Volunteer Week
April 10-16, 2011

Volunteers Unite!

Extension Volunteers by the numbers:

76,285 hours of community service in 2010! $1,590,422.25 value of volunteer time!

43 additional staff that’s the volunteer force equivalent!

1,785 Tarrant County residents participated as volunteers with Texas AgriLife Extension Service!

Volunteerism is the essential ingredient that guarantees Extension’s successful completion of its mission and goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master Gardeners</td>
<td>350</td>
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<tr>
<td>4H Adult Volunteers</td>
<td>148</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program Area Committee Members</td>
<td>116</td>
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<td>TEA Members</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>Master Wellness Volunteers</td>
<td>15</td>
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Welcome New Staff Members

Welcome New Staff Members

Supporting Tarrant County’s Agriculture
Establishing Bermudagrass

Strengthening Tarrant County’s Families
The Risky Side of Putting Your Home on the Line

Engaging Communities
Embracing the Reality of Now - Online!

Improving Tarrant County’s Health
Bones and Vitamin D: What’s Important?

Have a Flavor-able Reputation?
Springtime Favorites: Fruits and Vegetables

Enhancing Tarrant County’s Horticulture
Trees Provide Substance for Garden Landscaping

What’s Sustainable?
Senior Scholarships Require Advanced Planning

2010 Friend of Extension Award
Carolyn Sims
Precinct 3 - Precinct Administrator

2010 John South Spirit of Extension Award
Dr. Angel Ilarraza
Urban Development Committee

The Friend of Extension Award recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding service to the people of Tarrant County by their exceptional support and personal involvement in Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

The John South Spirit of Extension Award recognizes a program area committee member for exemplary service in the design and delivery of educational programs which enhance the quality of life for the people of Tarrant County.
We have 3 extra days to file our income taxes, why, because this year, Emancipation Day - anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s 1862 signing of the Compensated Emancipation Act - is being observed on April 15th instead of the actual date which is April 16th, which falls on a Saturday this year. The federal return deadline is Monday, April 18th.

Need an answer to the age old question, “What’s for dinner tonight?” If your answer is yes then you will want to experience our Dinner Tonight website. Each week a County Extension Agent with Texas AgriLife Extension Service demonstrates a healthy recipe appropriate for a family meal. The Dinner Tonight video includes easy how to steps in preparing the dish. The video is accompanied by a BLOG which provides more tips to help you get a quick and healthy meal on the table for your family.

Check out the Dinner Tonight video & BLOG at http://healthyliving.tamu.edu.

You can also sign up for the weekly email notice by contacting Tanica Bell at tbell@ag.tamu.edu. Just send a message that says, “Sign me up for Dinner Tonight” and include your name and email address.

Don’t keep wondering “What’s for dinner tonight?” Let Texas AgriLife Extension Service help you with the answer to that question.

Did you know? . . .

We have 3 extra days to file our income taxes, why, because this year, Emancipation Day - anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s 1862 signing of the Compensated Emancipation Act - is being observed on April 15th instead of the actual date which is April 16th, which falls on a Saturday this year. The federal return deadline is Monday, April 18th.
The establishment phase is probably the most critical step in getting forage Bermudagrass stands off to a good start and subsequent productive cycle. The time, effort and most importantly expense involved in establishing any forage cannot be overlooked, therefore attention to details is important to success. The ideal seed bed is smooth, firm, weed free, moist and fertile; it is free of excess residue or “trash,” and compaction zones. 

Land Preparation

Forage Bermudagrass should be thought of more as a crop instead of just some cattle grass. Low potential soils will lead to low yielding forage production so site selection is key to successful establishment. Seedbed preparation is important since it creates the proper environment in which to plant. Problems due to poor drainage should be eliminated before planting. Initial tillage may include moldboard plowing, heavy discing with an offset disk, chiseling or subsoiling. The soil should be cultivated with a disk to eliminate trash and reduce clod size. The seed bed should be as good as for any other crop. The seedbed should be free of clods, firm, and not “fluffy.” A fluffy seed bed will not allow water to move upward through capillaries in the soil. A weighted roller or “cutplacker” will do an adequate job to create a good seedbed. It is generally best to wait for rain to settle the soil after initial preparation. 

Planting/Sprigging

Rhizomes or “sprigs” are planted in late winter and early spring. They should be dug and planted as soon as possible to lessen the potential for dessication and death of the sprig prior to planting. Ideally sprigs are placed in a furrow created by an opened device, covered and rolled in one operation. Some producers have had success by broadcasting sprigs, discing them into the soil and immediately rolling, but substantial losses can occur if environmental conditions are not near perfect. 

The depth of planting is determined by the availability of moisture and the texture of the soil. Placed too deep, the new growth may die. Placed too shallow, the sprig may dry out without irrigation. Under dryland conditions, 2 to 2.5 inches deep is generally adequate. 

Weed Control/Fertilization

Controlling weeds is important because weeds compete for moisture, plant nutrients and light. Weeds can be controlled either by mowing or with herbicides. Herbicides tend to be more effective in weed control than mowing. See Suggestions for Weed Control in Pastures and Forages at the Texas AgriLife Bookstore. Refer to the label for complete rate and timing instructions before using any pesticide. Initial fertilization of the newly planted Bermudagrass can be done prior to, during or after planting depending on the placement of the material available. 

It is very important to soil test the field early so adequate, correct fertilizer can be applied to ensure a successful stand. 

Most failures in establishing hybrid Bermudagrass are due to:

1. Poorly prepared seed bed.
2. Inadequate moisture at planting.
3. Using desiccated or dried sprigs.
4. Planting too few sprigs.
5. Planting sprigs too deep.
6. Not firming the soil around sprigs.
7. Severe weed competition.
8. Severe grazing before plants are established. 

If treated as a “crop” during the start-up phase a premiere Bermudagrass field can easily be established and provide long-term forage production.

The preceeding recommendations were taken from “Forage Bermudagrass: Selection Establishment and Management” available from the Texas AgriLife Bookstore.

The Risky Side of Putting Your Home on the Line

Traditional institutions normally charge between 1 - 3% of the loan amount in points and fees. Are any of the application fees refundable if you don’t get a loan? How and how will the lender or brokers be paid? Lenders and brokers charge fees that must be paid at closing or add on to the cost of the loan or both. 

Penalties

What is the penalty for late or missed payments? What is the penalty if you pay off or refinance the loan early (prepayment penalty)? Are any of the application fees refundable if you don’t get a loan? How and how will the lender or brokers be paid? Lenders and brokers charge fees that must be paid at closing or add on to the cost of the loan or both. 

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Dreams of meeting and greeting as folks walk on by to increase your clientele base and network with fellow professionals are overshadowed by the reality of where our new client base exists…on the World Wide Web!!! Yes, folks still walk on by and need to be introduced to the wonders of your services or products, but there are a lot less numbers walking on by! Yes, word of mouth is still the best marketing tool, but where does most of it occur…via networking sites and online venues, both personal and professional! So, what do recent statistics say about how small businesses are adopting this new option for increasing visibility and viability? Let’s see what the University of Maryland’s Smith School of Business Small Business Success Index says:

As of 2010, small businesses surveyed shared the following:

- 75% have a company page on a social networking site
- 61% use social media for identifying and attracting new customers
- 57% have built a network through a social networking site
- 45% expect social media to be profitable in the next twelve months

In addition, many belong to online learning communities and networking groups specific to their industry or interests.

Personal experience has also led me to embrace the use of various technologies associated with modern times. During a meeting with local leaders involved in providing direction for service delivery efficiency, I learned that residents in a local hospital can often be seen walking with their iPhone’s remaining current on information as they eagerly use it to look up the details of various medications that they are introduced to as their chief resident and attending physicians make rounds and share their strategies in efficiently treating patient ailments and meeting their needs. Similarly, customers and fans of various businesses remain current on new products, business events, and educational opportunities. This is not to say it’s the only source of information, but it is a popular preference among many!

Let’s consider this: According to the US Census, Tarrant County had an estimated population of 2 million in 2009, or 10% of the population of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. The city of Fort Worth had approximately 300 million users in 2009. Now, small businesses do not intend on attracting that vast number of clients, but the network provides a wonderful platform by which to establish a presence and increase that wonderful online “word of mouth”.

You’d even be surprised to learn that many businesses are shying away from once popular recruiting web pages and seeking to recruit potential new employees through various social networking sites specifically geared toward the professional population. Many believe that this provides a more in-depth view into the potential candidate, gives an employer a more personalized set of information by which to consider offering an interview, and also provides potential employees an opportunity to market themselves more effectively past the sheets of paper that are their resumes. In addition, many small businesses begin their “interview” process by experiencing these potential candidates through interaction with them online. As a matter of fact, I personally know someone who was recruited through a social networking site, interviewed via web cam, and hired before ever meeting in person. Why? The business she was interviewing with was one that managed online communications and marketing for various private companies and they were able to experience her ease, familiarity with, and comfort levels surrounding an online presence and environment.

I know that, for many, this seems a bit beyond what we could have ever imagined, but, once embraced, and among other potential benefits, it can be a wonderfully new way to engage in your community, grow your business, and find employment!

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What is Vitamin D?

Vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin found in some foods and through conversion of sunlight (UVB rays) through our skin. Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium. Helps build bones and teeth and keep them strong.

Who needs Vitamin D and how much?

- Infant (0-12 months): 400 IU
- Children 1-13 years: 600 IU
- Adolescents (14-18 years): 600 IU
- Adults (19-50 years): 600 IU
- Adults (51-70 years): 600 IU
- Elderly (71 years and older): 800 IU
- Pregnant and breastfeeding women: 600 IU

Where is Vitamin D found?

Vitamin D is naturally found in the following foods:

- Fatty fish/seafood (Salmon, tuna, catfish, and shrimp)
- Fortified cereals
- Fortified milk and milk foods (yogurt and some cheeses may be fortified with vitamin D)
- Fortified soy beverages and products (soy milk and tofu)
- Fortified orange juice

Tips to know to protect our bones

- Eat a balanced diet rich in calcium foods—dairy foods, deep green and leafy vegetables, and some canned fish products.
- Estrogen replacement therapy is recommended for women during menopause.
- A regular program of exercise, and in some cases, medication may slow bone loss.
- Fall proofing the home and altering one’s lifestyle to avoid fracturing fragile bones is recommended.

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*Sources: Danielle Hammond RD, LD Extension Assistant Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Mary Kinney Bialewicki, Ph.D., R.D., L.D., Regents Fellow, Professor & Extension Nutrition Specialist; and Sharon Francey Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., Associate Professor & Extension Nutrition Specialist; Nutrition & Food Science Department, Texas A&M University Extension Service.
1. How would you describe yourself as a food tryer?
   - I don’t experiment 1
   - I'll try if offered 2
   - I’m a willing adventurer 3

2. When was the last time you bought an unfamiliar vegetable or fruit at the store?
   - Last year or longer 1
   - Last month 2
   - Last week 3

3. When a new food product hits the market...
   - I’m rarely aware of it 1
   - I’ll wait a while then try it 2
   - I try it right away 3

4. I try to eat a wide variety of foods.
   - Never 1
   - Sometimes 2
   - Almost always 3

5. I look for new ways to prepare familiar foods from cookbooks, magazines or the internet.
   - Never 1
   - Sometimes 2
   - All the time 3

6. The variety of foods becoming available due to biotechnology...
   - Doesn’t interest me 1
   - Mildly interests me 2
   - Intrigues me 3

7. When did you last eat at an ethnic restaurant other than Italian, Chinese or Mexican?
   - Last year or longer 1
   - Within the last 6 months 2
   - Within the last month 3

8. If preparing an Italian meal, I would make ...
   - Spaghetti 1
   - Spaghetti or other pasta 2
   - Any type of pasta, polenta or risotto 3

Now add up your points .... how well did you fare?

20 to 24: You’re probably a “foodie” who enjoys the adventure and flavors of new foods. If you are meeting current recommendations, you may also reap the nutritional benefits of eating for a greater variety of foods.

13 to 19: You’re open to experiencing new foods with a healthy attitude toward eating!

8 to 12: You’re more comfortable with your “tried & true.” Is your cautious approach to new foods causing you to miss out on a variety of nutritious foods?

*Source: American Dietetic Association*

Some people enjoy the spring season because the sun is out, the flowers are blooming, and children can go outside and play. Others are excited because with spring, comes all the delicious fruits and vegetables in season. Now is the time to take advantage of all the seasonal produce by making healthy meals for you and your family or just by trying something new!

The food guidance system, MyPyramid, developed by the United States Department of Agriculture, recommends 2 cups of fruit per day and 2.5 cups of vegetables per day based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Many Americans enjoy fruit and have no problem fitting in the recommended amount each day but most of us have a hard time consuming enough vegetables. Whatever your case may be, focus on increasing your intake of both fruits and vegetables so you can ensure your body is receiving all the necessary vitamins, minerals, fiber, other nutrients it needs to stay healthy and strong.

Focus on Fruits

When MyPyramid says to “focus on fruits” it means to try to eat more of the actual fruit and limit your intake of fruit juice. When buying a fruit juice, look for types that contain 100% fruit juice to reduce the amount of added sugars. Keep your meals and snacks fun and interesting by eating a variety of fruits. Look for fresh, dried, frozen, and canned fruits to eat throughout your week and that fit with your schedule. For example, if you have a long commute and little time for breakfast, make a fruit smoothie before heading out with frozen or fresh fruit. During lunch, add fresh sliced strawberries or dried cranberries to your salad.

Vary Your Veggies

Just like fruits, we need to eat a wide variety of vegetables throughout the week to ensure our body is receiving beneficial vitamins and minerals. This is easy to do if you color your plate with different vegetables during each meal. For example, try baking sweet potato fries for dinner and the next night, enjoy a leafy spinach salad. During the day, snack on broccoli cutlets and baby carrots instead of a candy bar or cookies. If you have a hard time getting your children to eat vegetables, sneak them into meals like macaroni and cheese, baked potatoes, or muffins. You may also want to involve them in the process of buying and picking out vegetables or let them grow their own. They may be more willing to eat the vegetables if they participate in the process.

*Source: United States Department of Agriculture, visit http://www.mypyramid.gov for more information!*

Here are a few seasonal favorites that come from the Lone Star State: Blueberries, Broccoli, Cabbage, Cantaloupes, Carrots, Celery, Grapefruit, Greens, Honeydews, Mushrooms, Onions, Oranges, Peaches, Potatoes, Spinach, Cucumbers, Squash, Tomatoes, and Watermelons

Look for these and many others between February and May!
Walk away from your garden and within a few short years, the entire place can become a shaded woodland. Because of our soils and climate, trees, vines and large shrubs are the “climax species.” Especially in some of our older and more established neighborhoods, these plants start from seeds spread by the wind, birds and other animals and quickly grow large enough to shade out the “meadow” plants we call flowers.

Because they are so dramatic in size and effect, trees provide the most important landscape framework for your garden, apart from your home and other structures. They are the “walls” and “ceiling” where shrubs are the furniture and flowers the knickknacks. Trees enclose and cool and they provide nesting places for wildlife. They capture the sound and motion of the wind and deliver color, texture, line, mass and lots of other design goodies.

The selection of those trees that are super easy to grow and enjoy is outstanding, even here in North Central Texas. Whether you choose tall or short, evergreen or deciduous, flowers or foliage, spring blooms or fall colors, there are kinds and varieties within each kind to suit every need and season.

It’s an oddball fact, but a small tree will outgrow a larger tree of the same species, if planted concurrently, nearly every time. I’ve watched this happen for many, many years now. This is because a smaller tree has a higher percentage of roots to top, so it doesn’t waste time playing catch-up, as does the larger tree, which spends time playing catch-up, as does the larger tree, which builds its root system to accommodate its branches and foliage. Choosing a tree that is smaller can be important both for your wallet and your back, and it will help determine how quickly the tree will get established and begin growing.

Even if you plant small specimens, keep in mind that trees need elbow room to grow. Small ones can fill a void beneath other larger trees with their spreading branches and roots. It is best to include only very small species in new flowerbeds, and to wait until larger kinds are established before planting shade perennials and ground covers underneath. Meanwhile, nothing beats a clean layer of natural mulch to make trees “look right” while protecting the new roots from hot summer sun, cold winter nights, and attacks from lawn mowers and string trimmers. Plus, as leaves and bark decompose, they feed the soil around tree roots in a most natural way (it’s how things have worked in the forest for a long, long time).

**To Prune or Not**

When should a tree be cut? Forget what you’ve been told or heard over the years, and think like a tree. If there are dead or broken limbs or branches, or one or more are getting in your way or shading a plant too much, then by all means remove them at any time of the year, just to the outside of the growth “collar” at the base of the branch. Otherwise, rote may get into the stub before it heals. If you cut off the collar, the tree will have a much harder time healing over the cut.

If you want to “limb up” a tree to allow more sunlight or a better view, do a few branches a year, leaving some here and there for a natural shape instead of zipping straight up the trunk leaving a “top knot” effect.

If you want to “thin out” some cluttered or competing branches, it makes little difference to the plant which ones go and which ones stay.

If you want to “bob it back” like a shrub, most experts and I recommend that you get a poodle dog instead and leave the tree alone.

And by the way, “pruning paints” are purely cosmetic and have no effect on how fast a cut heals or whether insects and fungi get into the cut area. Use them only for approval from a spouse or neighbor.

Remember the most important rule though, as an average homeowner if you cannot prune it with both feet on the ground you might want to call a professional! Pruning can be DANGEROUS!

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**What’s Sustainable?**

Many horticultural companies from growers to retailers to landscapers are using sustainability as a way to market their products and services. This is part of a larger trend that includes all kinds of consumer products. Everything from hybrid automobiles to mascaras is sold as the sustainable choice and as you might imagine there are probably as many definitions of sustainability as there are definers.

Unlike the mascara manufacturers, those who grow, sell and take of plants have a logical place to start. Plants provide a benefit to the environment by producing oxygen and sequestering carbon. Most landscape plants are long lived and many will reproduce without any help from man. That’s certainly sustainable.

Sustainable horticulture has three goals: environmental health, economic profitability, and social responsibility. A wide variety of practices can contribute to these goals.

However, what does the average customer think sustainability means when contemplating a plant purchase? Dr. Forrest Stegelin of the University of Georgia teaches an undergraduate class in horticultural marketing. Consumer research is always a component of this course, and in the spring of 2008, he sent his students out to ask customers at a big box garden center what sustainable meant and how “sustainable” labeling would influence their purchasing behavior.

Respondents said that sustainable meant:

- Green
- Locally produced
- Organic
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- Environmentally friendly

And interestingly enough, Expensive.

Perhaps even more interesting were the two choices that those garden center customers did not think were a part of sustainabilty best management practices and recycling. In addition, the interviewees that were asked if “sustainable” plants were better than other plant choices said that neither “sustainable” nor “regular” plants were “better.” These same customers did however say that “sustainable” Point of Sale labeling was an important in their purchasing decisions and that they would probably buy a plant with a “sustainable” label.

Customers in a sophisticated metropolitan area such as Tarrant County might not respond the way that customers at a Wal-Mart in Athens, Georgia did, but this study does point out that the way a term like sustainable is perceived by the seller of a product and its purchasers could be quite different.

Local production was widely recognized as a sustainable practice. Minimizing transportation impacts is a cornerstone of environmental sustainability. Money spent on locally produced means more local jobs and ultimately a stronger economy. Supporting local plant suppliers and produce is one way simple consumers can contribute to the complex goal of sustainability.
Character Development is a source of concern for many educators and parents alike. Within the curriculum, "Character Counts!" a mantra is introduced: Character counts all the time and all the time character counts. As a youth development professional, I often speak that mantra to groups of students who are struggling with the pillars of character. As I flip through the pages of the "Character Counts!" curriculum, I am energized with hope from the endless possibilities that came with introducing youth to the six pillars of character and having them recite the character mantra in unison with me. As the "Character Counts!" mantra still rings in my head, I set out to teach youth about Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring and Citizenship on a monthly basis. Lessons on Trustworthiness set the tone for the whole journey of character development and therefore will be the primary focus.

According to "Character Counts!", a project of the Josephson Institute, Trustworthiness is being honest and telling the truth. Trustworthy people do what they say they will do. They do what they know is right even if it is hard to do. A trustworthy person is a loyal friend. In preparing lessons on Trustworthiness, I often look for quotes that may spark interest with the youth and provide a solid backdrop for discussion. One of my favorite quotes is "A trustworthy friend is worth a mint" from an anonymous source. After explaining that the term "mint" refers to a vast sum we discuss the importance of being and having a trustworthy friend. I begin with the concept that a trustworthy person is a loyal friend because of the need to belong.

Friendship is also a topic that generates a lot of opinions. In groups with self-described "friends" I like to do a trust activity using LEGOS. I ask the youth to break into pairs with the person that they "trust" the most. That request generally puts the friends or BFFs together. Once they are in pairs, I ask each pairing to send one person outside the room. While outside the room, I show them a simple structure built with LEGOS. After about a minute, they are sent back into the room with a baggie of LEGOS containing the same pieces used in the example. Once in the room they must provide verbal instruction to their partner on how to construct the structure of LEGOS. While this activity is also a memory challenge it is the perfect illustration for youth to see how in life we must trust others for information and guidance. This activity can be frustrating for both parties but I have also seen it solidify friendships by each party recognizing and accepting each others' strengths and weaknesses.

Here are some resources from other Extension programs that may be helpful in further discovering how to teach Trustworthiness to youth:

http://www.isabellacounty.org/msue/forms/3_5_trustworthiness.pdf
http://www.isabellacounty.org/msue/forms/3_5_trustworthiness2.pdf
http://www.isabellacounty.org/msue/announcements/january_trustworthiness.pdf

There are a number of ways to save water, and they all start with you. It's 7:30 a.m. You've showered, brushed your teeth, and had breakfast. You rinse your dishes, grab your coat, and throw your clothes in the wash on your way out. You get to work or school, and on your way to your office or desk, you stop by the bathroom and the water fountain. By 8:15, you're sitting at your desk—and you've already used over 100 gallons of water. What could you do to lower this number? Here are some suggestions to conserve water in and around your home.

Area #1: Kitchen
1. Make sure your faucet doesn't leak. Fixing a leak can save 300 gallons a month or more.
2. Run your dishwasher only when it is full. You can save 100s of gallons of water in a month.
3. Don't use running water to thaw food. Defrost food in the refrigerator for water efficiency and food safety.
4. Use the garbage disposal sparingly. Compost vegetable food waste instead and save gallons every time.
5. Collect the water you use for rinsing fruits and vegetables, and then reuse it to water houseplants. Better yet, wash your fruits and vegetables in a pan of water instead of running water from the tap.

Area #2: Bathroom
1. Shorten your shower by a minute or two and you'll save up to 150 gallons per month.
2. Put food coloring in your toilet tank. If it seeps into the toilet bowl without flushing, you have a leak. Fixing it can save up to 1,000 gallons a month.
3. Turn off the water while brushing your teeth and save 25 gallons a month.
4. If your shower fills a one-gallon bucket in less than 20 seconds, replace the showerhead with a water-efficient model.
5. When running a bath, plug the tub before turning the water on, then adjust the temperature as the tub fills up.

Area #3: Yard
1. Water your lawn and garden in the morning when temperatures are cooler to minimize evaporation.
2. Adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is being watered; not the house, sidewalk or street.
3. Make sure you cover your pool/spa. This will reduce water loss due to normal evaporation. The cover can also reduce heating bills by preventing night heat loss and will save money on chemicals as well.
4. Adjust your lawnmower to a higher setting. A taller lawn shades roots and holds moisture better than if it is closely clipped.
5. Use a broom instead of a hose to clean your driveway and sidewalk and save water every time.
As Spring arrives, the life of a graduating senior seems to accelerate at an even faster speed. That final push for collegiate preparation takes on a new intensity. SAT & ACT exams were completed a year or more in advance. College visits and applications may have been submitted months earlier, but many scholarship applications are due in the early Spring.

How does one navigate the sea of applications, requirements, and due dates while maintaining a high GPA? Many experienced students agree that strategic planning and organization are the keys.

Strategic planning: Whenever faced with a major task it is often helpful to break it into manageable steps. This phase of the process may begin as early as the sophomore or junior year.

1. Define your goals. At this stage, the student should be able to state some general career goals. A teen might think, “I’m still young. I can’t think of any job that I want to do for the rest of my life.” Students should realize that nobody expects them to stay in one job for the next 45-50 years. However, it is helpful to set both short-term and long-term career goals. Things to consider might include:
   - an assessment of your talents and special skills
   - career interests
   - preference/tolerance of formal training (degree requirements, etc.)
   - benefits of chosen career (salary, hours/schedule, intrinsic benefits, etc.)

The process of clearly defining career and educational goals are closely related because each career has associated educational and skill sets. Things to consider when setting educational goals include:
   - degree plan
   - college selection
   - pace of study
   - class delivery options
   - cost of investment/reward

2. Consider scholarships carefully. When seeking financial resources, applicants are counseled to consider investing their time on applications for scholarships which closely match the goals of the donor with the goals of the student.
   - Make sure you meet the eligibility requirements.
   - Allow yourself enough time to prepare a quality application. Remember, in most cases, the donor (or scholarship selection committee) does not know what a great person you are. The application is your opportunity to sell yourself and convince the donor that you are worthy of his investment in your future.

   - Proof-read and double-check your application and essays. You may even ask a parent, teacher, or mentor to proof and provide constructive comments.

3. When requesting a letter of reference, provide the author as much time as possible (2 weeks minimum) as well as information directly related to the scholarship requested. This enables the author to tailor his letter to the scholarship committee and share the information which is of special interest to them. Often, you might need letters for more than one scholarship. If each scholarship is seeking different student qualities, then the author will compose a letter for each scholarship. All of this takes time, so providing ample time for the author will enable you to reap the benefits of well-written letters.

4. Avoid procrastination. Plan to submit your applications early.

Organization: There are literally thousands of organizations that offer scholarship opportunities. Because most are offered by private or non-profit organizations, they each have their own eligibility requirements, application requirements, deadlines, and funding priorities. This can seem overwhelming, but is much more manageable when an organizational plan is employed.

1. Begin by preparing a personal information file. Many scholarships require similar personal information. You will save time and stress by gathering these common requirements and having them readily accessible in a file. Items to include would include:
   - High school transcript
   - Standardized test scores (SAT, ACT)
   - Financial information, including tax returns of student & parents
   - Financial aid forms, such as FAFSA
   - Contact information for recommendation letters
   - Extra records (4-H Recordbook, essays, etc.)

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2. Prepare a reference file for each scholarship of interest. Attach the printed requirements on a checklist in the front of the file. As each of the required items are completed and included in the file, check it off. You will be too busy to remember later.

Write the due date on the file tab and file by due date.

3. Maintain a monthly or multi-month calendar of dates of importance. This would include application due dates, but might also include personal target dates for essays, recommendation letters, etc.

4. As each application is submitted, retain a copy in the file and record the date of submission.

While this can be a confusing process at a busy time in a high school senior’s life, strategic planning and organization can facilitate the process. Those who begin the strategic planning in the sophomore or junior year are one step ahead when the whirlwind of senior year activities emerge.

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