Extension in the City

1st Place:
Outstanding Master Gardener Association
Tarrant County Master Gardener Association

Master Gardener of the Year
Nancy Curl

Educational Program
Earth boxes

Website
Garden of Knowledge

Exhibit
Cultivating Your Children

Poster
How to Pick and Plant Trees

2nd Place:
Project Award
North Richland Hills Community Garden

Publication
Cactus and Succulent Garden

Newsletter
Share Cropper

3rd Place:
Mass Media
Survive and Thrive

Visit our website: http://tarrant.tamu.edu

Extension in the City Newsletter is Going Green!

In order to do so, we are going to need your help. Please call our office with your email address* or fill out the form attached below and return to our office via email, fax or postal mail at:

Texas AgriLife Extension Service - Extension in the City NL
PO Box 1540, Fort Worth, TX 76101
Phone: 817.884.1945 / Fax: 817.884.1941
Email: Tarrant-TX@tamu.edu

* Email addresses will remain confidential & will not be shared with anyone outside our agency.

Tarrant Cares is celebrating its first anniversary. During the first year alone, the site received 3,439,081 hits. Go online any time to www.tarrantcares.org to see all the information on health, social services, housing, employment and support groups, medical equipment, medications, medical tests and much more.

Sample E-newsletter Article – TarrantCares.org Celebrates First Anniversary

Do you need to find local health or social services? Would you like more information about medications and medical tests? Then TarrantCares.org is the place for you. Almost 3.5 million people used TarrantCares.org in its first year to find the help and resources they needed. At any time, day or night, you can find information on topics ranging from local health and social services to housing, employment and support groups. A library of more than 30,000 articles on health, parenting and other topics also includes information on medications and medical tests – all written in everyday language.

Featured Projects

TarrantCares.org offers a library of more than 30,000 articles on a variety of topics. To see all the information on health, social services, housing, employment, support groups, medical equipment, medications, medical tests and much more.

Sample Facebook Postings

TarrantCare: Just another day in paradise.

TarrantCare: How to Pick and Plant Trees.

TarrantCare: Visit our website: www.tarrantcares.org

Sample Employee Directory

- Nancy Curl
- Thomas Smith
- Sarah Johnson

Tarrant Cares is a service of Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.
We are pleased to announce our new Better Living for Texans (BLT) Extension Assistant, Melissa Crawford. Listed below are a few facts (bio) for Melissa:

Melissa was born in Orlando, Florida and moved to Arlington, Texas in 1988. She began her higher education at the University of North Texas studying Health Promotion in 2005. After 2 years of study she transferred to Texas Women’s University to pursue a degree in Food and Nutrition, where she graduated in 2009 with her Bachelor of Science. Her interests are music, reading, and art. She also enjoys going to the movies and baking. Melissa’s professional goals are to maintain a career where she can help others make positive and healthy life choices.

Join us in welcoming Melissa to our Tarrant County Texas AgriLife Extension Service office.

There are more than 2 million miles of pipelines crisscrossing the United States safely delivering all types of products. In our area, natural gas and petroleum pipelines are the type in greatest numbers. These pipelines are essential, as the volume they can move far exceeds any other form of transportation. In 2006, the federal government rededicated itself to pipeline safety when new methods and commitments for new technologies to manage the integrity of the nation’s pipelines where initiated.

How do you recognize a pipeline’s location? Markers or signs designate where a pipeline runs through your area or property. Pipeline markers are to be placed at each crossing of a public road and railroad; and wherever necessary to identify the location of the pipeline to reduce the possibility of damage or interference. The markers are required to have the name of the operator and the telephone number where the pipeline company can be reached at all times. If you have a pipeline in your area become familiar with this contact information, in case of an emergency.

A major source of leaks on pipelines is someone accidentally striking a pipeline when digging. This damage can easily be prevented by making one telephone call prior to digging or excavating. All persons are required by law to contact “811” prior to any excavation, trenching, boring or other soil disturbing activity. By simply dialing “811”, you can reach the one-call center where, at no cost to you, companies that may operate underground utilities in the area you plan to dig will be notified. Those companies can then dispatch locate crews to determine and mark the exact location of their utilities so that you can avoid hitting them when you begin your excavation.

A suspected leak may be detected by a strange or unusual odor in the vicinity of a pipeline. You may hear a hissing or roaring sound which is caused by escaping gas. Another sign may be a persistent bubbling in standing water, or discolored vegetation.

If you suspect a leak, leave the area immediately, your personal safety should be your first concern. Immediately notify the emergency personnel by calling 911 along with the pipeline operator from the number(s) listed on markers. Avoid direct contact with escaping gas or liquids. Avoid creating sparks or sources of heat which could cause liquids or vapor rising from them to ignite and burn. Warn others to stay away from the area.

To do your part in pipeline safety follow these rules: Always call “811” before you dig; wait for the area to be marked prior to digging; ensure you are not digging in a pipeline right-of-way; and dig with care.
A credit score is a three–digit number that measures how likely you are to repay a loan or fine. The range for credit scores is 300–850 your score is determined by information from your credit report to predict the risk of you not paying that loan back 24 months after scoring.

What will affect my score?

- Late payments - how many payments have been missed and how old are the late payments?
- Closing accounts may have a temporary negative effect on your credit score. Closing accounts will reduce your available credit limits and will increase your overall utilization rate, making it appear as if you suddenly taken on more debt.
- Applying for new credit represents an unknown risk to lenders. Meaning a person has applied, the status of the new debt isn’t known. Recent inquiries can have a small but meaningful impact on credit scores.
- Shopping for an auto or mortgage loan is unique. It is known that most people inquire about these loans in a short period and are counted as a single inquiry by credit scoring systems. This is a 45 day window, mind your inquiries – most likely you will also shop for insurance for these items also. Make a financially responsible decision within that time frame.
- Paying ALL your bills on time will keep your credit score stable and at a good level. Also if you and your spouse open credit together in Texas it will affect your score if they do not pay joint bills well.
- Be cautious who you co-sign for, if anyone.

One last note:
A consumer reporting company can report most accurate negative information for seven years and bankruptcy information for 10 years. There is no time limit on reporting information about criminal convictions; information reported in response to your application for a job that pays more than $75,000 a year and information reported because you’ve applied for more than $150.00 worth of credit or life insurance. Information about a lawsuit or an unpaid judgment against you can be reported for seven years or until the statute of limitations runs out, whichever is longer.

Take care of your payment history and your score will be a good one, maybe even a great one!
The weather is gorgeous, the lakes are full and all the Nurseries are ready to sell you some beautiful plants. Everyone is dying to get out and work in the yard, grab a shovel and dig away. But beware; do you know what lurks beneath that soil? How deep can you dig, did you know you have a Utility easement in your yard? These are just a few of the things no one thinks about?

Building a deck? Planting a tree? Installing a mailbox? 811 is the new number you should call before you begin any digging project. A new, federally-mandated national “Call Before You Dig” number, 811 was created to help protect you from unintentionally hitting underground utility lines while working on digging projects. People digging often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked due to concerns about project delays, costs and previous calls about other projects. These assumptions can be life-threatening. Every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees or shrubs. If you hit an underground utility line while digging, you can harm yourself or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood and potentially be responsible for fines and repair costs.

Why should I call 811 before every dig? Don’t gamble with your safety — if you’re a professional excavator or a homeowner, smart digging always requires a call to 811. Knowing where underground utility lines are buried before you dig will help protect you from injury and prevent damages to utilities, service disruptions and potential fines and repair costs. Whether you’re planting a tree or shrub, or installing a deck or patio, every job requires a call — Even if you’ve called before for a similar project. The depth of utility lines varies, and there may be multiple utility lines in one common area. Marked lines show you the approximate location of underground lines and help prevent undesired consequences such as injury, service disruptions to an entire neighborhood or costly fines and repair costs.

I’m just a homeowner, not a contractor—is 811 for me? Smart digging always means calling 811 before each job. Whether you’re a do-it-yourselfer planning a weekend project or a professional excavator contracted for a large job, one phone call to 811 will get your underground utility lines marked for free. How exactly does 811 work?

Want to avoid spending a day in the dark? It’s as simple as 8-1-1!

Call 811 from anywhere in the country a few days prior to digging, and your call will be routed to your local One Call Center. Tell the operator where you’re planning to dig, what type of work you will be doing and your affected local utilities companies will be notified about your intent to dig. In a few days, they’ll send a locator to mark the approximate location of your underground lines, pipes and cables, so you’ll know what’s below - and be able to dig safely.

Remember; always call 811 before you start any digging project! You’ll avoid injury, expense, embarrassment - and a very inconvenient day in the dark.

Do the colors of the paint and flags indicate anything in particular? Yes. Each color indicates a universal color to what is buried below ground.

Red – Electric
Orange – Communications, Telephone/CATV
Blue – Potable Water
Green – Sewer/Drainage
Yellow – Gas/Petroleum Pipe Line
Purple – Reclaimed Water
White – Premark site of intended excavation

Take the time to call and save yourself some potential problems and then you can enjoy your beautiful new landscape without having to pay some huge bill for damaging things!!

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Plant pathologists around the United States have been awfully busy dealing with a rash of “new” diseases lately. Whenever a plant disease makes the news, and that’s usually just the horticultural news, it should catch the attention of gardeners and green industry professionals in Tarrant County. We plant lovers have a responsibility to serve as first detectors and keep our eyes open for signs of new and unusual plant problems. The strategy so eloquently expressed by the fictional Barney File “you got to nip it the bud!” is truly the most effective way to prevent the spread of invasive plant diseases.

So what should you look for? In order for plant disease to develop, three things must be in place: a susceptible host, a causal agent, and the right environmental conditions. This is more complicated than it sounds, especially that last part. Let’s take a look at a few invasive plant diseases and evaluate whether or not we are likely to have to deal with them here by looking at the three sides of the famous plant disease triangle.

Citrus Greening aka Huanglongbing
Susceptible Host: Citrus spp., Murraya paniculata, Severinia buxifolia, and possibly others in the Rutaceae family. While some people do have citrus in containers in North Texas, those plants would die if left unprotected outdoors during the winter. Our environment limits the range of the host.

Causal Agent: The bacterium Candidatus Liberibacter asiaticus, which is vectored by the Asian Citrus Psyllid (ACP) insect. It’s in Texas! The disease was identified in Hidalgo County January 13, 2012. The vector has been here for years.

Environmental Conditions: The insect vector protects the causal agent from the environment and makes this a less important factor. However, the environment, specifically cold temperature, limits the spread of both the host and the vector in our area.

Citrus growers should be aware of the symptoms which are often mistaken for nutrient deficiency. We are more likely to see this disease around here now that it is in Texas, but it will never pose a serious threat to our landscapes.

Boxwood Blight
Susceptible Host: Buxus spp., Pachysandra terminalis. The US National Arboretum maintains the National Boxwood Collection of 178 varieties (who knew there were so many?) and will begin screening for host plant resistance.

Causal Agent: The fungus Cylindrocladium pseudonaviculatum boxicola. It has not been found in Texas. No one in the United States had even heard of it a year ago, but it has been identified in eight states including North Carolina and Oregon where many nurseries produce many boxwood plants that are sold in many states, including Texas.

Environmental Conditions: The temperature range for disease development is 41-86 degrees F, with optimum development occurring at around 77. Moisture is required, but not a plant wound. It may be able to survive by producing microsclerotia that can survive freezing temperatures in soils.

Don’t buy bargain boxwood that doesn’t look healthy! The symptoms of boxwood blight look like root rot or cold injury, so look at the roots (boxwood blight infected plants will have white, healthy roots) and look for cracked stems that are the result of cold injury. It just might be too hot and dry here for this disease to take hold, but we can’t be sure. Unlike citrus, there are plenty of susceptible hosts in our landscapes.
What does it mean to be a citizen, to be a part of a community? As the sixth pillar of character, Citizenship refers to the willingness of individuals to do their share to make the greater community a better place. To put it simply, it means to be a good neighbor. Ideally, citizens cooperate with others, obey the laws of the land and respect authority. The concept of citizenship stresses the importance of protecting the environment, staying informed and exercising one’s right to vote. This view of citizenship is easily obtainable if one puts into practice those other pillars of character such as respect, when you treat others the way you want to be treated. In this case that translates into “If you want a good neighbor, be a good neighbor”.

There are many activities which would be beneficial for young people to do in order to begin to understand the whole concept of being a citizen. The activity below is one of them and it is called Members of the Community. It is a matching activity that could easily prompt discussion about the different members of a community and their responsibilities towards making our community a better place. Another helpful resource that will help young people learn about the three R’s [Reduce, Reuse & Recycle] and acquire a little science education is through SciGirls, which is a curriculum through pbskidsgo.org. They have a number of short videos on going green with plenty of ideas for young creative minds. It can be found via the web at http://pbskids.org/scigirls/video2?asset=show111.

Members of the Community
Directions: Match the name of the citizen with their picture.

Shannon Johnson-Lackey   4-H Extension Agent      Cooperative Extension Program

Cassius McAlister   4-H Extension Agent      Cooperative Extension Program

Have you ever wondered why cities place water restrictions on their citizens? Water is one of the most essential natural resources. The world’s population is growing and growing and our water supply is being pushed to the limit to meet our ever increasing needs. According to the US Census Bureau the world’s population as of April 26, 2012, is 7,009,521,642. A little less than one percent of the water on the planet is actually available for use as fresh water. It is estimated that over one billion people or about one-sixth of the world’s population does not have access to clean fresh water.

With this frightening fact available now you can see reasons for restrictions. As our cities’ populations grow there becomes a larger need of water and in most cases building more reservoirs is too costly of an undertaking. So citizens should not only heed the city water restriction, we should also consider other water conservation options. That option I will discuss is checking your toilet for leaks because when I woke up this morning I noticed one of my toilets was leaking. This can be a simple solution and can save up to two hundred gallons of water from being wasted per day. Here is a simple way to check your toilet for leaks: simply place a drop of food coloring in the toilet tank. If the color shows up in the bowl within 15 minutes without flushing, you have a leak. Make sure to flush immediately after this experiment to avoid staining the tank.
Children have a natural curiosity about the world around them. The Egg to Chick project nurtures that curiosity and instills a quest for knowledge as it engages youth in their scientific studies. With an increased emphasis on science preparation for students, the Egg to Chick project is easily adapted to teach scientific concepts appropriate for all grade levels (i.e., life cycle basics for Kindergarten to Embryological Development for High School).

During the incubation phase of the project, students learn the basic concepts of incubation and the environmental needs for the process. They learn how to use equipment and observation to collect and record data. During the broader phase of the project, youth learn the basic needs of the chicks and utilize observation skills to learn various characteristics. Throughout the project, youth learn the developmental process and the life cycle of the chicken.

The Tarrant County 4-H Department offers the project to schools at no charge each spring and fall.

Tarrant County 4-H provides:
- Educator training
- Incubation equipment
- Procedure booklet
- Embryological development resources
- Evaluation forms

School provides:
- Designed area for equipment setup (requires uninterrupted electricity for 25 days)
- Fertile eggs
- Submission of evaluation forms

While the project may be offered in a single classroom, we strongly encourage the opportunity for students from multiple classrooms to be able to participate in the experience. This can be accomplished by placing the incubator in a central location available for classes to visit for short observations and data collection as time permits.

For additional information or to reserve the program for your school, please contact:

Cindy Bryant
817-884-1553
CPBryant@ag.tamu.edu