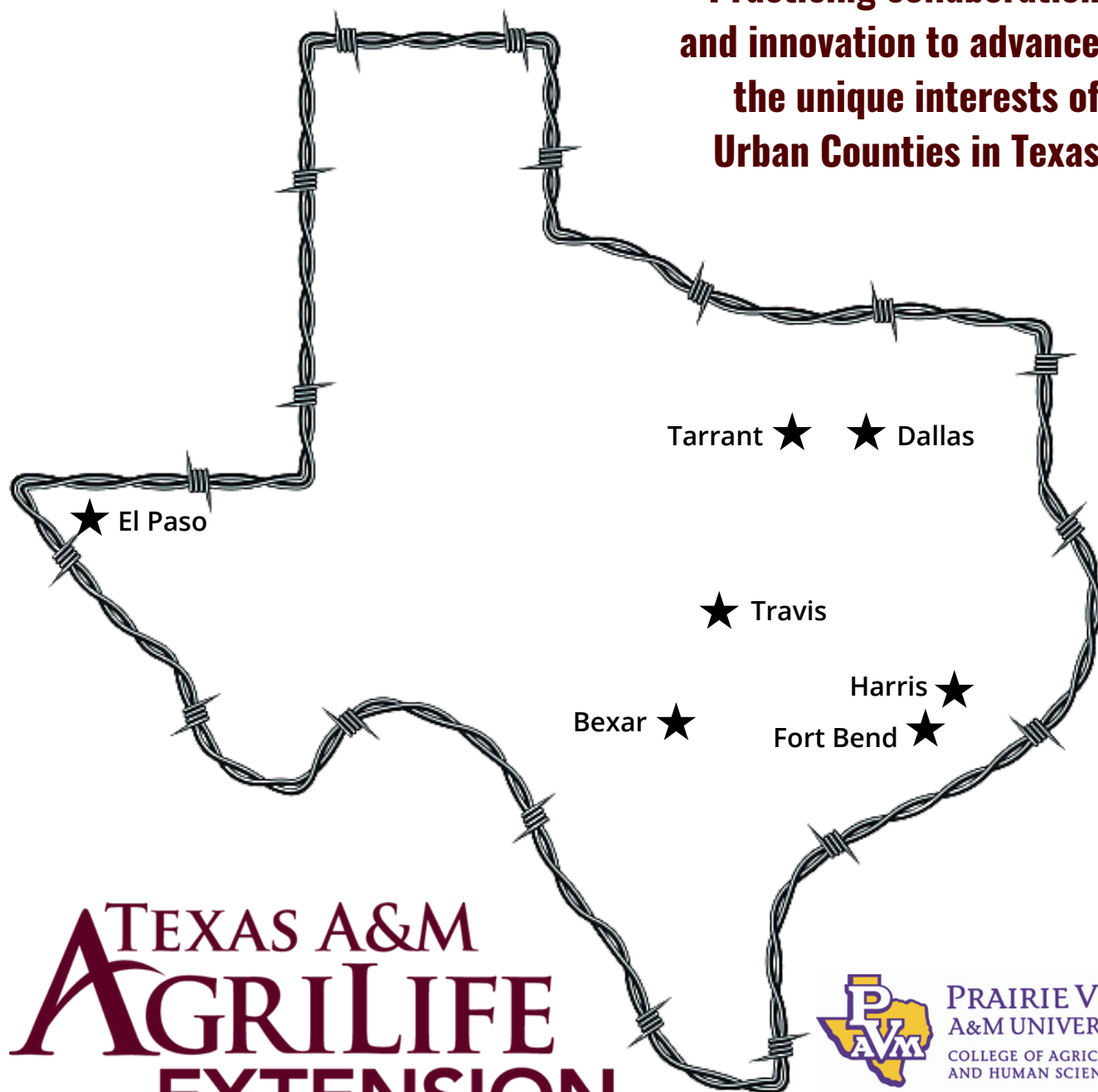


EXTENSION IN THE CITY

May 2022 Quarterly Newsletter

**Practicing collaboration
and innovation to advance
the unique interests of
Urban Counties in Texas**



**TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION**



**PRAIRIE VIEW
A&M UNIVERSITY**
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Cooperative Extension Program

AGRILIFEEXTENSION.TAMU.EDU

OUR WORK MAKES A DIFFERENCE. IN THE LIVES OF TEXANS AND ON THE ECONOMY.

MISSION STATEMENT:

“Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service works daily to make Texas better by providing innovative solutions at the intersection of agriculture, natural resources, youth, and health, thereby improving the well-being of individuals, families, businesses, and communities through education and service.”

VISION STATEMENT:

“Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service will be the leader in providing science-based information and solutions in agriculture and health to every Texan.”

SHARED VALUES:

“We value People, Programs, and Partnerships.”



Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service - Urban Counties



Extension in the City

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a unique education agency that provides programs, tools, and resources on a local and statewide level that teach people how to improve agriculture and food production, advance health practices, protect the environment, strengthen the economy, and enrich youth. With 250 county offices serving Texans in all 254 counties, county Extension agents and specialists serve families, youth, communities, and businesses throughout the state.

Seven of the 254 counties represent our urban counties with a population of more than 14.2 million residents. With our dedicated administration, volunteers, community leaders, stakeholders, and elected officials, we are better positioned to provide impactful programs and services to Texans for many years to come.

We hope you enjoy our first edition of the Extension in the City magazine. Our goal is to highlight the great work our team continues to demonstrate across multiple program areas. It illustrates the results of programs that our people develop and implement, often in partnership with others.

Respectfully,

David D. Wright
Urban Program Director
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

RODEO IN SAN ANTONIO

The San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo is one of the largest and most distinguished events in the city of San Antonio drawing 1.5 million visitors to its grounds each year. This year was especially exciting as the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo resumed a full event schedule and welcomed back its die-hard fans from far and near.

This year, a total of 153 4-Hers participated in the San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo showcasing their expertise, leadership, showmanship, and teamwork.



<i>San Antonio Stock Show – 153 Exhibitors</i>	
Barrow – 16	Calf Scramble – 8
Beef Heifer – 3	Sheep Skill-a-Thon – 2
Breeding Sheep – 1	Swine Skill-a-Thon – 5
Broiler – 3	Public Speaking – 1
Commercial Dam – 1	Junior Shoot-Out – 28
Crossbred Gilt – 6	Food Challenge – 7
Goat – 26	Livestock Judging teams – 7
Purebred gilt – 3	Consumer Decision Making Team – 1
Steer – 5	Photography – 13
Turkey Hen – 4	

R&B1 URBAN COUNTY FARM

R&B1 Urban County Farm is one of two research, education, and demonstration gardens managed by Dallas County Master Gardeners. The project is a joint effort between Commissioner Theresa Daniel's office and the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Urban County Farm serves as an example of what is possible when local entities work together to maximize the usefulness of public buildings and their surrounding spaces in ways that are beneficial for the community, its residents, and the environment. In- and out-of-state visitors tour the property regularly to learn more about our model.

Once home to an automotive service center for Dallas County vehicles in addition to the District 1 office, the 11 acre property now boasts a series of demonstration gardens, a vineyard, an orchard, an apiary and a donation farm.

The veggie farm has yielded almost 9,000 pounds of produce since its inception, all distributed to kitchens that help keep Dallas County's homeless and underprivileged population fed. Master Gardeners at Urban County Farm work in conjunction with other civically-minded growers in the area, coordinating crops in an effort to supply kitchens with the widest variety of produce possible.



Once harvested, the produce is sent to Big Tex Urban Farm in Dallas for distribution to kitchens located in Fair Park and south Dallas neighborhoods, impoverished sections of the city known for their large homeless population and a lack of access to fresh, healthy food in general. These kitchens include: the Austin Street Shelter, the Jubilee Park Community Center, Cornerstone Baptist Church, and the Baylor Scott & White Health and Wellness Center at the Juanita J. Craft Recreation Center. Our gardeners take great pride in knowing that food harvested on one day will be on someone's plate the next.

R&B1 URBAN COUNTY FARM, CONT.

Urban County Farm's apiary was established early last summer when two Flow-type hives were stocked with bees mail ordered from Georgia. A third live hive was rescued and added shortly thereafter. Yet another rescued hive, our fourth, arrived just a few weeks ago. All of our bees work very hard to keep the farm and vineyard producing in their own special way.

Bee Team members have learned quite a lot in a short amount of time and have already seen a great deal of success. They were able to harvest the first batches of honey much earlier than anticipated and in larger quantities than expected. The honey was awarded a second place ribbon in the Texas State Fair's 2021 Black Jar honey competition.



Recently, team leaders at Urban County Farm have been partnering with Dallas County's Juvenile Department to provide opportunities for area youth to earn required community service hours. Our young helpers have done a great job spreading mulch, filling raised beds, and potting young tomato plants.

Urban County Farm remains a work in progress. We will be looking for ways to increase the orchard's output and we anticipate having our largest harvests yet in the vineyard and veggie farm.

More information on the Urban County Farm can be found at <https://dallascountymastergardeners.org/rb1-urban-county-farm/>

SMALL FARMERS OUTREACH PROGRAM

On February 24, 2022, the El Paso County Extension office hosted a Small Farmers Outreach program at Sombra de Piro in El Paso's Mission Valley in Socorro, Texas. This program, a collaboration of Texas A&M AgriLife and Prairie View A&M University, invited small farmers from El Paso County to come and learn about USDA Farm programs such as farm financing, crop insurance, and conservation programs. The program also highlighted other local programs and resources like the El Paso Central Appraisal District and El Paso County Water Improvement District #1 that included information on Agriculture land exemptions and irrigation water rights. There were 25 participants in attendance.

The purpose of this program was to develop a localized approach to El Paso County specific farming practices using culturally specific methods. The series of programs will continue to address the topics that we have provided but will develop into a specialty crop program series. A large part of this program is to assist El Paso County small farmers with USDA Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service loan and application packaging. Our focus is to ensure and prepare El Paso County farmers for utilization of funds that are available to them and to confirm that they submit strong application packages that will be funded. We also serve as advocates and make ourselves available to the small farmer applicants as they continue to work with these federal agencies. We provide technical assistance and support through the entire application process, including attendance at meetings with these government agencies, and serve as representatives on their behalf.



SMALL FARMERS OUTREACH PROGRAM, CONT.



Other components of this program are to expose small farmers to local and state resources that are available to them. These include but are not limited to, agricultural burning, pesticide applicator license, and other agricultural exemptions. Our vision for this program moving forward is to provide the resources necessary to be successful small farmers through a series of educational programs that begins with small farmer finance programs and culminating into crop diversification and the introduction of local traditional specialty crops. Thank you to our sponsors Bodega Loya (Ralph and Marty Loya) and State Representative Mary Gonzalez, House District 75. If you are interested in learning more about the program, please click [here](#).



IN-PERSON CANNING CLASSES RESUME

After an almost 2 year hiatus due to COVID, in-person food preservation classes have resumed in Fort Bend County! During the hiatus, on demand online classes were available to those interested.

The in-person March 25th class focused on pickling and pressure canning. Canning basics including specific information on Boiling Water, Bath Canning, and Pressure Canning were shared. Fort Bend County Family & Community Health Agent Dianne Gertson emphasized using credible recipe sources and ensuring proper canning methods are selected along with an overview of the required equipment. The class included demonstrations of Bread and Butter Pickles and Stewed Tomatoes. This inaugural class of 2022 taught 6 engaged participants who each took home a jar of pickles and a jar of tomatoes.

Home Food Preservation classes in Fort Bend County are led by Dianne Gertson, RDN, LD; Family and Community Health Agent. Dianne has been leading the home food preservation classes for more than 10 years. Four additional in person classes are scheduled throughout 2022 to provide a full spectrum of education on food preservation topics.



THE HOME GROWN ONLINE LECTURE SERIES

The Home Grown Online Lecture Series was created as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic in May 2020 to mitigate the decline of educational outreach, and to capture the growing online presence by residents. The series allows the Agriculture & Natural Resources (ANR) Unit of Harris County to continue education despite the newness of the technology. The live virtual lecture series provides topics that focus on ag literacy, horticulture, and gardening relevant to the urban resident. Lectures are under an hour and allow for interactive participation. Viewers include Harris County residents but extend nationally and internationally.

Additional outreach components have been added to the series, such as a YouTube Channel, a monthly newsletter, and a podcast. The team has built a robust assortment of outreach appropriate for the urban setting. The formats encourage learning both synchronously or asynchronously and strengthens the AgriLife brand in the community.

Programming during the pandemic has challenged the team to stay relevant in the community. Our flexibility has allowed us to design a unique collection of resources that has proven to be a positive teaching opportunity. It connects participants with their environment, giving them the tools to better understand ag literacy and horticulture for health, savings, and nutrition. The series will compliment outreach as we incorporate in-person events and continue to build credibility for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agents in the community to reach all Texans.

Harris County Extension Horticulture:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmIhsYf4bJEHqUIFb2vVpkQ>

Home Grown Podcast: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/1791415>

Home Grown Newsletter: <https://harris.agrilife.org/home-grown-newsletter/>

HOME GROWN LECTURE SERIES

TAMU AgriLife Extension - Harris County
Ag & Natural Resources Unit

2022 Quarter 1



3 PROGRAMS



- Starting Plants from Seeds
- Basic Grafting Techniques
- Tomatoes for the Patio

535

attendees*

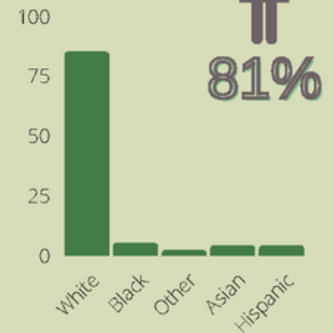
*274
completed
surveys



1,124 VIEWS

% viewed on
YouTube vs. Live

- Starting Plants from Seeds 31%
 - Tomatoes for the Patio 22%
 - Basic Grafting Techniques 100%
- *live not offered



91%

OF
PARTICIPANTS
INTEND TO
APPLY
INFORMATION



Participants' Level of
Understanding that was
Good or Excellent
BEFORE & AFTER
the lecture

33 %



92 %



72%

average

PARTICIPANTS
EXPECT TO
SAVE MONEY
FROM
LECTURE INFO

{ Starting Plants from Seeds
91% expect to save money }

Participants describe themselves gardeners

Avid 63%

Fairweather 29%

Lapsed 3%

New 5%

2% ↓

=
48%

50% ↑

In 2022 % of participants expect to
spend time gardening compared to 2021



PARTICIPANTS BELIEVE



Gardening can
increase physical and
mental health



Gardens
improve quality
of life



Gardens and gardening
have a positive impact
on the climate



Lectures provide
better understanding
of backyard farming,
urban ag and how food
is produced

85%

TARRANT COUNTY PROS IN PARKS PROGRAM

Tarrant County is one of the largest urban counties in the United States with an estimated population of 2.1 million citizens. Parks employees in Tarrant County are responsible for the maintenance of more than 20,000 acres of public green spaces. Management of this resource has an impact on not only the quality of life for all the residents of Tarrant County who use the parks for recreation and exercise, but also on the environment. Municipal parks provide a large part of the green infrastructure that has the potential to improve surface water and air quality in this heavily populated urban area. City employee training budgets are limited, but in a partnership with Texas AgriLife Extension, the Tarrant County cities of Fort Worth, Arlington, and Mansfield have been able to offer up-to-date information in educational programs by Extension Agents and Specialists on a wide range of horticultural and personal development topics in a convenient location at minimal cost.

Since its inception in 2009, the Tarrant County Pros in Parks program, under the direction of the Tarrant County Commercial Horticulture Agent, Laura Miller, and her Texas Water Star Program Committee, has educated more than 7,100 parks employees through high-quality, hands-on educational experiences. The program consists of six weeks of training on various relevant topics including Earth-Kind Landscape Management, Plant Identification and Selection, Plant Disease Diagnosis, Turf and Athletic Field Maintenance, Stream and Erosion Management, Urban Wildlife, Tree Hazard Identification, Pruning, Biting and Stinging Insects, Skin Cancer Prevention, and Customer Service. Additionally, most class sessions also feature hands-on outdoor activities.



TARRANT COUNTY PROS IN PARKS PROGRAM, CONT.



Participants have the opportunity to tour twelve different parks, survey two urban streams, participate in a photo wildlife scavenger hunt, plant trees, prune trees and shrubs, rebuild a pitchers mound, conduct playground safety inspections, evaluate tree hazards using a 10-point checklist, and work in small groups with volunteer leaders to practice plant identification skills. Partnerships with five Extension Specialists, three Agents in other program disciplines, and two other state agencies, Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas A&M Forestry Service, also enhance the program.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pros in Parks program was moved into a hybrid format with the classroom portions of the program being offered virtually.

Additionally, Agent Laura Miller and a team of Extension Specialists worked with the AgriLife Digital Education department to develop this into an online course now available through the AgriLife Learn platform so that other parks professionals from across the state can benefit from the education being offered in Tarrant County.

For more information, contact Tarrant County Commercial Horticulture Agent, Laura Miller, at laura.miller@ag.tamu.edu or 817-884-1945.

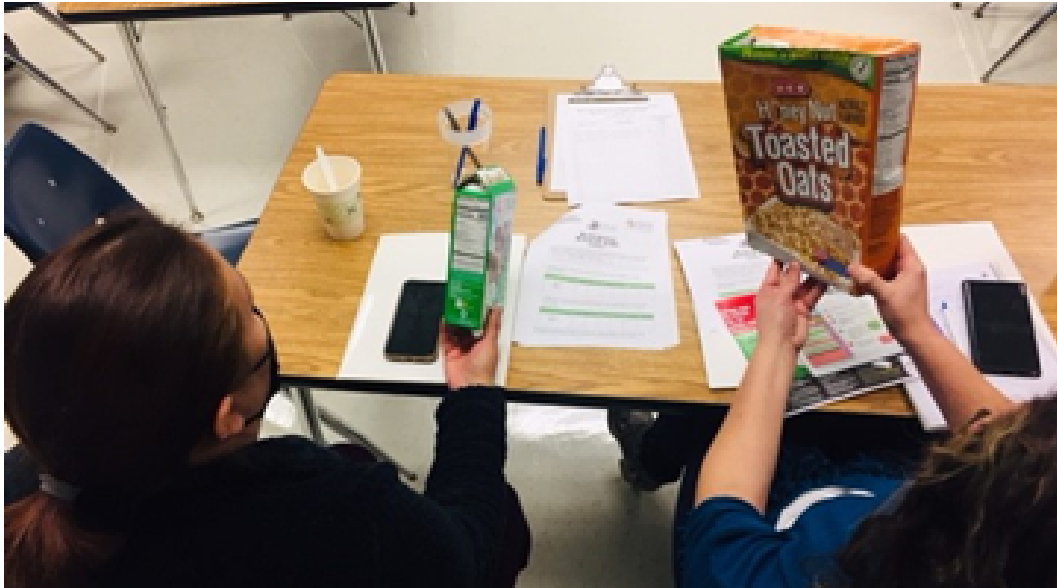
CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Austin, Texas located in Travis County is one of the urban counties that continues to have the offices mostly closed during the pandemic in 2022 and is transitioning slowly to in-person programs. As a result, Sonia Coyle, FCH agent works remotely to conduct virtual sessions and in-person with partner agencies. As part of the Chronic Disease Prevention Programs, Health & Wellness sessions in English and Spanish continues to be the main focus for Sonia Coyle during January-May of 2022.

Health and Wellness Programs are designed to promote health and prevent chronic diseases. The content and topics are based on several Extension curriculums, such as Step Up & Scale Down, Stress Less With Mindfulness, and Specialists' presentations such as "Fad Diets" and "Portion Control". The goal is to provide series of 4 or more classes with various audiences such as worksites, Head Start Program, schools, and agencies such as Take Off Pounds Sensibly (TOPS). The program's goal is to guide participants towards a healthy weight through 1) nutrition education, 2) food preparation, 3) physical activity with Power Walk, fitness videos and dances posted on YouTube, and 4) mindfulness. Mrs. Coyle works with Master Wellness Volunteers (MWV) utilizing them as speakers or liaisons, and some MWV acted as site coordinators choosing topics from a list of 18.



CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION PROGRAMS, CONT.



The highlight of the Health & Wellness Program is that Mrs. Coyle teaches a series of five Health & Wellness sessions in Spanish and five sessions in English virtually to parents from a group of eight Austin Independent School District Elementary schools that enrolled in the Head Start Program resulting in an average of 17 attendees at each session. The Head Start Health and Social Services Specialist promotes the sessions, sends friendly reminders, and coordinates the virtual platform. To motivate attendance and compliance of surveys Mrs. Coyle provides incentives for the parents that attended a minimum of three sessions and completed the pre and post surveys. The partnership with Head Start continues to evolve for more sessions in the Fall of 2022.

More in-person learning opportunities are scheduled for Mrs. Coyle focusing on youth this Summer and Health & Wellness programs in the Fall.

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Commissioner Marialyn Barnard
Commissioner Tommy Calvert



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County Judge Clay Jenkins
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Commissioner J.J. Koch
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County Judge
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**With the support of the County Judge
and County Commissioners, each Texas
A&M AgriLife Extension County Office
offers the knowledge resources of the
Texas A&M University System to local
citizens for self-improvement, individual
action, and community problem-solving.**

Thank You.