

WINTER 2022

# AgReview

Mason County Agriculture Newsletter

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## Rainy Weather Helps Soil Moisture Levels

Recent rainy weather improved soil moisture conditions for many wheat and cool-season forage producers, but most of Texas remains below normal rainfall, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts.

John Nielsen-Gammon, Ph.D., state climatologist in the Texas A&M College of Arts and Sciences Department of Atmospheric Sciences, said parts of the state received beneficial rainfall over the past week and that cooler temperatures will help soils retain the moisture.

“The Thanksgiving weekend was a lucky shot,” he said. “As late as Tuesday, the computer models were saying that the storm could move through quickly and miss us, could stall in an ideal spot, or slide south. It ended up stalling in an ideal spot, producing a broad swath of precipitation across the middle of the state.”

Midland to San Angelo, Corpus Christi, McAllen and northeastern areas of the state received good rains

that should provide decent soil moisture for the rest of the year, Nielsen-Gammon said. The largest totals for the week were in southeastern Texas.

Port Arthur received 5.95 inches and Baytown 5.43 inches. Elsewhere in the state, Carthage in northeast Texas recorded 5.06 inches, Santa Anna recorded 4.1 inches, and several stations near Brownsville recorded 3-4 inches.

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## Registration Open for 2023 Texas Pecan Course

The 59th annual Texas Pecan Short Course will be held Jan. 23-26 at the Texas A&M University Horticulture Teaching Research and Extension Center, 3199 County Road 269 East, about 9 miles west of Texas A&M University, College Station.

The short course will be from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. each day.

Registration is now open, but seating is limited. Cost is \$300, and participants must preregister at <https://tx.ag/2023PecanShortCourse>. Lunch will be provided each day and participants should wear clothing and footwear suitable to outdoor activities in Texas during the winter.

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# 15 Tips to Prepare your Garden for Winter

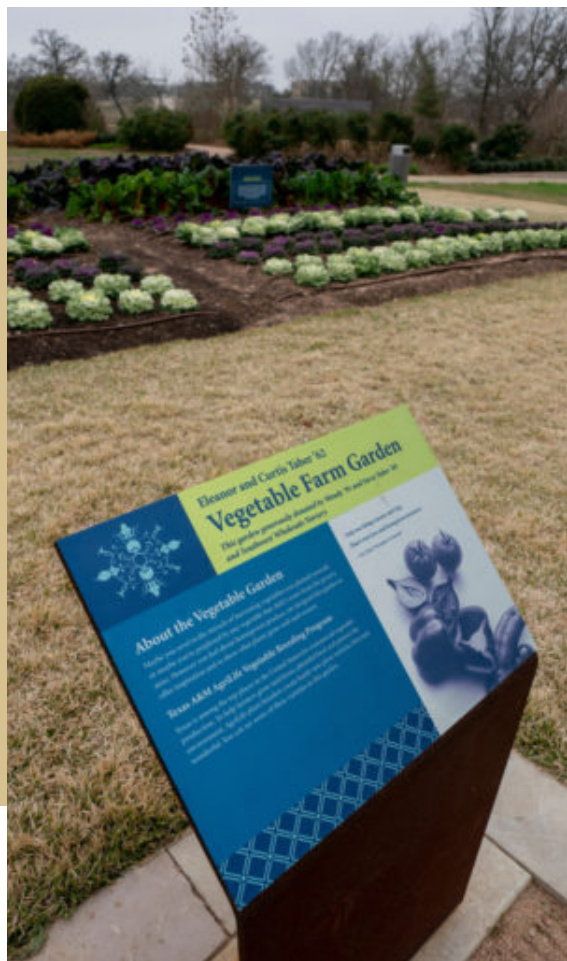
As cooler weather begins around the state, Texans need to start preparing their gardens and yards for the drop in temperatures. A good rule of “green” thumb is the farther north you live in the state, the sooner you need to start preparing.

“Texans should start thinking about preparing their garden for winter in early fall ideally; however, it’s not too late — and even think ahead to spring,” said Michael Arnold, Ph.D., director of The Gardens at Texas A&M University and professor of landscape horticulture in the Department of Horticultural Sciences at the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Bryan-College Station.

Arnold shared what he considers to be the key things Texans should be doing now to prepare for the coming seasons.

## 1) Remove Spent Annuals

Plant cool-season annuals for winter color in your gardens. “Annuals are a cost-effective way to add temporary color to your garden year-round by purchasing season-appropriate plants,” Arnold said. Also, you should immediately plant wildflower seeds, if you have them.



## 2) Weed and Clean

As we enter the winter season, many gardeners will find it is the perfect time to remove unwanted plants. Weeding now will minimize the work your garden will require for the other three seasons. Gardeners should also apply a pre-emergent herbicide, or a ‘weed killer,’ for cool-season weeds in landscape beds and turf areas, if desired.

## 3) Plant Trees and Shrubs

Late fall is the ideal time to plant woody plants so roots can be established before the heat of summer. The Texas A&M Forest Service has several web applications that provide good tree species options and recommendations for specific Texas regions and how to care for trees, including managing pests and diseases.

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# Higher Calf Prices Projected for 2023 in Texas

Drought conditions in Texas and throughout the U.S. continue to take a toll on cattle numbers, with higher calf prices and less beef production projected for 2023, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service livestock economist.

“Most of the country is in some form of drought,” David Anderson, AgriLife Extension economist in the Texas A&M Department of Agricultural Economics, Bryan-College Station, told attendees at the recent South Central Texas Cow-Calf Clinic in Brenham.

“Drought affects all aspects of the cattle business. The reason we have culled so many cows this year is because of drought and the cost of corn. High corn prices will lead to a high feed cost environment into next year. Production costs have also increased faster than calf prices.”

## Drought Related Culling

Anderson’s price outlook calls for tighter supplies of cattle going into 2023.



“In a couple of years, we will be talking about record calf prices again,” he said. “We will likely see over \$2 a pound in 2024 for 550-weight calves simply because there are fewer cattle, tighter supplies.”

Anderson said that’s being driven by more cull cows and heifers being slaughtered due to the drought.

“Drought is really affecting where wheat pasture is planted,” he said. “That’s also affected calf prices. Right now, there’s more value in heavier-weighted calves. Why? Feed is expensive.”

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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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# Mason County Agriculture

## Barberry Webworm

Spotted in some of the northern parts of the county, the Barberry Webworm is typically drawn to Algerita and Mesquite in the late Fall. This pest can be identified by its orange body with black markings.

Accompanied by orange clustered eggs, and a defoliated plant. Economic feasibility of chemical control is a hurdle. Although, most plants do eventually make a full recovery in the next growing season



## Upcoming Events

MASON COUNTY RANGELAND FIELD DAY

MASON | DECEMBER 8, 2022