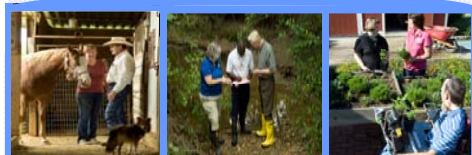


TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION



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Making a Difference In Tarrant County



Volunteer Week: April 23-29, 2017

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Volunteer Week

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Acknowledgements & Contact info

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HERE'S A SCREEN, THERE'S A SCREEN

Marian Ross
County Extension Agent
Family & Consumer Sciences

Have you stopped and looked around lately at all the screens we have in our daily lives? How many screens do you have in your home? This would include phones, tablets, hand held games and televisions. Screens are good, we have come a long way from having landline and maybe call waiting, however, families and singles need to monitor how much time you are facing the screen and not making eye contact.

When it comes to children, it is good to get away from screens. Not just for health reasons, for developing positive communication skills within your family. If you don't already do so, make it a point to spend one-on-one time with your children without a screen in the middle of what your family is doing every day. Spending that type of time with your family will be remembered far better than plopping your children in front of the TV. A friend of mine who has raised (and still has one tween at home) doesn't allow the television on during the week - on the weekend starting with Friday to Sunday they could watch television. When I would spend time with them, when her adult children were living at home, the bond that her older four children had was much deeper because of no TV. They did get cell phones when they were in high school, however, at 8:30 p.m. or once they got home from extracurricular activities or work, the phone was given to their parents. Not having the screen spurred their creativity and I would just have a good time watching them put on one act plays, sing/karaoke on their "fireplace stage" and other fun things. This also aided in no arguments about getting homework done.

Whatever you decide to do about getting away from the digital for a while every day, the best part of the plan is you, the parent, will be present with your child(ren) and will strengthen your bond with your child (ren).

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), children should have their screen time limited depending on their age. In the Fall of 2016, the AAP recommends that:

- ❖ Children younger than 18 months, avoid using screen media, unless a family is video chatting.
- ❖ Children 18-24 months of age can slowly be introduced to digital media through high-quality programming. Parents need to observe what the children are watching.
- ❖ Children 2 to 5 years, limit screen use to 1 hour per day of high-quality programming.
- ❖ For children 6 years and older, placing consistent limits on the time spent using digital media and types of media the children view should be monitored. In addition, make sure that the media isn't interfering with meal time, sleep, physical activity and other behaviors essential to health.

This limited exposure to digital media also includes what they are exposed to at daycare and school. If the day care is using media to keep the kids still and quiet consider moving them.

Remember, your children need you to reflect what you are teaching. At last put your device down for an hour, your family and friends will understand if you don't respond or "like" something instantly. Playing with your children will last longer in their life.

Sources and adapted from: OSU Extension FCS; HealthyChildren.org; aap.org

Do You Know What Your Credit Report is Saying?

Credit reports contain information about your bill payment history, loans current debt and other financial information. Credit reports show where you have lived and worked and whether you have been sued, arrested, owe on child support or filed for bankruptcy.

Credit reports help lenders decide if they will extend credit to you or approve a loan, and determine what interest rate they will charge you. Prospective employers, insurers, and rental property owners may also look at your credit report.

It's important to check your credit report regularly to ensure that your personal information and financial accounts are being accurately reported and that no fraudulent accounts have been opened in your name.

Want to learn more? Please attend the **Credit Check Up Event, April 20, 2017**, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m., 200 Taylor Street, Suite 500, Fort Worth, TX 76196.

Let's Talk Trash

Darlene Myatt
Extension Agent
Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program - Youth



Throughout the United States, there is a growing concern about food loss and waste. While one in eight Americans struggles to put enough food on the table, each year about 90 billion pounds of edible food in homes or other eating places go uneaten. This whopping amount weighs 123 times the Empire State Building with an estimated annual cost for consumers of \$370 per person.

As the world population increases, goals and initiatives have been established to reduce the amount of food wasted. Less food loss and waste can help save money, improve food access, and protect natural resources as well.

USDA has joined ranks with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to reduce food loss and waste by 50% by 2030. To achieve this ambitious national goal, a range of public and private efforts have been introduced, including the infographic Let's Talk Trash.

Introduced by the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) this consumer-friendly resource is located on the *Eating Healthy on a Budget* section of ChooseMyPlate.gov website. In addition to raising awareness about the amount of food wasted at home, you'll find ways to eat healthily and manage food resources at home to help develop positive behavior changes. Better yet, contact the EFNEP office to learn about our free nutrition education classes!

Here are additional tips you may find helpful...

- **Plan & Save**
Plan your weekly menu and make a grocery list. Does the list include food that you already have at home? Buy only what you need and stay within your budget.
- **Be Food Safe**
Shop refrigerated or frozen foods just before checking out. Transport items that spoil easily in a cooler or thermal bag and refrigerate or freeze within two hours of shopping.
- **Check for Quality**
The date on a food package helps the store determine how long to display the product for sale. It can also help you to choose a product at its best quality.
- **Storage Reminders**
Track storage times for different foods using The Food Keeper App to remind you when foods are near the end of their storage date.
- **Be Organized**
Foods are less likely to go bad when you use the older items first. Keep your pantry and refrigerator clean and organized so you can see what needs to be eaten first.
- **Re-purpose & Freeze Extra Food**
Give leftovers a makeover when you reuse them in recipes. Add broccoli stems to a salad or blend overripe fruit into a low-fat smoothie. Freeze extra food.
- **Donate**
Many shelters, food banks, and faith-based organizations will accept food donations to feed others who need a meal.
- **Recycle & Compost**
Instead of throwing out food, create a compost bin. Don't have a yard? Your city may help you find composting or recycling options that are right for you.

Source: [ChooseMyPlate.gov/lets-talk-trash](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/lets-talk-trash)

6 Ways to Live with Diabetes

Markena Minikon
County Extension Agent
Nutrition & Health

If you're among the 26 million Americans living with type 2 diabetes, it's important to adhere faithfully to any medications you've been prescribed. But that's far from the only thing that can help: There are many lifestyle steps that can ease the burden of living with diabetes—and some measures, like losing weight, might even reverse the disease. What does living your best life with diabetes look like?

Take care of your feet

High blood-sugar levels can damage nerves in the legs (neuropathy), which causes numbness in the feet. This can keep you from noticing cuts, bruises, and abnormal pressures on the foot—problems that can lead to ulcers or infection. [Neuropathy](#) can also make feet more prone to cracking, increasing infection risk. And diabetes can narrow arteries, impeding circulation and making it harder for wounds to heal. [Get tips for caring for diabetic feet.](#)



Get regular exercise

People with type 2 diabetes are more than twice as likely to have a heart attack or [stroke](#) than those without diabetes, and inactivity increases that risk. In a study of more than 15,000 Swedish people with type 2 diabetes, those who rarely exercised at the start of the study were 25 percent more likely to have a heart attack or stroke over a five-year period, and 70 percent more likely to die from one, compared with those who were the most active. [Get tips for exercising safely.](#)

Don't count on supplements

Despite the claims, there's no convincing evidence that any supplement—including vitamins, minerals, herbs, and other compounds—will help control diabetes. Until more is known about their benefits and risks, stick with proven treatments. [Read more about supplements for diabetes.](#)



Lose weight if needed

The obesity epidemic is a key reason the incidence of diabetes and prediabetes has been rising rapidly. Conversely, losing weight and keeping it off [may actually reverse the disease](#), according to a small English study. Adults with type 2 diabetes stopped taking their medication and undertook a supervised weight loss program, losing 30 pounds on average. They then received counseling to help them keep the weight off. About a third of participants were diabetes-free at the end of the eight-month study.

Care for your heart

All people with diabetes are at elevated risk for coronary artery disease, but for women the excess risk is twice as great as for men. So women with diabetes should pay special attention to their coronary risk factors, such as high cholesterol, hypertension, [obesity](#), and physical inactivity, and make sure they get the medical treatment they need. All people with diabetes are now advised to take a cholesterol-lowering statin drug to reduce their risk of heart disease. (Studies show women are less likely than men to be prescribed statins and other heart-protective drugs.)



Don't shun fruit

It's true that fruit contains sugar, but it's the naturally occurring kind (as opposed to added sugar), and fruit also supplies fiber and beneficial nutrients. In a [Danish study](#) of people newly diagnosed with diabetes, those who ate two pieces of fruit a day had similar weight loss and no deleterious effects on blood sugar compared with a group that was told to limit fruit.

Source & Photos: University of California, Berkeley

Lawn Fertilizing Made Simple and Quick

Steve Chaney
County Extension Agent
Horticulture

In late winter and again in late summer, the television and radio, the internet and local nurseries are all jammed with lawn fertilizer advertisements promoting the perfect green lawn! This perpetuates the neighborhood competition of who has the perfect lawn. Ask yourself why and is there another way??

The standard should be to produce an acceptable quality lawn with the least fertilizer and water needed. Remember our population may be growing, but our water sources are not! Even with all the advertisements, people usually end up guessing how much fertilizer to put out on the lawn every spring and fall. Generally, people buy a 40 pound bag of some highly advertised fertilizer and throw it around the lawn. Sounds simple enough, but there is a better way that is more effective and environmentally sound.

Lawn fertilizers can and often are the major source of pollution of creeks, streams, lakes and soils in our communities. Nitrogen and phosphorous far surpass chemical pesticides as water and soil contaminants. Try not to fertilize prior to a predicted heavy rain, I know that's contrary to the old thought that Mother Nature waters best. Nitrogen, and other fertilizer nutrients, can easily run off in heavy rains instead of being watered in as thought, leaving the creeks and streams to take the brunt of it. Excess Nitrogen can cause an "algae bloom" that consumes oxygen in the water to the point of causing mass fish kills!

Step 1: Measure your Lawn –You need a decent estimate of how many square feet of lawn you have in the landscape. Multiply the length of your lot by the width of your lot and subtract the total square footage of your home, garage, drive and plantings. Most people will have between 2,000 – 4,000 square feet of lawn.

Step 2: Choose & Use a Nitrogen Fertilizer – For more than 20+ years, extension educators have recommended a 3-1-2 ratio of fertilizers for lawns. Thousands of soil tests have now documented a phosphorous accumulation in lawn soils across Texas. High phosphorous levels contaminate our water sources and tie up other nutrients and make them less available to the plants.

Step 3: Determine how much Nitrogen to apply annually – The type of lawn grass you have will determine how many pounds of Nitrogen to apply annually per 1,000 square feet of lawn. The amount of nitrogen per year should be split into single applications of not more than 1 pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.

Step 4: Apply fertilizer at the proper time –In spring, apply lawn fertilizer after you have mowed the lawn grass at least three times. This confirms that the lawn grass is actively growing and ready to use the fertilizer applied. In fall, apply the last application approximately 45 days before the last freeze date in your area.

Step 5: Water as necessary – Sweep any fertilizer pellets back into the grass from the driveway, sidewalks or patio. Water the lawn thoroughly to activate the fertilizer and prevent fertilizer burn on the grass. *Be sure you stop watering before it starts running off and carrying your nutrients to the storm sewer and into our precious water sources!*

Remember to enjoy your turf, if the only time you walk on it is when you mow it then do you really need it???

Who is Your Landscape Service Provider?

Laura M. Miller
County Extension Agent
Horticulture



Many people enjoy doing their own gardening. Do-It-Yourself landscapers benefit from fresh air, exercise, and the satisfaction of seeing the results of their own labors. However there are times when even those who love mowing their own lawns may find themselves in need of a little professional help. This could be due to limitations in time or mobility. Some jobs are just a bit too complicated (installing a new irrigation system) or dangerous (removing a storm-damaged tree) for the average DIYer. Some days are just too hot.

When you are looking for a service provider, don't forget licenses, certifications and recognitions. Here's how to start.

Which Services Do You Need? The first step in finding a landscape service provider is always the same: decide what you want the provider to do. The most basic landscape service is often called "mow and blow." Almost anyone from the teenager next door to a national landscape company can provide this kind of service, but a good company will be able to do this much more efficiently than you can. Ian MacLean of Highland Landscaping in Southlake says that new customers are always impressed with how quickly his crews can mow and edge. "While it might take them a few hours, we can do in 20 minutes."

Sometimes you need more than regular maintenance, and when you do you'll want to find someone who is well qualified to handle the job. That doesn't always mean that they will be licensed. In the State of Texas, a **license** is required to:

- Apply pesticides. The Texas Department of Agriculture, www.texasagriculture.gov, regulates the commercial application of all pesticides and requires that individuals who apply pesticides for hire be licensed. This license is not required to apply fertilizers.
- Sell plant materials. The Texas Department of Agriculture also inspects plant materials to prevent the movement of plant pests and requires that anyone who sells plants have a license and provide access to those plants to inspectors. This is not required to install plants that are purchased from a licensed grower, re-wholesaler, or retailer.
- Install or modify an irrigation system. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, www.tceq.state.tx.us, regulates landscape irrigation to prevent contamination of public water supplies and to encourage water conservation.
- Landscape Architects are also required to have a professional license issued by the state. Landscape designers are not.

Certifications can help you determine which providers have proven that they have met certain professional qualifications, usually by providing proof of education and experience and by passing a standard examination. Certifications to look for include:

- Certified Arborist. The International Society of Arboriculture, www.isa-arbor.com, offers some of the most widely recognized certifications due to the scope and history of the organization and its programs. Trees are the largest, most valuable components of a landscape and their care often requires special skills and equipment. While no one has ever been injured by an improperly pruned Nandina, according to the Tree Care Industry Association, 580 people died in tree trimming accidents in the United States from 2009 to 2015.
- Texas Certified Nursery and Landscape Professionals. The Texas Nursery and Landscape Association's consumer website, www.landscapetexas.org, can help you find a certified professional in your area.

Where Do You Find a Good Provider? In addition to checking the lists of licensed and certified individuals as described above, and asking friends and neighbors whose landscapes you admire for recommendations, you can also rely upon Texas A&M AgriLife Extension to provide education in environmentally friendly landscape practices and to let you know who has completed that training. 45 individuals from 39 companies have completed the Water Efficient Recognized Green Professional program offered in cooperation with the Tarrant Regional Water District in 2016 and 2017. You can find out more about them and link to their websites at www.savetarrantwater.com/recognized-green-pros.

Take time to educate yourself about environmentally appropriate lawn care practices and remember that you **want** to pay for expertise in addition to services provided. A good landscape service provider will allow you to have a more beautiful and valuable landscape without breaking a sweat.



Don't Trash It

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

As spring is nearing and the Earth Day celebration looms, many will set off on a cleaning spree or task themselves with planting more flowers and/or trees. During this process of renewal, we should remind ourselves and others to reframe from throwing away items that could be recycled or reused in a different way. There are countless benefits to practicing the three R's (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle). On the EPA's website, <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-and-reusing-basics>, they offered some basic guidelines for reducing and reusing. On this page, they noted the following benefits of reducing and reusing:

- Prevents pollution by reducing the need to harvest new raw materials
- Saves energy
- Reduces greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change
- Helps sustain the environment for future generations
- Saves money
- Reduces the amount of waste that will need to be recycled or sent to landfills and incinerators
- Allows products to be used to their fullest extent

Additionally, the EPA provided ideas on how to reduce and reuse. Often times, we want to make changes but are not sure just where to begin. The following suggestions that are outlined on their page will help the process get underway:

- **Buy used.** You can find everything from clothes to building materials at specialized reuse centers and consignment shops. Often, used items are less expensive and just as good as new.
- **Look for products that use less packaging.** When manufacturers make their products with less packaging, they use less raw material. This reduces waste and costs. These extra savings can be passed along to the consumer. Buying in bulk, for example, can reduce packaging and save money.
- **Buy reusable over disposable items.** Look for items that can be reused; the little things can add up. For example, you can bring your own silverware and cup to work, rather than using disposable items.
- **Maintain and repair products, like clothing, tires and appliances,** so that they won't have to be thrown out and replaced as frequently.
- **Borrow, rent or share items that are used infrequently,** like party decorations, tools or furniture.

After learning more about the three R's (reduce, reuse and recycle), I truly believe that classroom teachers are probably the best examples of these concepts. Teachers have used soup cans as desktop pencil holders. They have used old pasta jars to hold small art supplies and aprons with big pockets as book holders. Not only are these educators teaching about the original three R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) they are demonstrating that items can have many uses while showcasing the impact of a creative mind. After all, a mop bucket can hold water today but be reinvented into a small ottoman for the reading nook tomorrow.



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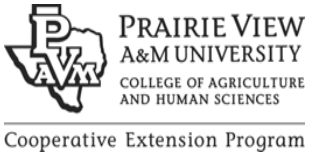
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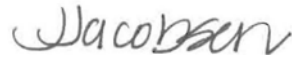
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