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**PLANT OF THE
 MONTH: *HENBIT***

Henbit is a cool season, annual broadleaf weed that can dominate turfgrass around the South Plains. Henbit is a member of the mint family and as such, has the characteristic square stems. Its flowers are conspicuous in early spring and are a pink to purple tubular shape. The best form of control is to apply a pre-emergent before the weed is present products like surflan, bensulide, or pendimethalin. If a pre-emergent was not applied and the weed is present, products that contain 2,4-D or MCPP will be effective. Always read and follow all label directions before applying.



TAMUISC Islander Green Community Garden



Henbit Flower

SLATON COMMUNITY GARDEN SERIES

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Lubbock County Horticulture in conjunction with Slaton ISD began an every-second-Saturday community garden series at Slaton Junior High School that instructs attendees through an entire year in the garden. The purpose of the series is to provide classroom style and hands on learning on starting (design and construction), maintaining and harvesting (nutritional information included) a garden to provide fresh produce for the entire community through the *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities* program. All Slaton community members are invited to participate! For more information, contact Christina Reid, CEA at 806-775-1740 or christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu.

Landscape Design Series



PART II: SITE EVALUATION

The purpose of the site evaluation is to record existing structures and features of the landscape, identify the positive and negative aspects of the existing landscape, and to record specific environmental and site characteristics (Figures 1 and 2). The landscape survey will be used in the initial planning stages, and later when designing plantings.

A site inventory documents all existing elements on the site in their existing location (Figure 1) and can be either hand drawn or computer aided. If you are drawing by hand, draw your landscape to scale as best you can, graph paper and a pencil will be helpful. You do not need to be an artist; any drawing that makes sense to you will be adequate. Mark the location of the house and unattached buildings like a detached garage, as well as existing walkways, drives, utilities boxes, patios, fences and other structures.

Record the locations of existing plant material including trees, shrubs and flowerbeds. Mark the location of tree trunks and use circles to indicate the extent of the tree canopy.

Once you have recorded the existing structures, walk through the landscape and take careful notes regarding site conditions.

Sun

Indicate on your map areas that receive full sun (6 or more hours of direct sunlight each day), part sun (4 to 6 hours per day), or shade (less than 4 hours of direct sun daily).

Wind

Identify what areas are relatively exposed to strong winds, and what areas are sheltered by structures or plants.

Topography

Low spots tend to remain wet and experience more frost than uphill areas. Steep slopes create challenges to gardening, such as erosion, and may need to be altered. On the other hand, slopes also provide opportunities in design and can be used in separating distinct areas of the garden.

Temperature

Identify hot spots in the landscape, such as along south facing walls or near air conditioning units and dryer vents. Areas that receive full sun or afternoon sun will also be hotter (and drier) than more shaded sites. Other areas may be more

protected from sun and wind, providing ideal planting sites for heat sensitive plants. Skilled gardeners can identify microhabitats in the landscape where marginally hardy plants can successfully be grown.

Water and Drainage

Identify areas in the landscape where water collects. Low spots and areas surrounding drain spouts tend to be wet. Other areas may be exceptionally dry. The soil beneath the roof overhang does not receive as much direct rainfall as areas not sheltered by the roof. The constant air flow near air conditioning units also has a drying effect on plantings. Consider and record any existing irrigation systems and structures.

Soil Type

Soil type will greatly affect the drainage of an area. Sandy soils drain very quickly, while clay soils are slow to drain. Some plants have specific soil requirements. Record the soil texture (sand, silt, clay) in different areas of the landscape. Need help with your soil? Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Lubbock County can conduct soil tests!

Once you have recorded all the characteristics and features of the existing landscape or planned planting site, it is time to conduct an evaluation (Figure 2). The purpose of this step is to identify the positive and negative features of the landscape. Begin by examining the existing structures. Many structures are necessary and cannot be altered, the air conditioner, for example. You might find other structures that are inessential to the current use of the landscape, such as a swing set that has not been used for years. Identify which structures you wish to keep and those that need removed.

Evaluate the existing landscape. Identify plants you wish to retain. Look for plants that have overgrown their space; a shrub that overhangs the sidewalk or blocks a window, for example. Some trees and shrubs may just require a little pruning, while others may need to be removed or transplanted to a new location.

In a visual evaluation, we are also concerned with views. Identify the locations from which you most often view the landscape. This may be inside your home, such as through a sitting room window, or may be outdoors, such as from a patio. Go to each location and look out over the landscape. Document whether the view is pleasant (highlight) or unpleasant (screen).

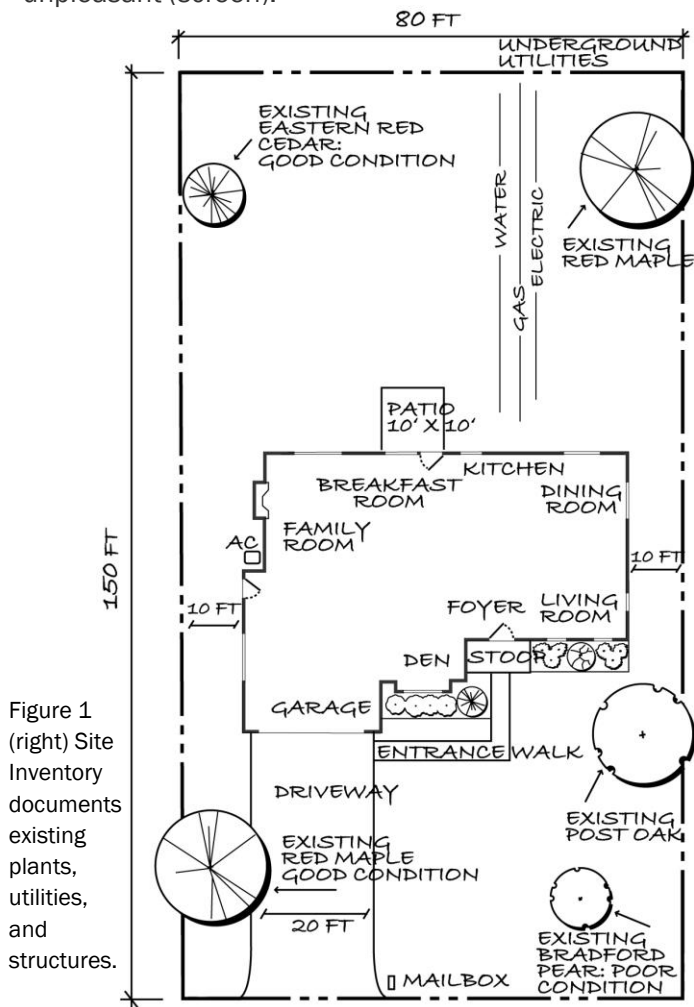


Figure 1 (right) Site Inventory documents existing plants, utilities, and structures.

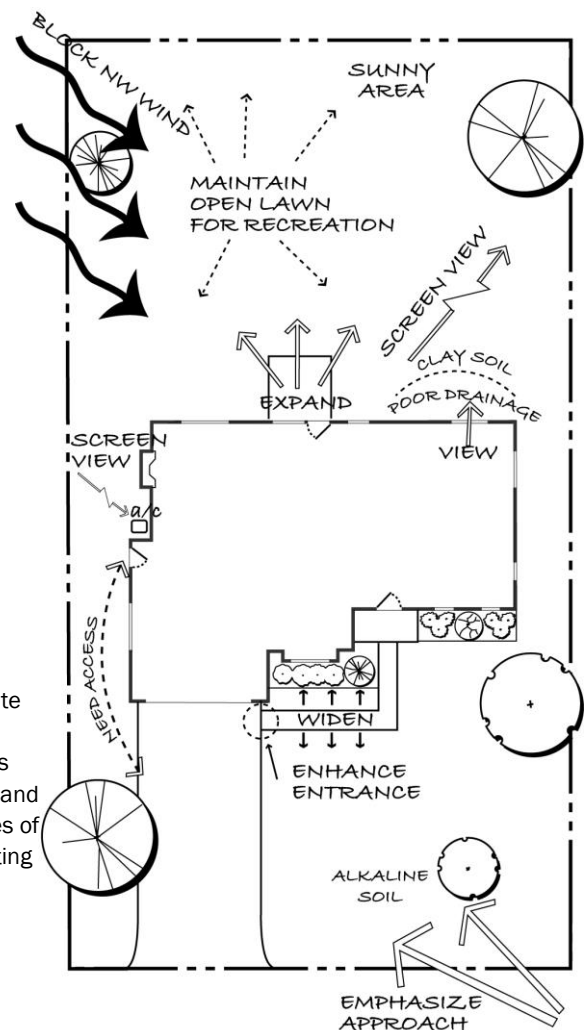


Figure 2 (right) Site Analysis identifies positive and negatives of the existing site.

Read next month's issue for Part III: Landscaping Goals



UPCOMING EVENTS

Commercial Turfgrass & Ornamental Workshop

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 15 9:00-3:00

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Lubbock County

916 Main, First Floor Auditorium, Lubbock

(5) TDA CEUs available. Program fee is \$45.00 and includes a catered lunch. For more information and to register, please call 806.775.1740



West Texas Homebuilders Association Home & Garden Show

FRIDAY- SUNDAY MARCH 1-3, 2019

Lubbock Memorial Civic Center

1501 Mac Davis Lane

For more information please visit <http://lubbockhomeandgardenshow.com/>



ASK AN AGENT...

Q: How can I help our local pollinators? The recent media headlines have really made me aware of their struggles.

A: First of all, THANK YOU! We all depend on our pollinators to survive! There are multiple things that you can do to help our local pollinators; the first being, taking a quick survey conducted by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, Texas Tech University and Oklahoma State Cooperative Extension to locally identify the plants that pollinators visit most in your own yard. Here is the link to the online survey:

https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5vU8wEnfSTo8rAx

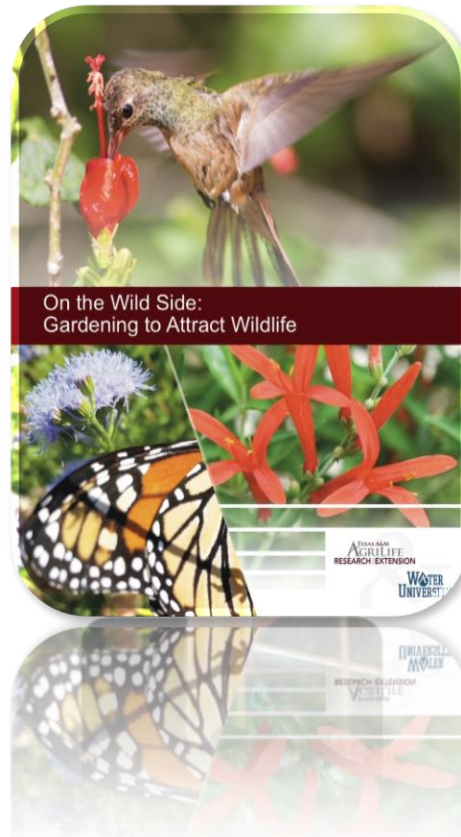
Second, this easy to read document, On the Wild Side: Gardening to Attract Wildlife, can walk you through steps to make your landscape pollinator friendly. Find this publication here:

<https://wateruniversity.tamu.edu/media/1208/wildlife-7-6-17.pdf>

Have a question you would like to see answered in a future issue? Email christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu today!



<https://www.facebook.com/LbkHorticulture/>



GROWING ONIONS ON THE

SOUTH PLAINS

Starting the 15th of this month, onion planting can officially kick off on the South Plains. Onions along with radishes, lettuce, kohlrabi, english peas, turnips, spinach and other cool season crops are the first vegetables to be planted in the spring garden. I'll explain the best onion planting practices in order to harvest large, beautiful bulbs come summer.

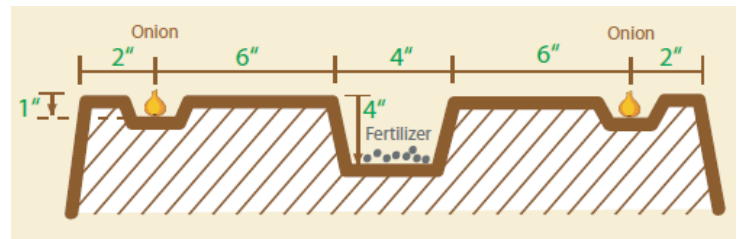
The size of the onion bulb is dependent upon the number of green leaves at the time of bulb maturity. For each leaf, there will be a ring of onion. Onions are characterized by day length; "long day" onion varieties will quit forming tops and begin to form bulbs when the daylight reaches 14 to 16 hours while "short day" onions will start making bulbs much earlier in the year when there are only 11 to 12 hours of daylight. A good rule of thumb is "long day" onions do better in northern states (north of 36th parallel) while "short day" onions do better in states south of the line. The best varieties for the South Plains are found below.

Short day (11–12-hour day length)	
Yellow	Chula Vista, Cougar, Jaguar, Legend, Linda Vista, Mercedes, Prowler, Safari, Sweet Sunrise, TX 1015Y, Early Grano 502, Granex
White	Cirrus, Marquesa, TX Early White, Crystal Wax
Red	Red Bone, Rio Santiago, Sakata Red, Red Burgandy
Intermediate day (12–13-hour day length)	
Yellow	Caballero, Cimarron, Riviera, Utopia, Yula
White	Alabaster, Mid Star, Sierra Blanca, Spano
Red	Fuego
Long day (14–16-hour day length)	
Yellow	Armada, Capri, Durango, El Charo, Ole, Seville, Sweet Perfection, Valdez, Vaquero, Vega
White	Blanco Duro, Sterling, White Spanish Sweet
Red	Tango

Another particular note about onions, you do not need to start them from seed (although you can if you really want to) or buy transplants, you purchase onion sets. Onion sets look like green onions in the grocery store, but rest assured they will turn into large, handsome bulbs!

Onions grow best in full sunlight and well draining soils. Work the garden soil only when it is dry enough to not stick to garden tools. Soil should be loose and crumbly; work it 8 to 10 inches deep. Remove all rocks and trash from the soil; then break up the remaining clods and rake the soil smooth. If your soil is compacted, work in compost to improve aeration and drainage. To stop weeds for up to six weeks, rake a pre-emergent herbicide, such as Treflan or corn gluten meal, into the top inch of soil before you plant. Don't worry, the herbicide will not affect the onion plant roots. It's helpful to know whether your soil is acid (pH below 7.0) or alkaline (pH above 7.0). Onions prefer soil with a pH between 6.2 and 6.8. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension can test your soil for you!

Onion growth and yield can be greatly enhanced by banding fertilizer rich in phosphorus (10-20-10) 2 to 3 inches below sets at planting time. Make a trench in the top of the bed four inches deep, distribute one-half cup of the fertilizer per 10 linear feet of row, cover the fertilizer with two inches of soil and plant sets.

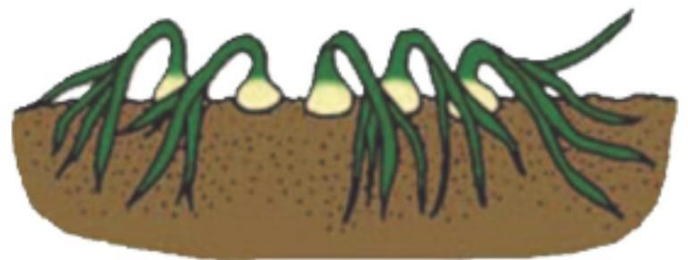


Plant the onions 6" from the edge of the trench on both sides of the trench. Do not plant the onions in the trench! Leave a 2" margin between the onions and the outside edge of the bed. Plant the onions 1" deep and no deeper, as this will inhibit their ability to bulb. If you want the onions to grow to maturity, space them 3" apart. If you prefer to harvest some earlier as green onions, space them 2" apart and pull every other onion during the growing season, leaving the rest to grow to maturity.

Water thoroughly after planting, and regularly thereafter. Onions have shallow roots, so don't let the soil at the base of the plants become dry and cracked. Overwatering is equally problematic. If leaves develop a yellow tinge, cut back on watering. The closer to harvest time, the greater the need for water. However, when the onion tops start falling over, stop watering and let the soil dry out before harvesting.

When caring for the onions during the season, do not allow weeds to mature near onions. Onions do not like competition. Nutritional needs are different during the growing season. Every 2 to 3 weeks after planting, fertilize with ammonium sulfate (21-0-0) in alkaline soils, or calcium nitrate (15.5-0-0) in acidic soils. Sprinkle it on top of the original fertilizer strip at the rate of ½ cup per 10 feet of row. Water the onions after every application. Stop fertilizing when the onions start to bulb.

When the tops of the onions turn brown or yellow and fall over, it's time to harvest. Ideally, the plant will have about 13 leaves at this point. Pull the onions early in the morning on a sunny day. Dry the onions in the sun for two days. To prevent sunscald, lay the tops of one row over the bulbs of another.





SPRING VEGETABLE PLANTING DATES FOR THE SOUTH PLAINS

Vegetables	Region II				
Asparagus	After Feb 15	Collards	Feb 15-Apr 10	Peas, Southern	Apr 20-May 15
Beans, snap bush	Apr 1-May 5	Corn, sweet	Mar 15-May 1	Pepper (transplant)	Apr 10-May 1
Beans, snap pole	Apr 1-May 1	Cucumber	Apr 1-May 15	Potato	Mar 10-Apr 1
Beans, Lima bush	Apr 15-May 15	Eggplant	Apr 10-May 1	Potato, sweet (slips)	Apr 25-May 15
Beans, Lima pole	Apr 15-May 15	Garlic (cloves)	Not Recommended	Pumpkin	Apr 25-May 20
Beets	Feb 15-May 20	Kohlrabi	Feb 15-Mar 1	Radish	Feb 15-May 20
Broccoli	Feb 15-Mar 20	Lettuce	Feb 15-May 1	Spinach	Feb 1-Mar 1
Brussels sprouts	Feb 15-Mar 10	Muskmelon (cantaloupe)	Apr 10-May 1	Squash, summer	Apr 10-May 1
Cabbage	Feb 15-Mar 10	Mustard	Feb 15-May 1	Squash, winter	Apr 1-Apr 25
Carrots	Feb 15-Mar 10	Onion (plants)	Feb 15-Mar 10	Tomato (transplant)	Apr 10-May 1
Cauliflower (transplant)	Feb 15-Mar 10	Parsley	Feb 15-Mar 10	Turnip	Feb 15-May 20
Chard, Swiss	Feb 15-May 1	Peas, English	Feb 15-Mar 1	Watermelon	Apr 10-May 1

Courtesy of Aggie Horticulture <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/archives/parsons/earthkind/ekgarden14.html>



For more information on any of the topics, or to ask questions please contact:

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