

# SOUTH PLAINS HORTICULTURE

Official Newsletter of Christina Reid,  
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Horticulture Lubbock County

## Soil Test Now

We offer professional, diagnostic reasonably priced soil testing for Texans. We teach how to collect samples to test as well as how to interpret and evaluate the results. Soil testing can inform what nutrients are needed in the soil to optimize growth and health for a variety of plants and crops. Stop guessing and get your soil tested before applying fertilizer and other soil amendments. Get all the information here: <https://soiltesting.tamu.edu/>

### Stop Guessing



## GET YOUR SOIL TESTED

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Lubbock County Extension Office

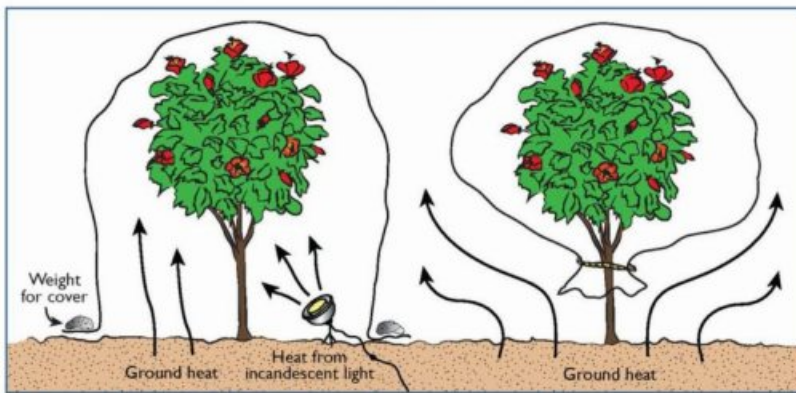
For more information, contact  
[christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:christina.reid@ag.tamu.edu)  
or call  
(806) 775 - 1740



# Brrrr

## How To Cover Your Plants For Harsh Weather

Driving through Lubbock neighborhoods, I often see well intentioned homeowners cover outdoor plants and pots incorrectly. This then typically results in frustration when the plant doesn't survive. Remember that our ground can be the biggest heat conductor and use it your your advantage!



**Figure 6.** Proper plant cover loosely draped over the top of a plant (left), and an improperly placed cover tied tightly around the trunk (right).

## Watering Before Temperature Extremes

Why does irrigating before a cold spell work? Water is a better thermal conductor than air. Soil that has moisture in it can better absorb and transfer heat from the sun into the soil profile during the day and back upwards towards the surface and plant canopy at night. Moisture will also darken light colored soils like sand, making them absorb more heat. This can be potentially helpful in increasing overnight minimum air temperatures and reducing damage to plants.

How much irrigation should I apply to moisten the soil?

Apply enough water to wet the soil to a six inch depth do not apply water to any exposed part of the plant (leaves, stems, etc).

## Now is the time to check your mulch piles!

A good 2"-3" even layer of mulch will also help insulate plant roots and hold moisture in the soil. Please spread the mulch evenly across planter beds or trees wells. No mulch volcanoes!

### TREE MULCH



How my friends think it should look



How my parents think it should look



How my neighbors think it should look



How society thinks it should look



How I thought it should look



How it should actually look

**Incorrectly applying mulch around a tree in the shape of a volcano can cause the roots to grow around the trunk, strangling it. This could eventually lead to the loss of the tree.**

Learn more at <http://texastreeplanting.tamu.edu/>



### Good Mulching



### Bad Mulching



# TREE PRUNING SEASON

## Now Is The Time To Prune

The dormant season, when all exposed tree parts are hibernating, is the best time to prune most landscape shade trees. On the South Plains this time window can vary, depending on weather conditions, but generally is December, January and into the beginning of February until bud swell. The only exception is pruning storm damaged trees immediately following a storm. Here are some tips to help you through:



1. Safety first!
  - a. Check for utility lines and call the utility company if there is a line within 10'.
  - b. Wear proper protective gear, including safety glasses and hearing protection.
  - c. Don't prune using a ladder.
2. Don't top trees- not even Crape Myrtles!
  - a. Topping is a poor pruning practice that is not appropriate for landscape trees.
  - b. Topping stresses the tree, creates weakly attached sucker growth, and is down right ugly.
  - c. Instead, thin the tree canopy.
3. Remove dead, damaged or diseased branches first.
  - a. Make sure to sanitize blades if working with diseased plants.
4. Then prune for plant structure.
  - a. Promote wide branch angles and a 2:1 branch ratio- the smaller the branch diameter should be half as wide as the larger branch it's attached to.
5. Try not to prune any branch over 6" diameter.
6. Don't prune spring flowering trees such as redbuds until after they bloom.

Just say  
no to tree  
topping!



# Hort. Around Lubbock County

# Get Involved

TEXAS A&M  
AGRI LIFE  
EXTENSION

Texas A&M AgrLife Extension Lubbock  
County presents

## 2024 COMMERCIAL TURF & ORNAMENTAL WORKSHOP

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2024 | 8:30AM - 3:00PM | \$50.00

5 TDA CEUS | LUNCH PROVIDED  
TEXAS A&M RESEARCH CENTER 1102 E FM RD 1294  
LUBBOCK

Registration & Payment Required by Friday, February 16, 2024  
For questions, please call (806) 775-1740



Mail registration and payment to:  
Lubbock County Extension, PO Box 10536, Lubbock, TX 79408  
Or hand deliver to Lubbock County Extension Office: 916 Main STE 401 Lubbock  
Make checks payable to AgrLife Extension Acct. 272113 (No credit cards)

Name on CEU Certificate:

Pesticide Applicator License#:

Phone #:

Email:

## GET A GARDEN PLOT @ THE LUBBOCK MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

*New*

## COMMUNITY GARDEN @ Lubbock Memorial Arboretum

PLOTS NOW  
AVAILABLE FOR THE  
2024 SEASON!

Soil, irrigation system & water included!

**VOLUNTEER @ THE  
ARBORETUM  
2/10 & 2/24 AFTER  
10AM!**

LUBBOCK MEMORIAL ARBORETUM  
PRESENTS

# TREE



## PRUNING WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, FEB. 10

10:00AM - 11:00AM

4111 UNIVERSITY AVE. LUBBOCK  
[www.lubbockarboretum.org](http://www.lubbockarboretum.org)

IT'S PRUNING SEASON!

KEEP  
LUBBOCK  
Beautiful



## 2024 ANNUAL ART CONTEST

Color  
Lubbock  
Beautiful

K-12th Grade  
Elementary School Middle School  
High School

\$100 Top Category Prizes  
Grand Prize featured on  
A garbage truck

Full Details at:  
[www.mylubbock.us/KLBArt](http://www.mylubbock.us/KLBArt)  
DEADLINE: MARCH 28, 2024



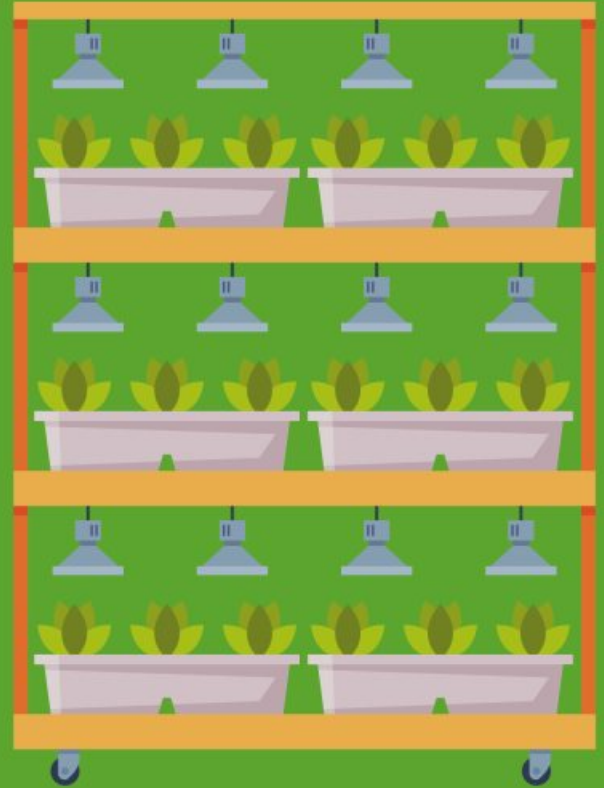
# SEED STARTING SEASON

Starting transplants from seeds in your home is a good way to get a head start on the growing season. At least 4 to 8 weeks can be cut from the time required between planting and harvesting or of getting effective landscape color by setting vigorous transplants rather than seeds into the garden.

Growing your own plants may be the only way to obtain a new or special variety you want. It also allows you to save seed to replenish your stock for next year!

## MATERIALS TO GET STARTED

- Containers: any shallow receptacle that holds soil, such as flats with or without individual cells, peat or paper pots, egg carton bottoms or halved milk cartons.
- Germinating mix: commercial or homemade. Mix your own with a 50-50 combination of fine sphagnum peat moss and vermiculite.
- Seeds
- Plastic bags, plastic wrap or plastic cover for your container
- Watering Container
- Plant labels
- Heating mat (optional)
- Light source
- An out of the way area space for your setup



## READ THE SEED PACKET! IT HAS ALL THE INFO. YOU NEED!





# DROP OF LIFE



## Water Weekly

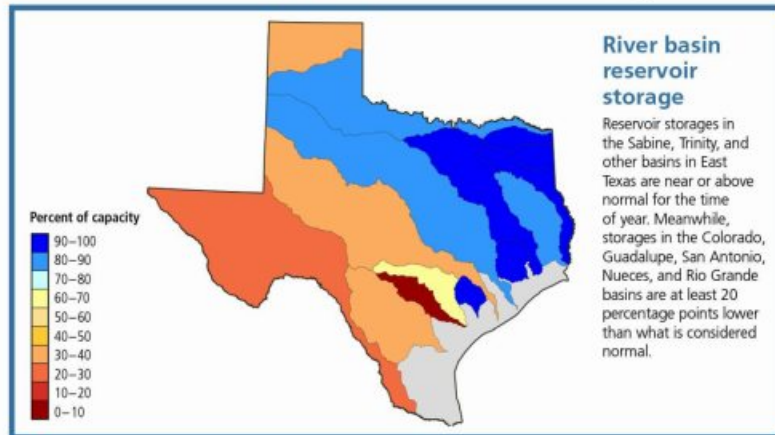
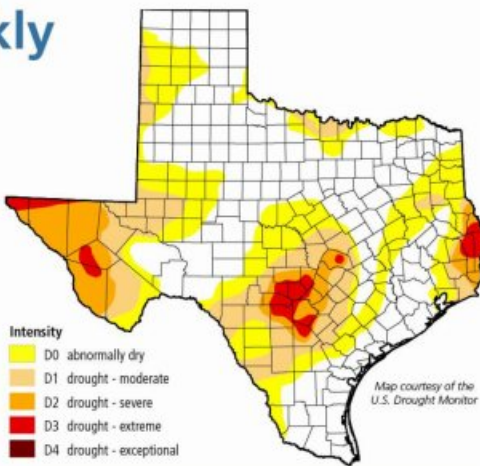
For the week of 01/29/24

### Water conditions

The latest drought map for conditions as of January 23 shows significant improvement from the previous week. But long-term drought continues to linger stubbornly in some parts of the state. During the last 27 months, at least one-fifth of the state has been in drought.

### Drought conditions

- ◆ 27% now
- ◆ 31% a week ago
- ◆ 75% three months ago
- ◆ 55% a year ago



### River basin reservoir storage

Reservoir storages in the Sabine, Trinity, and other basins in East Texas are near or above normal for the time of year. Meanwhile, storages in the Colorado, Guadalupe, San Antonio, Nueces, and Rio Grande basins are at least 20 percentage points lower than what is considered normal.

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

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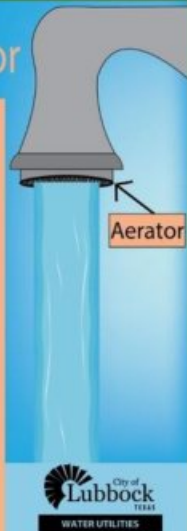
[www.twdb.texas.gov](http://www.twdb.texas.gov)

Stay connected:



## Save Water with An Aerator

An aerator can save you 0.7 gallons per minute. If you times that by the amount of minutes you use that faucet a month, you will have a good amount of savings.



Fall & Winter Irrigation Restrictions  
Oct 1st-March 31st

No watering on Sundays

No watering when it is below 35 °F



# RED LEAF LETTUCE



HARVEST OF THE MONTH  
FEBRUARY



**Red leaf lettuce** has large, open leaves and is a reddish-purple color. Lettuce is harvested by cutting the short stem underneath the leafy mass called the "head." Other varieties include romaine, green and butter. Red leaf lettuce is fat-free and offers more nutrients than green lettuce. As one of the world's most popular salad vegetables, lettuce comes in many shapes, sizes and colors. It is usually served cold and fresh although it can be cooked or steamed for a culinary adventure.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Red leaf lettuce comes from a big family, including: new red fire lettuce, red sails lettuce, redina lettuce, galactic lettuce and benito lettuce.

## FUN FACT

Did you know lettuce is a member of the sunflower family?



RED LEAF LETTUCE GROWING REGIONS

- |                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. The High Plains | 5. Trans Pecos       |
| 2. North Texas     | 6. Winter Garden     |
| 3. East Texas      | 7. Coastal Blend     |
| 4. Central Texas   | 8. Rio Grande Valley |



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

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

