

March 2024

THE PANOLA EXTENSION

A Monthly Newsletter by the Panola County AgriLife Extension office



UPCOMING EVENTS:

- 3/1: Flower ID Photography 4-H Contest begins
- 3/7: Health Literacy Series, 10:00am, Panola Senior Apartments
- 3/8: Master Gardeners Meeting, noon, Sammy Brown Library
- 3/13: Diabetes Support Group meeting, Sammy Brown Library, 10:00am
- 3/15: Spring Virtual Fishing Skill-a-thon begins
- 3/15: PCJLS Scholarship Postmark Deadline
- 3/15: Land Ownership Program, Extension Office, 9:00am
- 3/19: Horticulture in the Evening, 5:30-7:00pm, Sammy Brown Library
- 3/22-23: State 4-H Indoor Archery, Expo Hall
- 3/29: Extension Office closed for Good Friday
- 4/4: Agriculture Industry Breakfast, 7:00am, Expo Hall
- 4/16: Horticulture in the Evening, 5:30-7:00pm, Sammy Brown Library
- 4/18: Horticulture Spring Tour, Merket Tree Farm, 9am-noon
- 4/26: Mid-Sabine Cattleman's Conference, Carthage Civic Center, 8:30am
- 5/3-4: Come Alive in D5 District 4-H Roundup, Panola College
- 5/27: Extension Office Closed for Memorial Day
- 5/31: Outstanding Club Membership forms due into the Extension Office

Panola County AgriLife Extension Service

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The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION



Crapemyrtle

Pruning 101

By Greg Grant: Smith County Horticulturist,
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service



The misguided annual practice of crapemyrtle butchering is in full swing. As a crapemyrtle lover and owner of an allée of them along my driveway, I literally cringe when I see the site of carved crapes. The only pruning crapemyrtles ever need (if at all) is thinning the trunks as they are developing to the desired permanent number, removing suckers as they sprout at the base, and cutting out dead wood and crossing or rubbing branches. That's it. As with all trees in our landscapes, they should never be topped or heavily pruned. Here's why.

1. Pruning crapemyrtles decreases cold hardiness. Let's not soon forget the freeze damage inflicted on many crapemyrtles in recent memory.

2. Topping crapemyrtles causes them to sucker more at the base leading to more work to remove the unwanted sprouts. The ultimate goal is to have a permanent number of trunks (odd numbers like 3, 5 or 7 look best) with no suckers and no more topping.

3. Hack jobs on crapemyrtles costs money. Crews don't cut and haul crapemyrtle branches for free and the fuel used for the equipment isn't cheap or environmentally friendly. I suspect crapemyrtle bark scale (the tree's primary insect pest) is spread tree to tree and neighborhood to neighborhood by pruning equipment and trailers as well.

4. Topping crapemyrtles produces a plethora of new shoots and narrow crotch angles for the pesky crapemyrtle bark scale to hide and overwinter in. Crapemyrtle bark scale also likes to feed on new succulent growth and callus tissue produced by pruning.

5. Cutting and hauling crapemyrtle limbs is loads of work. I've had shoulder surgery, two neck surgeries, back surgery, and four hip surgeries. I'm certainly not looking for things to bend over and pick up!

6. If your crapemyrtle grows too big for the space you have it in, then you have the wrong cultivar and should remove it entirely instead of chopping on it annually. Some are bushes and most are small trees. They range in ultimate heights from 3-30 feet. Plant varieties accordingly.

7. Crapemyrtles have some of the most beautiful trunks and branching structure of any ornamental tree that we grow. A crapemyrtle never pruned will always be prettier than one that is maimed. The standard aesthetic rule of thumb is two-thirds upper branches and one-third sinuous lower trunks. Topping produces the opposite.

8. Cutting crapemyrtles back severely produces long sappy growth that flops and droops when they bloom. It creates larger blooms but fewer of them. It also delays the bloom time.

9. Topping crapemyrtles isn't recommended by any horticultural expert or educational publication in the world, with all agreeing that it's harmful to the tree and unattractive.

10. If your crapemyrtle has been horribly scarred by "crape murder," cut it to the ground in early spring and watch how fast it grows back. Wait one year then select the number of permanent trunks you want. Dwarf and semi-dwarf cultivars however can be grown as summer blooming shrubs by cutting back to around one foot high each spring when they begin to sprout.

Discover the Potential of Your Land

March Rural Landowner Series

By Lee Dudley

**March 15, 2024 • 9:00-12:00pm • Panola County AgriLife Extension Office
316 W. Sabine St.**

Are you a new landowner in Panola County or you thinking about a change on your property, the join Panola County AgriLife Extension, March 15th 9 am – 12:00 pm at the Panola County AgriLife Extension office located at 316 W. Sabine St. Carthage, Tx. Join us as we embark on an enlightening journey with Panola County AgriLife Extension's March Rural Landowner Series! Designed specifically for new landowners in our area, this series is your key to unlocking the full potential of your property.

Empowerment Through Knowledge:

Join us as we delve into crucial topics tailored to guide you through the exciting world of property development. Learn how to select the perfect specialty crop or livestock for your operation, and gain insights into crafting your own farm/ranch operations plan. Discover the importance of these plans and the impact they have on your future success.

Key Questions to Consider:

Before diving into decisions about your farm, consider three fundamental questions:

1. What are your goals for the farm?
2. What are the physical resources available?
3. What are your personal resources and skills?

Crafting Your Business Plan:

A comprehensive business plan is the cornerstone of success, whether your venture is simple or complex. Learn how to create a robust business plan that:

- Organizes your thoughts and actions
- Guides your aspirations and goals
- Meets the requirements for securing loans and financing

Specialty Crop Production Insights:

Discover the potential of specialty crop production, from vegetables and herbs to berries and ornamental crops. Whether you're starting small or aiming for commercial scale, this session will equip you with production methods, cultural practices, and crop selection knowledge.

Limited Availability - Register Today!

Secure your spot for this invaluable event! Our program is limited to the first 14 registrants, so don't miss out. Call the Panola County Extension office at (903) 693-0380 to reserve your place.

Don't let uncertainty hold you back—empower yourself with knowledge and join us on March 15th for a transformative experience. See you there!



Horticulture in the Evening

March 19, 2024 • 5:30-7:00pm
Sammy Brown Library

Topic: Daylilies in the Landscape
Selecting and Care



Horticulture Spring Tour



Merket Tree Farm

April 18, 2024 9am - noon

Topic: 1) Mayhaw Understanding its Value/Care
2) Tour a Operating Tree Farm



Greek Yogurt Banana and Blueberry Pancakes



- 1 Banana mashed plus more for topping
 - ¼ cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
 - ½ cup gluten-free rolled oats
 - 1 medium egg
 - 1 tablespoon unsweetened almond milk
 - ½ teaspoon baking powder
 - 1 teaspoon coconut extract
 - ½ cup blueberries fresh or frozen
- Wash hands and clean cooking area. Pre-heat skillet or griddle to medium-high heat.
 - In a large bowl, mash banana until completely smooth. Combine all ingredients together except blueberries. Mix well together then fold in blueberries and pour into a spouted measuring cup.
 - Spray cooking spray over skillet and pour batter. Pour just enough to make a small ball and flatten into a round shaped pancake using a small spoon.
 - Cook until the edges are set and bubbles begin to form in the middle, about 3 minutes. Use a spatula to flip and cook another 2-3 minutes.
 - Top with sliced bananas and blueberries and enjoy!

Cheesy Pot Pie Cups



- 2 Tablespoons vegetable oil
 - 2 Tablespoons all-purpose flour
 - 1 1/2 cups chicken broth no salt added, no sugar added
 - 1/4 cup skim milk
 - 1/2 teaspoon poultry seasonings
 - 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
 - 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
 - 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
 - 1 can crescent roll dough reduced fat
 - 10 ounce can chicken breast chunks in water, drained
 - 2 cups frozen mixed vegetables (corn, carrots, green beans, lima beans, peas)
 - 1 1/2 cups shredded Cheddar cheese – low fat
- Heat oven to 375°F
 - In a small sauce pan add vegetable oil and heat over medium heat.
 - Add flour, whisking until combined.
 - Reduce heat and slowly whisk in the chicken broth and milk. Whisk until thicken and turn off heat.
 - Add poultry seasonings, onion powder, garlic powder, and black pepper and set aside
 - Spray 8 regular size muffin cups with nonstick cooking spray.
 - Place one triangle of crescent roll dough in 8 muffin cup (covering the bottom and sides as best as possible)
 - Add the drained chicken and mixed vegetables to the chicken broth mixture stirring to combine
 - Evenly add the chicken mixture to 8 crescent roll lined muffin cups.
 - Top each muffin cup evenly with shredded cheese and bake at 375°F for 20 to 25 minutes



Health Literacy *Series*

Ability to understand health information equals better health outcomes!

Thursdays, February 8 - March 7

10am at Panola Senior Apartments (meeting room) • Open to the Public
101 Senior Ave, Carthage, TX 75633

FREE TO ATTEND

LAST LESSON: Finding Reliable Information on the Internet

Ag Industry Breakfast

April 2, 2024

7:00am

Panola County Expo Hall



**Topic: External Parasite Control
in Livestock (1 IPM CEU)**

Diabetes Support Group Meeting

*Second Wednesday of
every month!*

Next Meeting:

March 13, 2024

10:00am

Sammy Brown Library

2024 Mid-Sabine Cattleman's Conference

By Lee Dudley

The eagerly anticipated Mid-Sabine Cattleman's Conference is back for another informative year, brought to you by the collaborative efforts of Panola County AgriLife Extension, surrounding County AgriLife Offices, and industry sponsors. Scheduled for April 26th, this event promises a wealth of knowledge for attendees, with registration starting at 8:30 am and program topics running from 9:00 am until 2:00 pm.

Venue and Registration Details

The Carthage Civic Center Conference Room will once again serve as the host location for the 2024 Mid-Sabine Cattleman's Conference. To secure your spot, RSVPs are requested by April 22nd. The registration fee for this year's program is \$20, offering excellent value for attendees. Moreover, participants will earn Continued Educational Units for private applicators licenses, with 2 General, 1 IPM, and 1 Picolinic Acid Chemistry Training units awarded.

Expert Speakers and Program Highlights

Renowned regional experts will grace the stage, sharing their insights and expertise with conference participants. Dr. Vanesa Olson, AgriLife Extension Forage Specialist; Mr. Clint Perkins, County Extension Agent for Smith County; Mr. Rob Brooks, Envu Chemicals Range and Pasture Specialist; and Mr. Darren Rozell, Owner Operator of Rozell Sprayer Manufacturing, are among the distinguished speakers lined up for the event.

Key Program Topics Include:

1. Integrated Pest Management Strategies for Growing Warm Season Forages.
2. Picolinic Acid Chemistry Training: Exploring a New Tool for Weed Management.
3. Weed Identification Techniques and Control Options, featuring a weed identification test with a prize for the highest scorer.
4. Maximizing Herbicide Application Efficiency through Proper Sprayer Setup.

Engagement and Networking Opportunities

The conference promises more than just informative sessions. Doors open at 8:00 am, with attendees treated to coffee and donuts courtesy of the Panola County Beef and Forage Committee. Additionally, agriculture industry vendors will be present, offering educational resources and networking opportunities throughout the day.

Save the Date and Secure Your Spot

Landowners and cattlemen alike are encouraged to mark their calendars for the Mid-Sabine Cattleman's Conference. Early registration is advised to ensure your participation in this enriching event. For further details and registration, please contact the Panola County AgriLife Extension office at (903) 693-0380 or via email at jldudley@ag.tamu.edu. Remember, RSVPs are required by April 22nd.

Don't miss out on this exceptional opportunity to enhance your knowledge and network with industry experts. Secure your place today!



April 26, 2024
Carthage Civic Center
8:30am-2:00pm

4 CEU's Available
\$20 Fee
Register by April 12
903-693-0380



Preparing Texas Calves for Spring

Essential Management Tips

By Lee Dudley

As Texas transitions swiftly from winter chill to the onset of summer, the state's pastures come alive with the promise of better weather and lush greenery. Amidst this seasonal shift, newborn calves grazing on Texas pastures stand to benefit greatly. Now is the opportune moment for ranchers to implement economically advantageous calf management strategies that will yield dividends come weaning and marketing time.

Identification for Insight

One of the foremost considerations is the identification of calves. Utilizing ear tags facilitates the tracking of birthdates and maternal lineage for each calf. This information proves invaluable during weaning and marketing, aiding in assessing growth rates and market value. Typically, calves born earlier in the season tend to weigh more at weaning, indicating higher productivity from their dams. Monitoring calf weight at these stages helps identify and prioritize more productive cows, thus optimizing profitability.

Castration and Dehorning for Enhancement

Prompt castration of bull calves not intended for breeding, as well as early dehorning of all calves, is recommended. Conducting these procedures at a young age minimizes discomfort and accelerates recovery. Castrated calves are preferred by the feeding industry, commanding higher prices due to superior carcass quality and grading. While castration may lead to reduced weaning

weights compared to intact bull calves, compensating with calf growth implants can mitigate this loss. Dehorning or disbudding enhances calf appearance, uniformity, and reduces injury risk to both handlers and other animals. Alternatively, using genetically homozygous polled bulls or cows eliminates the need for dehorning.

Vaccination for Disease Prevention

Vaccinating calves against Blackleg or Clostridial diseases is crucial, especially if dams haven't received prior vaccination and calves are over a month old. This preventative measure shields calves from potentially fatal "sudden death" diseases. Commercial vaccines offer robust immunity against these ailments, with all calves requiring vaccination and subsequent boosters as per label instructions.

Seeking Further Guidance

For additional information and assistance, ranchers are encouraged to reach out to the Panola County AgriLife Extension Office at (903) 693-0300 Ext 161.

By implementing these prudent calf management practices, Texas ranchers can ensure the health, productivity, and profitability of their herds as they usher in the spring season.

PCJLS Scholarship

MUST be **postmarked by MARCH 15**

Attachments Required: High School Transcript and three (3) letters of recommendation

Students must have participated in the Panola County Junior Livestock Show for at least 2 years.

<https://pcjls.net>



DISTRICT PHOTOGRAPHY



Spring Flower ID Photography Contest

Register March 1 - June 15, 2024

Upload Photos May 15 - June 15

- Open to 4-H members, adults, and Clover Kids in District 5
- Individual event
- Identification of plant or tree by common name based upon “showy” flower
- Photography skills implemented to capture those colorful spring flowers



TEXAS 4-H REEL 'EM IN FISHING SKILL-A-THON



Spring Tournament:
Fish at YOUR Location
March 15 - May 27

Register NOW thru March 7 \$50 fee

Saltwater - Spotted Seatrout,
Flounder, and Redfish

Freshwater - Bass, Catfish,
and Panfish group

Panola County 4-H OUTSTANDING CLUB MEMBER

MUST be turned into Extension Office
with a 4-H Record Book by
May 31, 2024 @ 4:00pm

These scoresheets will be used for
consideration of the
Outstanding Junior Club Member and
Outstanding Senior Club Member

Points are based on participation from
June 1, 2023 - May 31, 2024

[Forms are on our website!!!](#)



SPRINGTIME SPLENDOR

Embracing Small Flowering Trees in Panola County

By Lee Dudley

As spring approaches, the picturesque countryside of Panola County prepares to burst into a kaleidoscope of colors with the blooming of dogwood, redbud, fringe-tree, crabapple, pear, peach, plum, and other small flowering trees. With the season conducive to planting, now is the opportune moment for residents to consider adding these charming trees to their landscapes.

The Charm of Small Flowering Trees

Small trees, typically standing at less than 25 feet in height, offer a multitude of benefits over their larger counterparts. Their most alluring feature lies in their ability to adorn themselves with delicate blooms, adding a touch of beauty to the landscape for a defined period. Whether it's the ethereal blossoms of dogwood and redbud in spring, the vibrant hues of crape myrtle in summer, or the winter berries of yaupon and deciduous holly, small flowering trees offer a visual feast throughout the year.

Versatility in Landscape Design

Thanks to their attractive blooms or berries, small trees serve admirably as specimen or accent trees in landscape design. An accent with crabapple, Japanese magnolia, or native hawthorns can elevate the aesthetics of any setting, creating captivating views from interior spaces.

Fast Growth and Shade Provision

Most small trees exhibit rapid growth, swiftly providing shade and beauty to the landscape. Varieties such as crape myrtle, river birch, sassafras, redbud, cherry laurel, plum, and fig are particularly noteworthy for their fast growth rates. They offer a quick solution for shading and landscaping needs until larger, slower-growing trees reach maturity.

Planting and Care Tips

Small trees are generally more adaptable to planting, but proper soil preparation and care are still essential. Early spring planting facilitates root establishment before the onset of summer heat. Staking may be necessary, especially for varieties like crabapple and dogwood, to promote upright growth and protect against sun scale and pests. Adequate spacing and generous planting pits ensure optimal growth conditions.

Embracing Gardening Joy

The allure of small flowering and fruiting trees lies in their ability to deliver quick results, rewarding gardeners with beauty and vibrancy. Residents seeking further information on this topic are encouraged to reach out to the Panola County AgriLife Extension Service at (903) 693-0380.

By embracing small flowering trees, residents of Panola County can enhance the beauty of their surroundings and revel in the joys of gardening as spring unfolds its splendor.

STRESS RELIEF FROM LAUGHTER? IT'S NO JOKE

By Mayo Clinic Staff



Whether you're guffawing at a sitcom on TV or quietly giggling at a newspaper cartoon, laughing does you good. Laughter is a great form of stress relief, and that's no joke. Stress relief from laughter

A good sense of humor can't cure all ailments, but data is mounting about the positive things laughter can do.

Short-term benefits

A good laugh has great short-term effects. When you start to laugh, it doesn't just lighten your load mentally, it actually induces physical changes in your body. Laughter can:

- Stimulate many organs. Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.
- Activate and relieve your stress response. A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response, and it can increase and then decrease your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling.
- Soothe tension. Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

Long-term effects

Laughter isn't just a quick pick-me-up, though. It's also good for you over the long term. Laughter may:

- Improve your immune system. Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can affect your body by bringing more stress into your system and decreasing your immunity. By contrast, positive thoughts can actually release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.
- Relieve pain. Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers.
- Increase personal satisfaction. Laughter can also make it easier to cope with difficult situations. It also helps you connect with other people.
- Improve your mood. Many people experience depression, sometimes due to chronic illnesses. Laughter can help lessen your stress, depression and anxiety and may make you feel happier. It can also improve your self-esteem.

Improve your sense of humor

Are you afraid that you have an underdeveloped — or nonexistent — sense of humor? No problem. Humor can be learned. In fact, developing or refining your sense of humor may be easier than you think.

- Put humor on your horizon. Find a few simple items, such as photos, greeting cards or comic strips, that make you chuckle. Then hang them up at home or in your office, or collect them in a file or notebook. Keep funny movies, TV shows, books, magazines or comedy videos on hand for when you need an added humor boost. Look online at joke websites or silly videos. Listen to humorous podcasts. Go to a comedy club.
- Laugh and the world laughs with you. Find a way to laugh about your own situations and watch your stress begin to fade away. Even if it feels forced at first, practice laughing. It does your body good.
- Consider trying laughter yoga. In laughter yoga, people practice laughter as a group. Laughter is forced at first, but it can soon turn into spontaneous laughter.
- Share a laugh. Make it a habit to spend time with friends who make you laugh. And then return the favor by sharing funny stories or jokes with those around you.
- Knock, knock. Browse through your local bookstore or library's selection of joke books and add a few jokes to your list that you can share with friends.
- Know what isn't funny. Don't laugh at the expense of others. Some forms of humor aren't appropriate. Use your best judgment to discern a good joke from a bad or hurtful one.

Laughter is the best medicine

Go ahead and give it a try. Turn the corners of your mouth up into a smile and then give a laugh, even if it feels a little forced. Once you've had your chuckle, take stock of how you're feeling. Are your muscles a little less tense? Do you feel more relaxed or buoyant? That's the natural wonder of laughing at work.

Can you weigh less *without eating less?*

Adapted from: www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/Energy_Density.pdf

Can you weigh less without eating less? Have you tried to lose weight by cutting down the amount of food you eat? Do you end up feeling hungry and not satisfied? Or have you avoided trying to lose weight because you're afraid of feeling hungry all the time? If so, you are not alone. Many people throw in the towel on weight loss because they feel deprived and hungry when they eat less. But there is another way. Aim for a slow, steady weight loss by decreasing calorie intake while maintaining an adequate nutrient intake and increasing physical activity. You can cut calories without eating less nutritious food. The key is to eat foods that will fill you up without eating a large amount of calories.

If I cut calories, won't I be hungry? Research shows that people get full by the amount of food they eat, not the number of calories they take in. You can cut calories in your favorite foods by lowering the amount of fat and/or increasing the amount of fiber rich ingredients, such as vegetables or fruit. Let's take macaroni and cheese as an example. The original recipe uses whole milk, butter, and full-fat cheese. This dish has about 540 calories in a one-cup serving. If we make some simple substitutions (8 oz light cream cheese for the cheddar, skim milk for whole milk, margarine for butter), we can get that down to 315 calories. We can also add some fiber-rich vegetables like spinach and tomatoes to add flavor, color and keep us feeling full.

What foods will fill me up? In order to be able to cut calories without eating less and feeling hungry, you need to replace some higher calorie foods with more filling foods that are lower in calories and fat. In general, this means foods with lots of water and fiber in them. Here are some examples: Fruits and vegetables (prepared without added fat), low-fat and fat-free milk products, broth-based soups, whole grains, legumes (beans and peas), lean meat, poultry and fish. Choose these foods more often than their fattier alternatives.

Instead of...	Try This!
Fried Chicken Sandwich	Grilled Chicken Salad
Cream-Based Soup	Broth-Based Soup
Chips and Pretzels	Fresh Vegetables





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