

Agriculture/Horticulture Newsletter

July 2024

2nd Annual Cattleman's Workshop

**2nd Annual
Cattleman's Workshop**
Brady, Texas

July 26, 2024
Heart of Texas Event Center

Registration 7:30 a.m.
Welcome & Kick-off at 8:00 a.m.
Free Admission and Lunch Provided

- *Low Stress Cattle Handling*
- *Prescribed Burning*
- *Chemical Updates*
- *IPT Brush Control*
- *Picolinic Acid Training*

3 CEU's

Event Sponsors:

McCulloch SWCD

Please RSVP to McCulloch SWCD
Via email, mcculloch@swcd.texas.gov Or call 325-597-1512 ext. 3
by July 19, 2024.

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- How to store Tomatoes
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The 2nd Annual Cattleman's Workshop, held in Brady, Texas, is just around the corner. This year holds exciting and educational topics such as low stress cattle handling, brush control, and prescribed burn. This program will be worth 3 CEU's- 1 Laws and Regs, 1 IPM and 1 General.

Please RSVP to the McCulloch County Soil and Water Conservation District via email or call by July 19, 2024.

mcculloch@swcd.texas.gov
325.597.1512 ext. 3

Aquatic Weed Management

Tom Guthrie, CEA-ANR, Mills County

Do you call it a stock tank or a pond? I grew up calling them stock tanks thinking that ponds were for picnics and pollywogs. My grandparents even had one we called the drinking tank. Yes, that's what supplied water to their home in southern Coleman County where we had no underground water or rural water system. I often hear them referred to as ponds nowadays. No matter what you call them, it has been a blessing to finally have mostly full to full stock tanks and ponds. The amount of rainfall we have seen up to this point in the year has been amazing. Sitting here at the Mills County Courthouse we sit at about 28 inches of rain for the year so far. I know many areas in the county have seen more than that and some less. With full tanks and ponds, brings on other issues. Most of them have been low to even dry the past few years. We have seen less aquatic weed problems and less fish stocking. This summer, I have been getting calls on fish stocking and management and aquatic weeds.

Aquatic Weed Management

Here are some pointers to keep in mind when dealing with aquatic weed problems- The best time to treat algae, floating and submerged aquatic vegetation is in the spring before you have a large biomass build up. It is best to treat with water temperatures between 65-88 degrees F. When using contact herbicides, treat in sections of 1/4 to 1/3 at a time, wait 10-14 days and treat the next section. Follow up spot treatments are typically necessary. Active ingredients that are contained in aquatic products may also be present in products that are not approved for aquatic uses. It is not legal to apply a herbicide directly to water unless the herbicide label has specific instructions for application to water. Many of our aquatic weeds look very similar to other aquatic weeds when in the water. Proper identification is key to treating them. Besides chemical applications, there are non-chemical methods available that are physical and biological options.

One of the best websites we have available from Texas A&M Agrilife Extension is called Aquaplant. Found at aquaplant.tamu.edu. This site will help you identify the plant, give you options on how to manage the plant, and which herbicides and methods work best. It will also provide information on fish stocking and pond management.

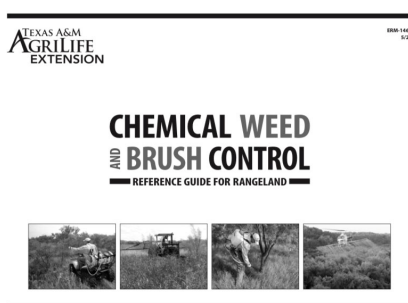
Fertilizers- Most of the time in our ponds, phosphorus is limiting. When looking at fertilizer mixes, the middle # is phosphorus. N-P-K. In liquid and granular mixes, you need 20-36% phosphorus and in powdered mixes you need 50-60% phosphorus. When fertilizing ponds, you can increase fish production 4-6 times. Do not fertilize rooted vegetation. Do not overfertilize. When making the decision to begin fertilizing your ponds, it is important to remember that this is not a one-time job. You must be dedicated to making it a part of your management operation. The alternative to fertilizing is feeding. Learn how to use a Secchi Disk to measure water transparency to determine need.

Fish Management- All species of fish have different management strategies. Educate yourself on which species you want to stock before stocking. Will you fish for them? Will you harvest them? How big is your tank or pond?

Chemical Weed and Brush Control Reference Guide—Updated

ERM-1466 Chemical Weed and Brush Control Reference Guide was updated in May of 2020 to include the most recent chemicals.

This publication provides general suggestions for herbicides used to control brush and weeds on Texas rangelands. It also gives information on the levels of control expected. Visit the Agrilife Bookstore for the free download:



<https://agrilife.org/westtexasrangelands/files/2020/05/ERM-1466.pdf>



Figure 9. Mesquite tree showing lateral roots and branching taproot.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

How to Store Tomatoes— Tips to Keep Tomatoes, From “Breakers” to Ripened Red

One of the simple joys of summer is access to great-tasting tomatoes.

Whether grown and picked at “color break” from a home garden or bought fully ripened at a local farmers market or grocery store, tomatoes are a treat. There are some tips and tricks to help you get the most from your tomato harvest or purchase, according to a Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service expert. Joe Masabni, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension small-acreage horticulturist at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in Dallas and professor in the Department of Horticultural Sciences, shared his expert advice on storing and extending the life of tomatoes without compromising taste.

Timing is everything- Nothing will taste as great as a tomato at its peak, so timing is a major factor to consider when ripening tomatoes. They can ripen in days or weeks, depending on the variety and stage at which they were picked, so buy or pick accordingly. If all your tomato plants are full simultaneously and there is no possible way to eat them as fast as they need to be picked, there are ways to space out the ripening process to allow for extended use. Any tomato reaching the “breaker stage” will continue to ripen off the vine, Masabni said. This is the stage where the bottom of the tomato has started to change from green to yellow.

Five tomatoes in a row shown in different stages of ripening from left to right starting with green and ending with bright red

The best place to let tomatoes ripen is on your kitchen counter. Ideally, ripe or ripening tomatoes prefer temperatures around the mid-60s, but Masabni said room temperature in most homes is fine. However, breaker-stage tomatoes can be stored in a refrigerator to halt the ripening process. This allows you to pull them from the fridge and let them ripen as needed. Once the tomatoes are at room temperature again, they will usually continue the ripening process over several days. If you’ve picked an entirely green tomato, it will not ever ripen. It’s best to use these for a favorite recipe, like a relish or fried green tomatoes.

Vine ripening, or not- Tomatoes in various shades of green and red ripening on the vine. Once a tomato is at the breaker stage, it can be classified as vine ripened. Even though it doesn’t look ripe yet, it has all the sugars and essential compounds necessary for it to reach its mature color and full flavor. “Once it’s physiologically ripe, it is considered vine ripened and can be picked and marketed as such,” Masabni said. For gardeners, while it may seem like a good idea to keep the tomato on the vine until you are ready to eat it, the longer it is on the vine, the more likely it is to be eaten by birds or bugs. If you can protect your tomato plants from pests that is best, but don’t have any qualms about picking your tomatoes and allowing them to finish ripening off the vine, because they will still have that same wonderful flavor.

Best way to store tomatoes- Make sure you store the tomatoes with a little space between them on the counter or in a container to allow air circulation, Masabni said. “Tomatoes should be stored how you see them at the market – out in the open,” he said. “Consumers often do it wrong – they treat onions like tomatoes and tomatoes like onions when it comes to storage. Keep your onions in the refrigerator, not the counter or the pantry.” Do not keep tomatoes in a closed bag unless you want to hasten the ripening process. Ethylene gas produced by tomatoes ripens them quicker when held in the bag. Tomatoes will also ripen more quickly if left in warmer temperatures, like on a porch or in an outbuilding. This can happen quickly, so you’ll want to check on them daily in temperatures above 80 degrees. Refrigeration can alter taste- As a rule of thumb, Masabni suggested not refrigerating ripe tomatoes whenever possible. “Do not refrigerate ripe tomatoes unless you just can’t eat them,” Masabni said. “Refrigerators can affect the taste and texture of a ripe tomato, so let them ripen on a counter and then eat or cook with them.”

But for gardeners who have more than they can eat or share with friends and family, refrigeration is a way to extend the shelf life.

Let no tomato go to waste- If you have more tomatoes than you can eat, consider using them in salsa and other recipes. If they are just a little past their prime, they can also be turned into sauces. Romas can be used to make tomato paste, but detecting if a Roma is still good is tough since they stay firm even after they go bad inside. Whole tomatoes may also be frozen to use in stews or cooked dishes. “The only time a tomato is garbage is if it’s starting to be mushy,” he said



Texas Sheep and Goat Expo 2024



San Angelo—August 16-17, 2024

Registration is open now for you to attend the upcoming 51st Sheep and Goat Field Day and 2024 Texas Sheep and Goat Expo! This event, taking place on August 16-17, 2024, offers a unique opportunity for producers and enthusiasts to attend educational presentations and participate in hands-on demonstrations led by industry experts. Our program addresses the diverse needs of the sheep and goat industry. Sheep and Goat Field Day: We will kick off with the 51st Annual Sheep and Goat Field Day with registration at 7:30 a.m. on Friday, August 16th at the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center in San Angelo. Texas Sheep and Goat Expo: The 2024 Texas Sheep and Goat Expo will begin with lunch at 12:00 p.m. on Friday at the San Angelo Fairgrounds First Community Spur Arena, and the days' activities will conclude at 8:30 p.m. We will begin Saturday, August 17 at 7:00 a.m. with breakfast and vendor demonstrations followed by the concurrent sessions for wool sheep, hair sheep, meat goats, angora goats, club lambs, and a youth skill-a-thon workshop. The Expo concludes following lunch on Saturday. The Youth Program and Skill-a-thon will be held on Saturday, August 16th from 8:00 AM - 1:00 PM. It will feature hands on learning from industry experts. Skill-a-thon topics include: Skill-a-thon Skills and Contest, Ultrasound, Genetic Selection and Mohair Judging. Includes breakfast and lunch. Register online- <https://agrilife.org/agrilifesheepandgoat/participants/>

TEXAS SHEEP & GOAT EXPO 2024

This unique sheep and goat event provides producers and other interested persons the opportunity to attend educational presentations. The speakers are experts in the industry. This program meets the needs of a very diverse sheep and goat industry.

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<https://agrilife.org/agrilifesheepandgoat/>



AUGUST 16-17, 2024

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