy Calvert



DALLAS COUNTY

County Judge Clay Jenkins
Commissioner Dr. Elba Garcia
Commissioner John Wiley Price
Commissioner
Andrew Sommerman
Commissioner Dr. Theresa Daniel



EL PASO COUNTY

County Judge
Ricardo A. Samaniego
Commissioner Carlos Leon
Commissioner David Stout
Commissioner Iliana Holguin
Commissioner Sergio Coronado



FORT BEND COUNTY

County Judge KP George
Commissioner Vincent Morales, Jr.
Commissioner Grady Prestage
Commissioner Andy Meyers
Commissioner Dexter L. McCoy



HARRIS COUNTY

County Judge Lina Hidalgo
Commissioner Rodney Ellis
Commissioner Adrian Garcia
Commissioner Tom S. Ramsey
Commissioner Lesley Briones



TARRANT COUNTY

County Judge Tim O'Hare
Commissioner Roy C. Brooks
Commissioner Alisa Simmons
Commissioner Gary Fickes
Commissioner Manny Ramirez



TRAVIS COUNTY

County Judge Andy Brown
Commissioner Jeff Travillion
Commissioner Brigid Shea
Commissioner Ann Howard
Commissioner Margaret Gómez



**With the support of the County Judge
and County Commissioners, each Texas
A&M AgriLife Extension County Office
offers the knowledge resources of the
Texas A&M University System to local
citizens for self-improvement, individual
action, and community problem-solving.**

Thank You.