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## PLANT OF THE MONTH: *LIVE OAK*

As spring comes to West Texas, so does live oak spring leaf drop. I have received several frantic phone calls about “sick” live oaks, so here is what is really happening as opposed to oak wilt discussed later in this publication.

Live oaks are not true evergreens and will drop old leaves as new leaves emerge. The old leaves are senescing, or dying off, and may appear yellow, blotched and sickly. You should see new buds found at the base of the leaf petioles. These buds may be very small early on, but will become more prominent as the older leaves fall.

# South Plains *horticulture*



*Live oak leaves senescing Photo courtesy of: Texas Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab*



*New buds on live oak*



*Senescing live oak leaves*



Starting Seeds February 9, 2019

## 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](mailto:christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu).



# INDUSTRIAL HEMP UPDATE

By: Dr. Calvin Trostle

Photo courtesy of: f2.8/shutterstock.com

**Disclaimer:** The Texas A&M University System and System agencies, including Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service and its employees, do not advocate for or against the passage of legislation in Texas which would legalize industrial hemp production. Furthermore, Texas A&M AgriLife does not endorse possible future legal industrial hemp production as a viable agricultural production system in Texas relative to any other crop.

Despite what you may have heard, industrial hemp is still not legal in Texas to plant, grow, or harvest. As mandated in the 2018 Farm Bill, which removed industrial hemp from the list of federally controlled substances, states may now develop a plan using USDA guidelines to regulate and develop industrial hemp production. For some states, this may be relatively easy. But Texas has laws that currently ban all industrial hemp as illegal.

Revising this ban will require action by the Texas Legislature and the Governor's signature. Once there is legislative approval then the Texas Department of Agriculture would be directed to develop regulatory

guidelines for licensing approval, reporting, and testing requirements in Texas. These must then be approved by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

There were several industrial hemp bills filed in the Texas House and Senate at the beginning of the 2019 legislative session. Now a "better" bill, SB 1240, filed by state Senator Charles Perry, Lubbock, on Feb. 27, 2019 improves alignment with requirements in USDA's 1946 Agricultural Marketing Act. It appears the bill also better addresses topics such as defining licensing fees, reporting, etc. Texas Dept. of Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller supports passage of SB 1240. A summary of the bill is found at <http://senate.texas.gov/members/d28/press/en/p20190227a.pdf>

**What is industrial hemp and how does it compare to narcotic/psychoactive marijuana?**

Industrial hemp and marijuana are the same plant species.

Both are *Cannabis sativa* but with distinct subspecies for industrial hemp (subsp. *sativa*) and marijuana (subsp. *indica*) which reflect exclusive characteristics. *C. sativa* subsp. *indica* is undesirable for fiber quality. The buds (all female) of indica lines, which produce psychoactive tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), are used as a narcotic. Industrial hemp has low levels of THC and higher levels of cannabidiol (CBD), which has popularity as an oil. Regulatory definitions state that to be approved as industrial hemp, THC levels must not exceed 0.3%. This THC level has no measurable or noticeable narcotic effect. In contrast, narcotic cannabis has been bred to have high levels of THC, often above 10%. The fiber of *Cannabis sativa* subsp. *sativa* has many uses including textiles, plastics that are biodegradable, insulation, clothing, food and feed. In addition, the literature reports that subsp. *sativa* and subsp. *indica* are different in appearance.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Texas Community Futures Forum

**MONDAY, APRIL 22 6:00-8:00 PM**

*Texas AgriLife Extension Lubbock County*

*916 Main st. first floor meeting room*

Texas A&M AgriLife will be addressing educational programming topics for the next 3-5 years. RSVP is by April 18<sup>th</sup> is required to 806-775-1740.



### Strawberry Workshop & Field Day

**SATURDAY, APRIL 27 8:30AM-12:00**

*Texas AgriLife Extension and Research Center*

*1102 E. Drew Street Lubbock*

Learn how to grow strawberries with Extension Specialist Dr. Russ Wallace. This free course will cover high and low tunnel technology, biocontrol, and a tour of research plots.



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



## ASK AN AGENT...

**Q: My iris have healthy green leaves and are multiplying but I don't have any blooms. What am I doing wrong?**

**A:** Iris beds need thinning every two to three years due to their over crowding. Septemeber is the ideal time to divide and replant iris. Iris need a sunny, well draining location with good air circulation.

Have a question you would like to see answered in a future issue? Email [christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu) today!

# OAK WILT: STOP PRUNING

Oak wilt is a fungus that can infect the water-conducting tissues of all oak tree species, but some oak species are affected more than others. It can be spread through the root systems of infected trees (up to 75 feet per year) and sap beetles which deposit the spores into recent, open wounds on trees.

Red Oaks (Shumard, Texas red oak, and blackjack) are highly susceptible to oak wilt. Live oaks are intermediate in susceptibility. White oaks (post and bur oak) are less susceptible to the fungus.

**Prevention starts with not pruning oak trees from February 1- June 30 of each year.** The beetle that carries the oak wilt fungus is particularly active during this period of time making trees the most susceptible. Always paint your pruning cuts, regardless of time of year, immediately after cutting. Any paint will do, even the spray paint that costs \$1. Clean pruning tools between trees with a disinfectant spray or 10% bleach-water mixture to prevent the spread of the fungus.

This winter, remember to not bring in red oak firewood from an unknown source since infected wood will carry the fungus.



Above: Red Oak



Illustration: Robert O'Brien  
Copyright-free for non-profit use.  
Left: Infected Live Oak leaf



Illustration: Robert O'Brien  
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Right: Infected Red Oak leaf



Above: Fungal mat on Red Oak

Infected live oaks typically exhibit vein necrosis, where the veins turn yellow or brown and appear “zebra like”. Injections work best as a preventive treatment, although they can be costly. It is best to determine your “high value” trees and inject each. Injections do not stop the fungus movement in the soil through the roots.

Another option for prevention is trenching, or digging a trench to sever all the root connections between infected trees and healthy trees in order to stop the fungal movement in the soil through the roots. This can have an enormous cost, depending on the location and environment.

Infected red oaks can produce a fungal mat under the bark if conditions are right, usually during a cool and moist spring. The beetle is attracted to the fungal mat for breeding and feeding, and will pick up fungal spores to carry to fresh wounds on other trees. If your red oak leaves turn red/brown within 4-8 weeks (not during the fall), it may be infected with oak wilt. Infected red oaks have 0% chance of survival.

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

**Christina Reid, County Extension Agent Horticulture**