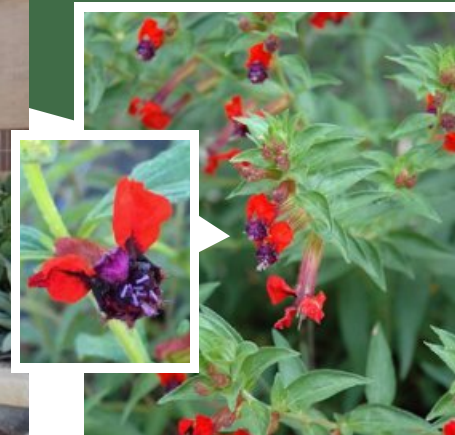


SOUTH PLAINS

HORTICULTURE

THIS EDITION

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Lubbock County Extension Office

For more information, contact christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu or call (806) 775 - 1740



Water-wise landscaping, at-home gardening, students in horticulture, and community engagement. Read about this and other stories in this month's South Plains Horticulture Newsletter!

SEVEN STEPS TO HOME XERISCAPING

Water is one of our most valuable resources in the South Plains. As much as 60% of your household water may be going toward traditional landscaping maintenance. Xeriscaping is a great alternative for our West Texas climate. Xeriscaping is a type of landscaping that focuses on water and environmental protection and conservation. Practical steps such as new irrigation systems, planting primarily native and water-wise plant species, and adopting water-efficient landscaping practices.

While it may sound like a daunting endeavor, there are seven simple, practical steps to better accommodate our limited water supply in the area.

1. Planning and Design

Sketch your yard for current plants, shrubs, and buildings. Determine areas that require the most water and pinpoint your landscaping budget.

2. Soil Analysis and Prep

Test your soil to see what additional nutrients your soil may need and find what plants will grow best in your yard.

Visit soiltesting.tamu.edu or contact the Extension Office for soil testing information.

3. Practical Turf Areas

Turf requires lots of water. Incorporate decks, patios, mulch or rock areas, and groundcovers to lessen turf use.

4. Appropriate Plant Selection

Select trees, shrubs, and groundcovers that are adapted to our area or select native species. Many local nurseries carry adapted species.

5. Efficient Irrigation

A permanent irrigation system that is properly installed will save time, money, and water. There are a variety of watering systems ranging from drip to sprinklers. Drip irrigation systems are the most water conservative and beneficial to plant.

6. Use of Mulches

A simple layer of mulch or rocks over plants will reduce water evaporation to make better use of water while maintaining more stable soil temperatures.

7. Appropriate Maintenance

Simple steps such as mowing grass at proper heights, fertilizing at correct times, periodically checking irrigation systems, and properly timing pest, weed and disease control will result in a happy, healthy xeriscape.



SMITH ELEMENTARY

Students in the Smith Sprouts after-school gardening club have spent the last month preparing for their upcoming plant sale. Preparation has included plant observations, seeding, transplanting, goal setting, and marketing. Stay tuned for updates on the students' plant sale at the end of April.



Students have also begun taste-testing crops ready for harvest. In April, kindergarten through fifth-grade students tried spinach, arugula, mint, and strawberries that they have helped grow this year!



MAY PLANT SPOTLIGHT



Bat-Faced Cuphea

Bat-Faced Cuphea is an annual shrub native to Mexico. Its name comes from the bat-like appearance of the bloom (the purple is the bat face and the red as the ears). Thanks to these colorful blooms, this species is great for attracting pollinators such as hummingbirds and butterflies!

Cuphea will bloom starting in early spring until the first frost. These plants like well-draining soil and prefer our drier climate, so don't overwater! They will often do best in full sun to partial shade and grow to be about 2 feet tall. Bat-Faced Cuphea would be the perfect water-wise addition to your landscaping this summer!



APRIL AT THE ARBORETUM



On April 8th, the Lubbock Memorial Arboretum hosted an easter egg hunt. With over 2,000 eggs and 100 attendees, all the eggs were gathered in under 10 minutes!



Keep an eye out for new tree species planted at the arboretum! This past month, a New Mexico Privet, Weeping Red Bud, and Ranger Peach tree were all added around the premises.



Work is continuing for the Lubbock Master Gardener's Association Demonstration Garden. Design plans and new pathways are all in progress. We are excited to see how this space will serve as an educational resource for the community!

EARTH DAY AT MAHON PUBLIC LIBRARY

Several children and parents joined Agent Reid at Mahon Library to celebrate Earth Day. After reading *A Place to Grow* by Stephanie Bloom and learning about how seeds grow, kids had a chance to look at a variety of seeds and collect their own seeds to take home. Thank you to Mahon Public Library for letting us share what Earth Day is all about!



HOME GROWN TOMATOES

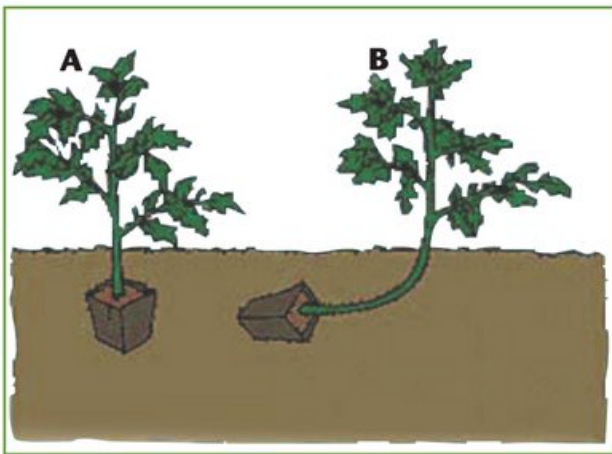
Tomatoes are a great addition to any home garden. Before beginning, it is important to have the proper knowledge to help your tomato plants thrive.

Soil Preparation

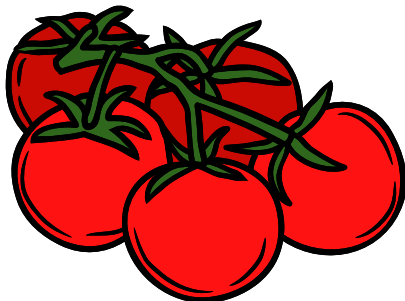
Begin by working up the top 8-10 inches of soil in your selected area. Select an area that will receive plenty of full sun. Consider getting a soil test to identify needed nutrients for your soil. If you have access to compost or organic matter (such as dried leaves or rotted hay) work these into the soil for added nutrients.

Planting

Select healthy starter plants for the desired varieties you wish to grow (it is best to plant tomatoes from plants as opposed to seeds. One plant will produce much fruit.). If possible, plant on an overcast day or in the evening to prevent excessive stress on the plant. If you plan to use cages, space plants 4-6 feet apart in each row. Space rows 5-6 feet apart.



Plant tomatoes slightly deeper than they were first growing (A). If the plants are leggy, set them as shown (B). Ensure any leaves are removed that may be planted under the soil to prevent disease.



Cages

Given our extreme environment here in the South Plains, cages are a great way to protect against environmental factors such as wind, hail, and insects, while supporting your plants. Cages should be 18" - 24" in diameter and 3-5 feet tall. Use taller cages for indeterminate varieties.

Determinate: varieties that grow to a certain point then stop. Cages are not as vital for these varieties, but still recommended.

Indeterminate: Varieties that continue to grow all season. Cages/trellises needed for proper plant growth.

Quick research can help you figure out whether your tomato variety is determinate or indeterminate.

To provide the necessary environmental protection, wrap cages in perforated plastic, or spun-bound polypropylene cloth/row cover cloth and secure material with clothes pins.

Plant Care

Water: Water plants slowly and deeply. Avoid excessive wilting of plants for more successful yields.

Mulching: Consider adding 2-3" of mulch, dry leaves, or hay around the base of each plant to retain soil moisture and prevent weed growth.

Pruning: Remove suckers/side shoots throughout the season (shoots that are not producing flowers or fruit).



Pests: Watch for pests or signs of disease/fungus throughout the growing season. Select pesticides or herbicides specific to the pests you have.

Harvesting

It is ideal to harvest at peak ripeness. If harvested while still green, allow fruit to ripen indoors at room temperature. Store ripe tomatoes in the refrigerator for a longer shelf life.

Happy growing!

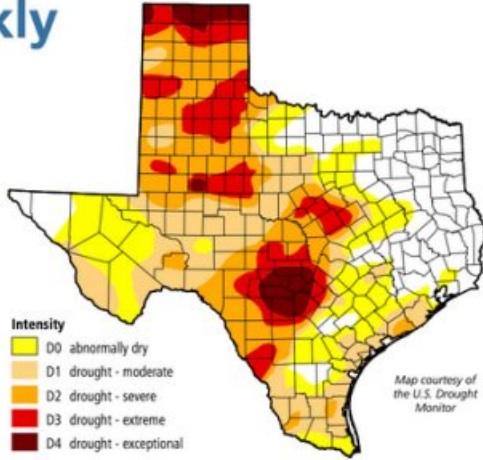
DROP OF LIFE

Water Weekly

For the week of 04/17/23

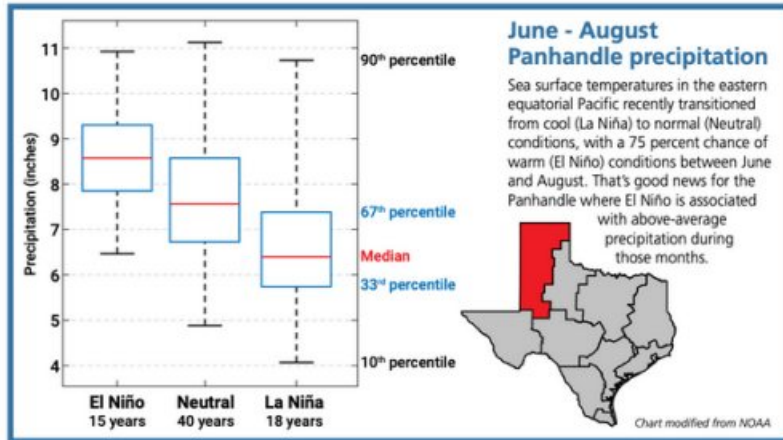
Water conditions

The latest drought monitor map, for conditions as of April 11, shows one to two categories of improvement across large areas of South and Central Texas. The net effect was the largest one-week decrease in the area of the state impacted by drought since November 2022.



Drought conditions

- ◆ 59% now
- ◆ 67% a week ago
- ◆ 52% three months ago
- ◆ 88% a year ago



Written by Dr. Mark Wentzel — Dr. Mark Wentzel is a hydrologist in the TWDB's Office of Water Science and Conservation.

Bryan McMath, Governmental Relations | bryan.mcmath@twdb.texas.gov | 512-463-7850
Media Relations | MediaRelations@twdb.texas.gov | 512-463-5129

www.twdb.texas.gov

Stay connected:



WHAT'S AROUND TOWN?

Check out rainwater gardens and xeriscapes around Lubbock! This is a great way to see water-wise landscaping techniques in action.

Water Utilities Department
406 Municipal Drive
Lubbock, TX

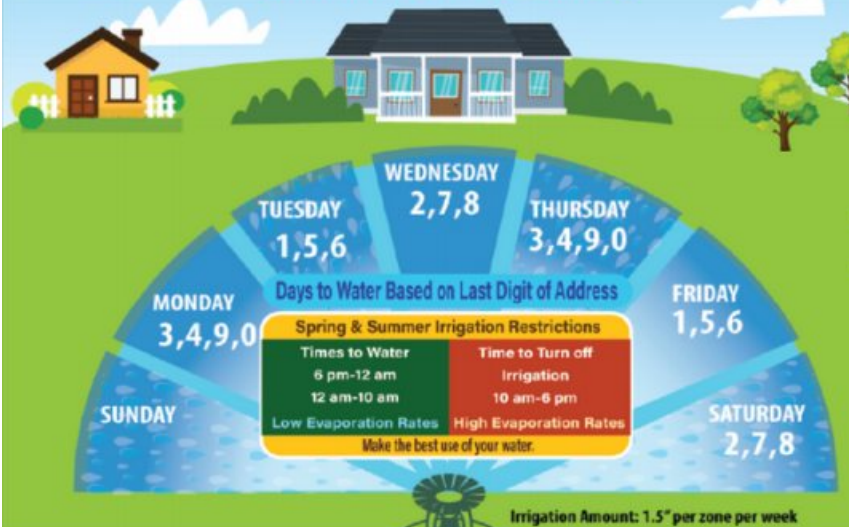
High Plains Water District
2930 Ave. O
Lubbock, TX



Images from the demonstration garden at the Water Utilities Dept.

Spring & Summer Watering Days & Times

IRRIGATION FROM APRIL 1ST - SEPT. 30TH





BLUEBERRIES

HARVEST OF THE MONTH
MAY



Blueberries are plump, juicy and sweet. They grow together on bushes in small clusters or groups. Each one is round and usually no larger than a marble. They are pale greenish at first, then turn reddish purple, and then dark blue when ready to eat. The darker their color, the sweeter they taste. Blueberries go great in everything from muffins to desserts. You may even find them on your breakfast cereal or in pancakes. Blueberries can ripen any time between May and August.

DID YOU KNOW?

A one-cup serving of blueberries has only 80 calories and almost no fat. One serving gives you 25 percent of the Vitamin C needed for the day.

FUN FACT

Every year, almost 20,000 people come to the Annual Texas Blueberry Festival in Nacogdoches, Texas.



BLUEBERRY GROWING REGIONS
East Texas




TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

This product was funded by USDA. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.






GET INVOLVED



HORTICULTURE CAREER DAY
JUNE 5, 2023 1:00pm


OPEN TO ALL HIGH SCHOOLERS

HORTICULTURE AND FORESTRY SCIENCES BUILDING

- meet faculty, staff, and current students.
- learn about careers in horticulture.
- visit with an academic advisor about applying to Texas A&M
- hands-on experiences in floral design, propagation & tissue culture, wine & enology, hydroponics, etc.

SIGN UP TODAY! MORE INFORMATION
jayla.fry@ag.tamu.edu



THE LUBBOCK MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION IS PROUD TO AWARD STUDENTS PURSUING THEIR EDUCATION IN HORTICULTURE, BOTANY, PLANT SCIENCE, OR RELATED FIELD.

<https://lubbockmastergardener.org/scholarship/>

DEADLINE
JUNE 1ST

DINO DAY FUN RUN

Join the Lubbock Memorial Arboretum for our first ever Dino Day Fun Run! Dress up as your favorite Dino and stomp around on our 1/2 mile course!



Saturday, May 13th
9:00am - 10:00am
Lubbock Memorial Arboretum
4111 University Ave

Participants can walk or run one lap or several, depending on fitness level.

JOIN US FOR

CULTIVATE, COOK & CREATE

A SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAM TO LEARN HOW TO GROW, PREPARE, AND CREATE YOUR OWN FOOD



EVERY WEDNESDAY
6/7/23 - 8/16/23

10:00AM - 11:30AM
SOUTH PLAINS FOOD BANK GRUB FARM
304 76TH STREET LUBBOCK

Call the Lubbock County Extension Office at (806) 775 - 1740 to register.

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

GET INVOLVED

Join us!

**FOOD HANDLERS CERTIFICATION
+ COTTAGE FOOD LAW TRAINING**
AND A SPECIAL Q&A WITH KASSI ANTHONY OF DSHS

MAY 3, 2023

8:30 A.M. - 12 NOON
LUBBOCK COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE

916 MAIN, STE 401
LUBBOCK, TX 79401
806-775-1740

RSVP: [HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/VT6CY825J6VXZBME6](https://forms.gle/vT6CY825J6VXZBME6)

\$20 PER PERSON

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

PUMPKIN Contest GROWING

CATEGORIES*

BIGGEST
SMALLEST
MOST PERFECT
MOST ODD COLOR



CONTEST SEEDS ARE NOW FREE AT THE
FLOYD COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE

JUDGING TO TAKE PLACE AT PUNKIN DAYS, OCT 14TH

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday: 8am-4:30pm
Friday: 8am-2pm

ADDRESS

122 E. California
Floydada, TX 79235
(806) 983-4912

To receive seeds by mail, email Kristy at
kristy.lefevre@ag.tamu.edu

Explore.
Connect.
Grow.



Hub City Garden Tour

Join us around Lubbock on
September 3rd for the 3rd annual
Hub City Garden Tour.

SUPPORT THE

Lubbock Memorial Arboretum

Renee's Garden

The Garden to Table Seed Company

SHOP WWW.RENEESGARDEN.COM AND
THE ARBORETUM WILL RECEIVE 20% OF
YOUR ORDER WITH COUPON CODE
FRTNG AS A DONATION !

PRESERVING TEXAS' PECAN LEGACY

JOIN OUR INDUSTRY-WIDE 2023 DISCUSSION

WHAT: Texas A&M Agrilife Extension & Texas Pecan Growers Association through funding from Texas Dept of Agriculture & Industries are hosting ten (10) “Regional Pecan Listening Sessions” this Spring—2023.

WHY: Pecan growing is a Texas legacy—one worth preserving! We want to hear from pecan growers around the state about this important agricultural industry. Are we gaining or losing financial strength? Are we gaining or losing acreage or people? What are your successes? What do you need help with? How can we can work together to sustain pecan growing in Texas? Help set the priorities. *We want to listen!*

WHERE: Ten Regional Listening Sessions—Attend the one nearest you! Your opinion and experiences matter!

Region	Date	Location
Lower Colorado River	Tuesday, March 28th	Bastrop
Gulf Coast	Wednesday, April 5th	Wharton
Guadalupe Valley	Tuesday, April 11th	Seguin
East Texas	Tuesday, April 18th	Palestine
Wintergarden-South Texas	Wednesday, April 26th	Uvalde
High Plains	Tuesday, May 2nd	Lubbock
Concho Valley	Tuesday, May 9th	San Angelo
Central Texas	Tuesday, May 16th	Goldthwaite
North Central-Red River	Tuesday, May 23rd	Bowie
El Paso Valley	Tuesday, May 30th	El Paso



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
Horticultural Sciences

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

WHO: Texas A&M University: Dr. Monte Nesbitt, Dr. Larry Stein, Dr. Amit Dhingra. Texas Pecan Growers Assn: Ms. Blair Krebs, Ms. Meghan Mabry, and Board of Directors





What is...
 a Lubbock County Master Gardener?
 and
 How do I Become One? 

A Texas Master Gardener is a volunteer who has completed a training program offered by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The program provides in-depth horticultural training to individuals who then volunteer in their communities to share their knowledge and promote gardening and environmental stewardship.

Applications for the 2023 Lubbock County Master Gardener Intern Class are being accepted now through July 31.

- Apply online at <https://lubbockmastergardener.org/master-gardener-intern-program/>
- The 2023 intern program consists of 8 in-person classes
 - Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 - September 7 through October 31
- Program cost is \$250
- The class will be limited to 20 participants

Come Learn and Grow with Us!

Please contact Christina Reid, CEA Horticulture for additional information at 806.775.1740 or christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu

CONTACT US

For more information, contact christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu or call the Lubbock County Extension Office at (806) 775 - 1740

FOLLOW US



Lubbock AgriLife Extension Horticulture

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
 EXTENSION