Congratulations!

The Master Gardeners had an excellent state meeting hosted by the Somervell and Hood County Master Gardener Associations in Glenrose, Texas in April. We are quite excited to report that they received the following awards:

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

2nd Place: Educational Program - Educational Curriculum at Tarrant County Resource Connection

3rd Place: Poster - Alice Carlson OLE Elementary School

Ambassador Award Recipient: Ginger Bason “Above and Beyond” contributions to the Master Gardener Association

Attendance Award
More members than any other Association

Mass Media - 360 West Magazine - News article, “Giving Back” - at Samaritan House

Graphic Presentation - Pick ‘em, Plant ‘em, Keep ‘em - PowerPoint presentation

Project
Native Grasses

Newsletter
The Sharecropper

Congratulations to Ginger Bason, recipient of the Sharie Lanza Ambassador Award for 2010. Ginger’s hard work and dedication for the past 3 years as Chairperson of the Awards Committee shows her commitment and dedication to the Texas Master Gardener Association (TMGA).

Throughout her three year stint as State Awards Chair, Ginger was constantly available to all counties with their queries of concern and questions in writing the State Awards. She assumed responsibility for the Awards Committee without any previous involvement or experience, and made a seamless transition from the previous Chairperson. Her first step as Awards chair was to convene a small committee to rewrite, and above all, to shorten the awards forms and improve and enhance the Awards Handbook guidelines. Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, she improved the process for searching out-of-state judging of award submissions, increasing the number and qualifications of judges.

The Sharie Lanza Ambassador Award recognizes and honors Sharie Lanza’s outstanding work in organizing and guiding the Texas Master Gardener’s state awards program. Sharie loved the state association and felt awards were a way to encourage local associations to participate more at the state level.

Sharie was instrumental in revamping the awards program and updating category guidelines. After Sharie’s death in November, 2001, the executive board members, prompted by Marva Beck and A.I. Norris, moved to establish the Sharie Lanza Ambassador Award. This award is separate from other awards to recognize an individual who is a member of the directors and is active at the state level. The elected executive board selects the recipient based on above and beyond contributions to the state association. The recipient is to be an active Texas Master Gardener and be one of the following:

- A present or past director of Texas Master Gardener Association;
- A present or past TMGA committee chair
- OR a TMGA past officer

A cash award will be given to the recipient at the discretion of the executive board.

The first Sharie Lanza Ambassador Award was presented to Al Norris in Wichita Falls at the Advanced Training Seminar, in 2002. Additional recipients are: Anna Wygryn - 2003; Marva Beck - 2004; Eleanor Tuck - 2005; Walter Daude - 2006; Doug Richards - 2007. And now, Ginger Bason - 2010!

Researched and Drafted by Eleanor Tuck, Master Gardener, Tarrant County, February 2011.
Texas Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN) is a collaborative educational network dedicated to educating citizens about disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. Texas EDEN is a part of the Texas Agrilife Extension Service and is affiliated with National Extension Disaster Education Network.

This site is intended to accommodate Texas AgriLife Extension agents and all Texas citizens by sharing education resources to reduce the impact of natural and man-made disasters for individuals, families and communities.

The primary goals of Texas EDEN are to:
1. Provide credible and reliable information relating to disaster preparedness and recovery for individuals, families, and urban and/or rural communities.
2. Reduce the impact associated with disaster by disseminating educational materials related to disaster mitigation, preparedness and recovery.

Visit the website at http://texashelp.tamu.edu

FEATURED SECTIONS INCLUDE:

Parking at the Tarrant County Plaza Building - Texas Agrilife Extension Service

Healthy Kids, Healthy Families

Fighting obesity is one of the most important public health issues facing the country, state, and Tarrant County. Obesity and its related health issues take a large financial toll on the state and Tarrant county. By one estimate, the cost of health care for issues related to obesity in Texas is over $5.7 billion.

In Tarrant County, an estimated 19% of children between the ages of 2-14 are obese and an estimated 28.2% of adults 18 and older are obese.

The FitKids initiative was started to help improve the health and wellness of Fort Worth ISD (FWISD) elementary students and their families. We are partnering with them on a multi-pronged approach that encompasses student and parent education effort to help foster practices that improve good health habits.

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Darlene Myatt, the Extension Agent for EFNEP, along with Jennifer Boganey and Erica Phillips, Nutrition Education Associates - Youth, have expanded the outreach of classroom nutrition education into more than a dozen schools that would not have been served without the FitKids initiative. Additionally, we have been able to present nutrition education for both the students and parents simultaneously at six schools. The involvement of entire families is a key factor in helping to reduce obesity and we are pleased with this coordinated effort. We are hopeful that more opportunities to present the information in this coordinated manner will present themselves in the future.

Kids Walk-to-School

After a successful pilot program at South Hi-Mount Elementary last fall, the Kids-Walk-to-School program is now under way at five FWISD Elementary schools:

1. South Hi Mount Elementary - Wednesday

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Algae are the most common group of weeds occurring in farm ponds. Shape and size vary from microscopic single or multiple celled plants to branched plants that resemble submersed aquatic weeds. Unlike other aquatic plants, algae do not produce flowers or seeds. Algae are divided into three groups: plankton algae, filamentous algae (pond moss) and the stoneworts such as Chara or Nitella. Plankton algae produce the majority of dissolved oxygen in the pond and are essential to fish survival. In the presence of sunlight, green plants release oxygen as a by-product of photosynthesis. At night, plants and other pond organisms consume oxygen. Because of this diurnal cycle, oxygen concentrations are the lowest at dawn and highest in the mid-afternoon. Cycle imbalances can lead to oxygen depletion and subsequent fish death.

Floating, planktonic algae cannot be mechanically or physically controlled, except by replacing the pond water. Exchange of water from a well or other source that does not have an algae bloom will dilute the planktonic algae in the pond. This is not a practical option for most pond owners unless their ponds are very small and they have wells close by. Non-toxic dyes or colorants prevent or reduce aquatic plant growth by limiting sunlight penetration, similar to fertilization. However, dyes do not enhance the natural food chain and may suppress the natural food chain of the pond. Filamentous algae, Chara and Nitella can be removed by raking or seining. Fertilization to produce a phytoplankton or algal bloom will displace the planktonic algae in the pond. This is not a practical option for any pond owner, but if the pond is heavily infested with weeds it may be possible to replace the pond water. Exchange of water from a well or other source that does not have a planktonic algae bloom prevents the establishment of most bottom rooted aquatic weeds and produces a strong food chain to the pond fish.

While many microscopic animals (zooplankton) eat planktonic algae there is no practical way to increase their populations, so no biological control is possible.

Copper Sulfate or blue stone is probably the most commonly used algal treatment because of its excellent control, availability and low cost. Copper sulfate comes in several forms depending on how finely it is ground. Smaller crystals will dissolve easier than larger crystals. Ponds treated with copper sulfate do not have any waiting period for livestock watering, fishing or swimming. In very hard water it is difficult to use copper sulfate because it binds with the calcium, precipitates out of solution, and renders the copper ineffective as an algicide.

One danger with any chemical control method is the chance of an oxygen depletion after the treatment caused by the decomposition of the dead plant material. Oxygen depletions can kill fish in the pond. If the pond is heavily infested with weeds it may be possible (depending on the herbicide chosen) to treat the pond in sections and let each section decompose for about two weeks before treating another section. Aeration, particularly at night, for several days after treatment may help control the oxygen depletion.

There you open the pretty envelope that was in your mailbox, and excited that it is not a bill, there it is another “Save the Date” card announcing another wedding of a family member (close or distant), friend or neighbor. You are paralyzed momentarily thinking if you are audible and then your mind fills with all of the other financial commitments related to this and any other wedding or family/friend events. There is a way to manage the guest or wedding party cost of a wedding.

First step, set up a spending plan to know what you are wanting or obligated to spend as a part of the wedding. Be honest about your own financial situation to make sure you can fit it in.

Be realistic about what you can spend, especially if you are in the wedding party and are going to be “expected” to host or host any pre-wedding parties. Consider that you may be invited to: engagement party, bridal shower and/or bachelor and bachelorette parties. Some of these parties have also become destination gatherings, be honest if you can afford to go to an event that could last 3-7 days.

Looking for less expensive way to throw a fabulous party: have the event at home, pick a non-meal time to be able to serve appetizers; have others bring food or drink; have a more casual celebration.

Consider a casual rehearsal dinner, for example a cookout to save on food costs. Another way to reduce expenses is to pool your money with other friends, make a thoughtful gift or offer to make a signature food or drink for the party.

When planning for wedding gifts, visit the registry for the couple. If nothing on their list fits your budget, buy a store gift card or pool your money together with other guests. Consider a non-monetary gift to the bride and groom such as assisting with addressing the various invitations, helping on the “BIG” Day, assist with transportation or hosting out of town guests, or offer a service such as designing floral arrangements. Home made gifts are affordable and also memorable.

$ If you are the bride and groom, be respective of your attendant’s budgets, especially if you are not paying for the attendants wedding attire, on how much they can afford. Before anyone commits, be upfront with each other about finances. Everyone wants your wedding to be magical, however, when the con-fetti stops falling we do not want friends and family to be disappointed on how much they have spent and pay credit card bills for months after the event.

$ If you are a female guest, purchase a single outfit that you can change by using different accessories, even consider borrowing accessories.

The major expense for some wedding guests is travel expenses, if you are planning to attend, book your travel arrangements early. Ask the following question of the bride or groom:

■ a block of rooms at a hotel near the wedding activities; if its too pricey find another one close by.
■ ask about local transportation; will the bride and groom be providing any shuttle services or transportation.
■ if you have children, ask the couple what their plan is for children attending the festivities. Be prepared to pay for child care if you are one of a few guests with small children.
■ Plan for any miscellaneous expenses that might come up along the way. Add to your expenditures an “oops” category.

Celebrate the new milestone for the couple in your life with a relief of having money to spare after the thank you notes have been received.

Adapted from: NEFE
It’s vacation time and we’re off! We might go by plane, car, or boat…but, our destination is on our handy dandy map! We wouldn’t dare navigate the unchartered waters, the unflown skies, or even the unexplored roads without having mapped out our route on the beautiful map we have; whether online or in print! However, how about where we remain for the majority of our lives….in our own communities…have you mapped those out? I’m not speaking of the roads or where your friends reside…I am talking about the many resources available within it…the many gifts that exist that have gone unfound, hidden, and under utilized!

In these pressing economic times filled with financial uncertainty, it is ever-more important to be self-sufficient as a community, rather than as an individual. In order to do so, we must know what we have, but that is rarely the case. We may know how many restaurants we have, how many nail salons, how many grocery stores, etc. But, we know not how many helping hands, minds, hearts, and souls we have to strengthen the capacity of our communities! Hence, we encounter the need for a new and improved map…an Asset Map of our communities.

What are community assets? Those things that exist that are vital to the overall economic, social, and environmental well-being of your community. These are the things you want to maintain, enhance, and sustain from generation to generation.

What is asset mapping? Creating an all-inclusive inventory of everything good in your community, ranking them in terms of community value, and the discovery of the reasons why they are highly valued within your community.

Why would you use this asset mapping? It provides a common understanding of what the community considers important. It creates an atmosphere of strength rather than need and it sets the community up for communicating a positive view of the community. In addition, it makes them more desirable to potential funders when they have much to contribute to any community development project.

Remember: Include a road spectrum of your community in the process….youth, elderly, various socio-economic groups, occupations, ethnicities, religions, languages; institutions, businesses, environmental considerations, etc.

Resources: Building Communities from the Inside Out by John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight

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Foods that must be kept cold:
- Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, cooked beans or sandwiches/salads made with these foods
- Lunch meat
- Cheese
- Salad dressing and mayo
- Milk
- Pudding
- Cut fruit/veggies
- Cooked pasta
- Cooked rice
- Keep hot foods hot with insulated bottle and keep cold foods cold with ice packs

*Other tips*
- Keep lunch bags clean
- Use paper bags only once
- Do not reuse plastic bags or wrap
- Keep lunches out of direct sunlight or other heat sources
- Only use leftovers that have been in the refrigerator for less than 1 to 2 days

*Adapted from “Packing a Safe & Healthy Lunch for School” by Jenna D. Anding, PhD, RD, Texas AgriLife Extension Service*
Were you born with a “sweet tooth”? Possibly yes. Studies show newborns respond to sweet tastes quicker than to other tastes: bitter, sour or salty. No doubt, for many of us sweetness adds to the pleasure of eating!

To find out whether your favorite “sweet” treats are packed with nutrients, or provide mostly empty calories and little nutritional value, check the space that best describes what choices you make!

Do you.....?

Reach for fruit as a snack, rather than candy?

Drink juice or milk with lunch or dinner rather than soft drinks?

Top cereal with fruit instead of or along with – sugar?

Sweeten waffles, pancakes or French toast with fruit rather than just syrup?

Top ice cream with fruit, not just chocolate or caramel syrup?

Order juice or milk with a fast food meal or snacks?

Choose fruit for dessert, not a rich, high-calorie dessert?

Go for a smaller rather than bigger slice of pie or cake?

Snack on 2-3 cookies with milk rather than downing 5-6 cookies?

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<th>Do you.....?</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Mostly</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
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Now rate your choices

Total the points in each column. For each answer, give yourself:

4 points for “always”
2 points for “mostly”
1 point for “sometimes”
1 point for “never”

If you scored... 30 and above... Your “sweet” choices are mostly high nutrients, too. In fact, enjoy a bit of sugar now and then to add pleasure to eating.

20 to 29. If your overall diet is balanced and you are not overspending your calorie budget, your preference for sweets is probably okay.

10 to 19. Your “sweet tooth” may be crowding out nutritious foods. Check them out and consider some naturally sweet options from the food groups, not just the tip area of the Pyramid.

Reference: American Dietetics Association

With the temperatures in the high 90’s during the summer months, Texans are hot! During these months, it is especially important that we are choosing our beverages wisely. Not all beverages are created equal and consideration needs to be taken when you are looking to stay hydrated.

Although the Dietary Guidelines do not make a recommendation on how many ounces of water to drink per day, the general rule of thumb is to consume 6 to 8 eight-ounce glasses of water/fluids a day. On average, the typical adult consumes this amount, getting 20% from the food they eat and 80% from the beverages they consume.

Beverages contribute not only to the amount of water our bodies need a day but also to the amount of calories we consume. Drinking too many of these calorie-containing beverages can lead to additional weight gain. Calorie-containing beverages would be those that have had sugar or sweeteners added to them, such as soft drinks, fruit drinks, sugar sweetened- coffee drinks, smoothies, and flavored teas. Non- caloric drinks would include water, tea, coffee, and some diet drinks.

Americans should get most of their daily fluids from water, then from tea, coffee, and low-fat milk. When choosing a milk product, select a low-fat option that is high in calcium and vitamin D. Add low-fat or fat-free creams and milk products and use non-caloric sweeteners instead of sugar when you pour your next cup of coffee or tea.

If you are like me, you may have a hard time drinking water throughout the day. Here are some tips that can help you increase the amount of water you consume:

- Take water breaks throughout the day
- Start lunch or dinner with a cup of soup
- Take a bottle of water with you when you leave the house
- Drink milk during meals
- Enjoy decaffeinated teas and coffees

Be aware if you experience signs of dehydration and replace lost fluids immediately. Older adults, infants, children, athletes, and anyone on a hot day are more prone to dehydration. If symptoms persist, see your health care provider.

Sources: Texas AgriLife Extension Service, “Hydration: Water...The Beverage of Life” and “Better Beverage Plan: Choose Calories Carefully”

Signs of Dehydration:

- Thirst, dry mouth, flushed skin
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Dizziness, weakness
- High body temperature
- Increased breathing rate
- Dark yellow urine
- Skin that stays in a pinched position
In May, telephone calls to radio garden shows, nurseries, and county extension offices all around the country invariably focus on “What’s wrong with my plant?” Spring has passed, bugs and diseases are in full force, plants begin to experience stress, and symptoms indicating unhealthy plants show up! Responders to these calls are tested to properly diagnose plant problems and prescribe effective, environmentally friendly solutions!

Undoubtedly the biggest challenge for home gardeners and gardeners is diagnosing plant problems. Armed with a keen eye and knowledge, you can make a correct diagnosis that will lead to proper action to manage the problem. Accurate identification of the “enemy” causing the plant problem is critical. The enemy can be placed in three categories: Insects, Infectious plant diseases and Cultural or environmental causes. Believe it or not, the vast majority (over 70%) of problems results from improper cultural practices or the environment; however, the easiest to diagnose are insect and disease problems. Diagnosing plant problems is a process of elimination for even the most experienced professional as well as for the homeowner!

• They destroy various weeds in the same way they may injure desired plants.
• They consume decaying dead animals and plants.
• They pollinate flowers of many fruit and vegetable crops, as well as ornamental flowers.
• They improve soil conditions by tilling and burrowing through the soil while consuming organic matter and debris; dead insects and insect droppings also serve as fertilizer.
• Perhaps most important, they serve as predators and parasites of insect pests.

Predatory insects capture and eat thousands of insect pests. For example, lady beetles (ladybugs) and green lacewings and their larvae eat aphids, and praying mantises eat young grasshoppers. Parasitic insects lay eggs in insects, the eggs hatch, and the larvae eat the host insect. Parasitic wasps lay eggs in aphid and armypom cat-erpillars. So think twice before you squash or spray an insect. They may just be your next best friend! Call the Tarrant County Master Gardeners at 817.884.1944 if you have any questions at all on “Are they Good Bugs or Bad Bugs?”

If the forecasters at the US Climate Prediction Center have it right, the summer of 2011 will be unusually hot and dry. That’s not good news for a number of reasons, but one of great concern to horticulturists is the fact that landscapes need water to survive but are often viewed as less than necessary when time and resources are scarce. It is true that landscape irrigation does account for up to 65% of residential water consumption. In fact, according to Mary Gugliuzza of the Fort Worth Water Depart- ment, March 2011 set a new record for water use. How can we apply enough water to keep our valuable landscapes healthy without wasting precious water? That is the question that every landscape manager must ask about irrigation when summer time comes and talk inevitably turns to falling lake levels, water restrictions, dusty rain gauges, cactus gardening and even tumbleweeds. The spring of 2011 has been especially dry in most of the state. The U.S. Drought Monitor (http://www.drought.gov/monitor.html) shows the entire state of Texas in some stage of drought since March 29, 2011. In contrast, at that time last year, March 30, 2010, only 4.5% of the state could be considered “abnormally dry.”

Take these steps to maximize landscape water investments this summer:

1. Hydrozone - turfgrass, groundcovers, trees and shrubs, and annual and perennial beds have different water requirements and should be irrigated separately when possi- ble.

Most lawns receive more water than they require for a healthy appearance. Don’t water by the calendar, for example, once a week. Let your turf tell you when to water... Look for folded blades of grass or footprints that don’t immedi- ately disappear. Apply enough water per irri- gation to completely wet the root zone. Many of our most popular turfgrasses can survive a 60 day drought induced dormancy. For more infor- mation see the results of the Texas A&M/ San Antonio Water System study at http://itc.tamu.edu/documents/2008FinalReport_SAWS&TPT_s.pdf

Trees and shrubs should be watered as infre- quently as possible, yet thoroughly. Most estab- lished trees and shrubs will benefit from a twice a month thorough watering during the growing season in the absence of adequate rain. Normal lawn watering is not a substitute for thorough tree and shrub watering.

Newly planted trees and shrubs will need more frequent watering from the planting time until they are well-rooted. Apply water directly on the root ball. Newly planted sod needs daily water- ing until you can not easily lift the new pieces. This usually takes about two weeks. Newly in- stalled plant materials and containers must be a watering priority.

2. Mulch - apply a 2-4 inch layer of mulch to cover bare soil surfaces.

Research at Texas A&M University has shown that unmulched soil may lose twice as much wa- ter to evaporation as mulched soil. Mulches can be organic materials, such as shredded bark or yard waste, compost and wood chips; or inor- ganic materials, such as rock, textiles, and rub- ber.

Mulch preserves soil moisture, prevents soil compaction, keeps soils temperatures more moder- ate and reduces weed populations. Manag- ing weeds is especially important when irrigation water is limited. Weeds are not just ugly, they steal water from more desirable plants. Organic mulches will decompose and sometimes wash away, so plan to replenish them regularly.

3. Utilize Non-Potable Water - make the most of any rainfall event by harvesting and storing water and utilize condensate from air condi- tioning units for irrigation.

While investing in rainwater harvesting system in a drought might seem like a twisted version of carrying coals to Newcastle, most people under- estimate the amount of water that can be col- lected from even a meager little rain event.

To estimate the amount of water that can be harvested from a roof of any kind, multiply the area (in square feet) times rainfall (in inches) times 0.6. For example, a half inch rain on a 1000 square foot roof would fill a 300 gallon storage tank.

1000 sq.ft. x 0.5 in. rain x 0.6 = 300 gallons harvested rainwater.

When it is hot and dry, there will be air-conditioning. Wherever there is air-conditioning, there is condensate water. This water must be diverted out of the building. The condensate is most often dis- charged into the sewer drain. The amount of condensate can vary considerably and can range from 3 to 10 gallons/day per 1,000 square feet of air- conditioned space, largely dependent upon local climate, system design and type of use for the building.
Aretha sang about it. Educators throughout our land shout it as a reminder of desired behavior for their students. Parents strive to instill the Golden Rule aspect of it within their households. Our judicial system demands it. Friends and family desire it for their willingness to lend an ear, a shoulder and non-judgmental attitude when it’s needed most. And many earn it simply through their tireless work and service to others. Yet, we may long for it, struggle to understand why some do not embrace it and wish that our leaders practiced it.

As a youth development professional, I’m often challenged to be its voice by being an example. I often find that reciting “Character counts all the time and all the time character counts” is a reminder to students to examine their own behavior and make adjustments. When all else fails, I’ve discovered that getting the hands busy cannot hurt. The following craft project / lesson was taken and adapted from Good Ideas To Help Young People Develop Good Character, produced and published by the Josephson Institute in Los Angeles, CA in 2007.

Objectives: 1. To illustrate the need to recognize or “see” respectful behavior in ourselves and others. 2. To have a tangible reminder to be respectful.

Materials: White-Erase Board or chart paper, Dry-Erase markers, 3 Pipe cleaners (fuzzy stixs) per participant.

Optional Items: beads, decorative gems or self-adhesive foam shapes.

Age: Adaptable

I. Write the word RESPECT on the board or chart paper.
II. Ask the students to tell you what RESPECT means to them. [Write their responses on the board or chart paper]
III. After writing down a few ideas about RESPECT, ask the students:
   ■ Who are some people we should or must RESPECT and why?
IV. Then say:
   ■ How can you tell when someone is being RESPECTFUL?
V. Ask:
   ■ What is a tool to help us see things better? (wait for them to say “glasses”)
VI. Explain:
   ■ Today we are going to make RESPECTACLES to help us to see RESPECTFUL behavior as well as remind us to be RESPECTFUL.
VII. Demonstrate making Respectacles by following the directions:
   ■ Begin by twisting two pipe cleaners together. *Try to use different colors.
   ■ After they are twisted together, form a figure eight.
   ■ With your third pipe cleaner, cut it in half.
   ■ Take one half and twist it to one end of the figure eight creating an arm. Repeat on the other end creating the second arm.

After everyone has made their RESPECTACLES have a RESPECTFUL Parade modeling their new eyewear.

Rainfall Harvesting: Did you ever notice that old barrel attached to the roof at your grandparents or great grandparents home? Why was it there? Was it just your ancestor’s way of just getting one more use from that old barrel or was it more profound than that? It is the accumulat- ing and storing, of rainwater for reuse to irrigate plants or to supply people and animals, before it reaches the aquifer (underground lakes) that dates back to the beginning of agri- culture. It has been used to provide drinking water (if used for human consumption water must be treated), water for livestock and wild- life, water for irrigation, as well as other typical uses given to water. Rainwater collected from the roofs of houses, tents and local institutions can make an important contribution to the availability of drinking water. In some cases, rainwater may be the only available, or eco- nomical, water source. Rainwater harvesting systems can be simple to construct from inexpensive local materials, and are potentially successful in most habitable locations.

Why do it in the city? It is good for plants. It can help lower water bills by reducing amount needed via sprinkler systems. It produces beneficial externalities by reducing peak storm water runoff and processing costs. In munici- palities with combined sewer systems, reduc- ing storm runoff is especially important, be- cause excess runoff during heavy storms leads to the discharge of raw sewage from outfalls when treatment plant capacity cannot handle the combined flow. Make sure to check with your local HOA for area restrictions.

For details on how to make your own barrel visit this website: http://urbansolutionscenter.tamu.edu/media/403/makingrainbarrel.pdf

Don’t ignore your mortgage problem. If you are unable to pay or haven’t paid your mortgage, contact your lender or the company that collects your mortgage pay- ment as soon as possible.

Do your homework before you talk to your lender or housing counselor. Find your original mortgage loan docu- ments and review them. Review your in- come and budget. Gather information on your expenses, including food, utilities, car payment, insurance, cable, phone, and other bills. If you don’t feel comfort- able talking to your lender, contact a housing or credit counseling agency.

Know your options. Some options provide short-term solutions/help, while others provide long-term or permanent solutions. For information on different options, visit HUD’s website or Foreclosure Resources for Consumers for links to local resources.

Stick to your plan. Protect your credit score by making timely payments. Prioritize bills and pay those that are most necessary, such as your new mortgage payment. Consider cutting optional expenses such as eating out and premium cable or digital TV services.

Beware of foreclosure rescue scams. Con artists take advantage of people who have fallen behind on their mortgage pay- ments and who face foreclosure. These con artists may even call themselves “counselors.” Your mortgage lender or a legitimate housing counselor can best help you decide which option is best for you.

Source: Federal Reserve
The Texas 4-H Center, located on beautiful Lake Brownwood, provides children with the chance to develop character, learn valuable life skills, make new friends, and discover new interests. Finding the right camp for your child is as important as helping them find the right college! Annually, five or more sessions are offered each summer for youth ages 9 to age 18, 4-H membership is NOT required for most camps. The 4-H Center is accredited by the American Camp Association.

Specialty camps include the normal camp activities, such as teambuilding, swimming, kayaking/canoeing, etc. but also include experiences in specialty areas. Below are a few of the specialty camps offered for the summer of 2011.

Prime Time – This camp is designed especially for youth ages 9–13 and provides opportunities to meet new friends, develop new skills, and learn how to work with others. Activities include: Swimming, canoeing, archery, climbing and rappelling, and more!

Bits, Bytes, & Bots – As the name indicates, the focus of this camp is geared on technology. In addition to the traditional camp activities, campers may participate in activities such as robotics, stop-motion animation, and video game creation.

SpecTra – The objective of SpecTra is for youth to enhance project knowledge, explore careers, expand leadership skills, and strengthen their confidence. Evenings are dedicated to college and/or workforce preparation. It is about “life after high school!” Campers select one of the following as their project area of focus for the camp: Culinary Arts, Entomology, Creative Leadership, Meat Science, Speaking Your Way to Success, or Global and Cultural Education.

The Texas 4-H Conference Center offers a variety of opportunities geared towards all ages and interests of youth.... general camps, specialty camps, and more! There truly is something for everyone!

Additional information on camp opportunities can be located on their website: http://texas4hcenter.tamu.edu.

Chef at Camp – This camp is perfect for those foodies who want to enhance their skills while exploring new opportunities. Campers will be able to tape their own cooking show and participate in a Chef’s Food Challenge. Subject focus topics include: Kitchen Safety and Breads, All About Desserts, Get Your Fruits & Veggies, 4-H Healthy Lifestyles, and Manners and Etiquette.

Mission Possible – This is an Inclusive Camp, created to promote an environment for all youth. It is specially designed for youth (ages 9 – 21) with a variety of special needs including, but not limited to, autism, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities, visual impairments, and hearing impairments. Campers are able to enjoy nature while participating in fun activities.

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