

# John South Spirit of Extension Award

*Jacklyn Jones, County Extension Agent, Agriculture/Natural Resources*



Left to right: Jacklyn Jones (County Extension Agent-Ag/NR), Courtney Davis (Tarrant County Extension Director), Commissioner J.D. Johnson, Pct. 4, and Kenneth McIntyre (Representative of Senator Jane Nelson's Office)

The John South Spirit of Extension Award was initiated at the retirement of Agricultural Extension Agent, John South, in order to keep his Spirit of Extension alive. Some of his hallmark programs that continue today are the Red Stegall Cowboy Gathering, the Horse-O-Rama Horse Show and the annual Pizza Ranch event. Traditionally, the award recognizes a Program Area Committee member for exemplary service in the design and delivery of educational programs which en-

hance the quality of life for the people of Tarrant County. However, this year it was unanimously decided to recognize an individual who exemplifies the same passion and understanding of the need for Agricultural Education in densely populated Urban areas.

This year's recipient is Commissioner J.D. Johnson. Commissioner Johnson's passion for agricultural events as well as youth events began at an early age while participating in calf-roping and team penning events. Today, he has a passion for supporting students in both 4-H and FFA in Tarrant County. He actively supports the Tarrant County Junior Livestock Show Association, North Texas High School Rodeo Association, Southwestern Exposition and Livestock Show Calf Scramble Committee as well as serving on the Board of Directors for the Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo.

As a Tarrant County Commissioner, he has been a champion for 4-H and the total Extension program and was instrumental in building and maintaining two 4-H barns and a 4-H building in Saginaw. His unwavering support of 4-H youth has been essential to the success of the organization's growing and vibrant urban program.

For J.D.'s work with 4-H and FFA, he received one of three Texas 4-H Alumni Awards from the Texas Cooperative Extension. This is the highest honor award given to friends of 4-H or former 4-H members in Texas. He was honored again by the Texas Cooperative Extension in 2006, becoming the inaugural recipient of the "Extension in the City" award, recognizing outstanding support and leadership by an elected official for the Texas Cooperative Extension Urban Program.

Greatly respected statewide for his knowledge of efficient delivery of County services, J.D. frequently testifies before the Texas legislature and has served as President of the Texas Association of Counties (TAC); the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas; and the West Texas County Judges and Commissioners Association. J.D. is also a past recipient of the West Texas County Judges and Commissioners "Outstanding Elected Official of the Year" and "Sam D. Seale Award" leadership awards.

## Director's Message



Courtney Davis,  
Tarrant County Extension Director

Happy New Year from Tarrant County AgriLife Extension! Lots of exciting things happened in 2019 and I am even more excited about the changes and opportunities coming to our office in 2020! Since starting as the new Director on October 1, I've had the opportunity to meet so many program stakeholders and so many of our amazing volunteers that help make the Tarrant County AgriLife program so successful. The Tarrant County team has a great reputation across the state and the work done by our volunteers is a big part of that. We had the opportunity to recognize several of these volunteers on December 12 at our annual AgriLife Interpretation and Volunteer Recognition Luncheon. You will read more about each of those award recipients throughout this newsletter. Additionally, we have provided you with a snapshot of our AgriLife program in 2019, focusing on the impact of our volunteers and those programs that set us apart from any other agency. I'm proud of the work being done in Tarrant County and look forward to meeting more of our program stakeholders and volunteers, working more closely with the programs, and seeing our impact in Tarrant County grow. If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to contact me as my door is always open!

## Director's Award

The safety and security of our staff, volunteers and program participants is our top priority in AgriLife Extension. During my near 14 year career, I've worked in a county in which an officer was shot in our building during work hours and in another county in which we were the only office on the first floor of a public building and would field a great deal of street and migrant traffic, not all of which were pleasant dealings. All of this to say that I highly appreciate being able to come to work in a safe environment and know that our staff, volunteers and participants are protected. It was with great pleasure that I was able to award the Tarrant County Sheriff's Department - Plaza Building team of Deputy Rodrigo Robles, Deputy Jimmy Wright, Deputy David Causey, Deputy Marcus Moore, and Deputy Brandy Garcia with this year's Director's award. Not only does this group of individuals keep us safe on a daily basis, but they provide a bit of sunshine throughout our day in their greetings and are always willing to assist our team. Thank you.



Left to right:  
Deputy Brandy Garcia,  
Deputy Marcus Moore,  
Deputy Jimmy Wright and  
Deputy Rodrigo Robles

Not shown:  
Deputy David Causey

# Repurpose, Reuse, & Recycle What's in Your Kitchen

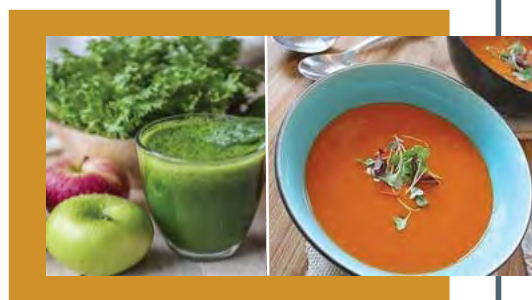
*Robin Hall, Extension Agent, Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program - Adult*

According to the USDA, Americans waste more than 103 billion pounds of food per year; food waste which ultimately ends up in landfills, producing methane gas, which is more devastating to the environment than carbon emissions released from vehicles. As people throw away this food, 1 out of every 6 people in this country goes to bed hungry.

Farmers, food producers, and food retailers often catch the brunt of the blame for the country's food waste problem, but the fact is that the majority of individuals involved in the farm-to-table process are actually working to reduce food waste; they are not in the business of producing food that cannot be sold or consumed.

ReFED, a nonprofit organization against food waste in the United States suggests that American households are huge food waste offenders – more so than farmers and food processors combined. According to research by The Hartman Group, however, “sustainability” is a buzzword influencing more than 85% of consumers’ values, attitudes, and actions. Yet, ironically there is nothing sustainable about food waste – not for the planet and not for our neighbors.

Challenge yourself to learn how to repurpose, reuse, and recycle what's in your kitchen. Keep reading for tips



you can start using today to reduce your own food waste footprint.

1. Hash of Trash – Chop up leftover bits of cooked vegetables, grains, beans, meat or seafood and sauté them in a skillet before transferring the hash to a plate. Then, cook an egg in the same skillet to top off the “hash of trash.” The hash gives leftovers a second life as a crisp, browned, flavorful base, and serves as a bed for an over-easy egg.
2. Gazpacho or Smoothie – Search your vegetable bin for tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, avocados, and squash, and throw them into

a blender along with herbs, extra virgin olive oil, vinegar or lime juice, and salt. This can make for a hearty hot, or cold soup; you can do the same with fruit to make smoothies for breakfast.

3. Go Green – Save the greens from root vegetables such as carrots, beets, or radishes, as they can be chopped and added to a variety of dishes, including pesto, tabbouleh, salads, and soups; or they can be sautéed with oil and garlic as a side dish. Carrot and radish greens will add a peppery flavor, similar to parsley or arugula, while beet greens provide a sweet addition to the dish. All three greens add an earthy flavor – along with antioxidants, phytonutrients, vitamins A, C, and K, and potassium.
4. Banana-nana-fo-fana – Peel and place overly ripe, brown, mushy bananas in freezer bags and place them in the freezer. They will last for a few months in the freezer and add a touch of creamy sweetness without relying on added sugars. Add the frozen bananas to smoothies, oatmeal, pudding, and plain yogurt; they can also be used as an ingredient in whole wheat pancake, waffle, and muffin mixes to add moisture and nutrients such as potassium and phytonutrients.
5. Veggie Power – Grill or roast large pans of a variety of cut up vegetables drizzled with a little balsamic vinaigrette to add a nutritious and flavorful side dish to dinner. Repurpose the leftover vegetables in marinara sauce to make it taste meatier; sandwich the veggies into a hummus wrap to add bulk; sprinkle the veggies on top of a premade pizza crust; or add the vegetables to an omelet, frittata, or quiche for a veggie and protein-packed breakfast.
6. Soup Scoop – Once you see vegetables such as tomatoes, zucchini, potato, or onion rotting, grab your knife and carefully cut away the blemished part and save the rest of the edible portion. Immediately toss the edible portions of the vegetables into a pot or slow cooker with some stock, a can of drained beans, and dried herbs to make a high-fiber soup that will last all week, or in the freezer for up to six months. A bowl of this vitamin-packed soup will help you consume your minimum of two and a half cups of vegetables daily.

# Friend of Extension Award Winner

*Alaina O'Daniel, County Extension Agent, Family & Community Health*

The Friend of Extension award is presented by the Tarrant County Extension office to a person, business, or organization and is designed to recognize truly outstanding support and involvement in Extension efforts. A Friend of Extension has consistently exhibited leadership, initiative, excellence and helped enrich Extension programs within Tarrant County.

This year, The Tarrant County Friend of Extension Award is being presented to the TCU Nutrition department. The TCU nutrition department is being given this award because of their consistent contribution to bettering the lives of kids in Tarrant County through putting on our county 4-H food challenge contest each year. 4-H works to empower young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime utilizing researched based experiences that translate into meaningful leadership opportunities. The TCU nutrition program, in turn, is helping to inspire kids to use the tools they're learning in the Food and Nutrition Food Challenge project and turn it into a lifelong passion and career.

The 4-H Food and Nutrition Food Challenge contest challenges teams of 4-H members to create a dish using only a predetermined set of ingredients. From these ingredients, team members must identify and prepare the dish, then make a presentation about it to the judges. The contest helps provide opportunities for participants exhibit knowledge and skill in the kitchen, provides opportunities for teamwork, public speaking and leadership. With more than 100,000 youth across the state of participating in the 4-H

Food & Nutrition Project, the next generation is learning how to prepare nutritious and safe meals and snacks and adopt behaviors that can help reduce their risk for chronic disease.

Considering obesity among adults and children is a growing issue in Tarrant County, cooking at home on the decline and eating out being the easy, convenient choice, TCU is encouraging the next generation of kids to lead out and make healthy choices.

Teaching kids how to cook has numerous benefits - it teaches math, improves reading comprehension, teaches basic chemistry principles and cooking expands kid's

palates. When a child cooks a new food or dish, they are more likely to eat it- or at least try it. With the staggering lack of vegetable intake in children this is a key benefit of teaching kids to cook. A study in the Journal of Nutrition, Education and Behavior showed that kids who know how to cook have better nutrition in their homes and in their families more than 10 years later.

Dr. Jada Willis has gone above and beyond to educate, lead and teach her students in the Coordinated Program in Dietetics. “The Coordinated Program in Dietetics (CP) provides a quality academic curriculum with a concentration in nutrition education that prepares students to be scientifically competent, accountable, and ethically responsible citizens who are prepared to be productive, self-educating leaders within the dietetics profession and the global community at large.”



# Home Horticulture - Master Volunteers

Steve Chaney, County Extension Agent, Horticulture



## The Texas Master Gardener Program

Who are Texas Master Gardeners? Master Gardeners are members of the local community who take an

active interest in their lawns, trees, shrubs, flowers and gardens. They are enthusiastic, willing to learn and to help others, and able to communicate with diverse groups of people.

What really sets Master Gardeners apart from other home gardeners is their special training in horticulture. In exchange for their training, persons who become Master Gardeners contribute time as volunteers, working through their Extension office to provide horticultural-related information to their communities. Extension furnishes 72+ hours of education in exchange for 72 volunteer hours the first year. Does this sound fun and exciting to you?



Tarrant County Master Gardeners are a wonderful volunteer arm of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Here in Tarrant County they assist me to help deliver various educational programs to the nearly 2 million residents of the County. One of the best kept secrets is the Master Gardener Hotline, they currently man this phone line 9 am - 3 pm Monday-Friday at our office at 817-884-1944. Give them a call to ask gardening questions, along with any other Horticulture question you may have. Visit the many demo gardens scattered throughout the County or attend one of the many educational classes presented by them throughout the year. There are over 400 Master Gardeners in Tarrant County and they would all enjoy sharing their knowledge and enthusiasm for volunteering with you, visit them at TCM-GA.org.

## The Texas Master Naturalist Program

**The Mission:** To develop a corps of well-informed volunteers to provide education, outreach, and service dedicated to the beneficial management of natural resources and natural areas within their communities for the State of Texas.

**The Need:** Many communities and organizations rely on such citizen volunteers for implementing youth education programs; for operating parks, nature centers, and natural areas; and for providing leadership in local natural resource conservation efforts. In fact, a short supply of dedicated and well-informed volunteers is often cited as a limiting factor for community-based conservation efforts.



Cross Timbers Master Naturalist are a joint volunteer arm of Extension and Parks and Wildlife. They are highly involved in the community assisting with field surveys of endangered species, presenting interpretative events at State Parks, Nature centers, restoring Blackland prairie in a city park, leading a school class on a nature hike and so many more vital educational events. There are over 100 active members in our area, visit them at CTMN.org and check out some of the exciting educational venues they are involved in!!

Between these two wonderful volunteer groups, they give back over 60,000+ hours of their time to the community each year. To help you to better understand that amount of value to the community, it's equal to 29 FTE which is the same as 29 Full Time employees. The best part of it all is they are having fun giving back to their community!!

Happy Gardening in 2020, let us know how we can help your garden be more sustainable this year!

# Deck the Halls with Boughs of Ilex vomitoria

Laura Miller, County Extension Agent, Horticulture



When the weather outside is frightful, or at least a little too chilly for Texans, there is no reason to stop enjoying the landscape. North Texas Native evergreen trees and shrubs are ready to provide color, texture, food for wildlife, home décor, and even food for you.

*Ilex vomitoria*, more commonly and attractively known as yaupon holly, is a small tree/large shrub with light gray bark, small green leaves that stay on the plant all winter, and the ability to adapt to a wide range of soil and climate conditions. Yaupon holly is one of the most popular landscape plants in North Texas. It can be maintained as a shrub or small tree and the popular dwarf cultivars (mostly males!) are widely used as low growing shrubs in home and commercial landscapes.

Like all hollies, yaupons are dioecious, which means that there are male and female plants. Only the female plants produce the characteristic red, orange and even yellow berries, and they will only do that if there are male plants around. Fortunately for North Texans, there's usually a male holly hanging around within a quarter mile or so and we can choose to install female plants without fear of poor pollination.

Many kinds of songbirds feed on yaupon berries in the late winter including our Texas State Bird, the Northern Mocking-

bird, as well as bluebirds, robins, cedar waxwings, white-throated sparrows and a variety of sapsuckers. Evergreen leaves and dense branches provide excellent cover and good nesting sites for a variety of birds, even quail and turkeys. The Texas State Small Mammal, the Nine-banded Armadillo, and other less celebrated small mammals like raccoons and foxes also enjoy yaupon berries. If that's not enough, come spring yaupon is a larval host and for Henry's Elfin butterfly.

Cut branches of holly berries are great displayed both indoors and outdoors. Stick a few branches into a container planting of pansies or kale for an instant thriller in those fillers and spillers in an outdoor container. Display cut branches indoors in a vase on their own or with cut flowers. *Ilex decidua*, slightly less attractively but rather colorfully known as possumhaw, loses its leaves in the winter leaving behind just the berries on female plants making them show up especially well in fencerows and fancy floral arrangements alike.

Have you ever consumed yaupon? Perhaps not, but it is the only plant native to North America that contains caffeine. Native Americans used roasted leaves and shoots to make a tea sometimes referred to as Black Drink. Yaupon tea was also popular as a coffee/tea substitute in times when coffee from tropical mountains and tea from China were hard to come by such as during the Civil War. A few modern-day Texas entrepreneurs are roasting and marketing yaupon tea as a locally grown sustainable beverage. And what could be better than a hot cup of tea on a cold day?

# Darlene Myatt Friend of Children Award

*Jordan Peldyak, 4-H Extension Agent, Cooperative Extension Program*

Every year, the Tarrant County Extension office puts on an annual volunteer appreciation awards ceremony and luncheon. These awards are the least we can do to show how fortunate we are to have such great volunteers who allow us to serve the citizens of Tarrant County and Texas. In the 4-H department we chose two well deserving volunteers this year that went above and beyond to help support the 4-H program. The award that the 4-H volunteers received was named in honor of long-time outstanding Extension agent Darlene Myatt.

For 40 years, Darlene Myatt reached thousands of inner-city youth in Tarrant County and improved their diets by using effective leadership and commitment in her programming. This award, given in honor of Darlene recognizes individuals who dedicate their time, talents, and treasure to teaching children with dynamic enthusiasm and loving leadership. These are traits that exemplify Darlene's dedicated leadership in teaching some of Tarrant County's most vulnerable youth.

One of the recipients of this award was Teresa Womble. She has been at the fore front of almost every 4-H project and training this past year helping the youth with countless hours of her own time to make sure the youth of Tarrant County receive the beneficial experiences that are offered. She is also the President of the Adult Leaders Association and runs her own 4-H club. We cannot thank her enough for all that she does for 4-H.



Left to right: Teresa Womble (Tarrant County 4-H Adult Leaders Association President), Darlene Myatt (retired Extension Agent-Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program), Andrea Rasco (Tarrant County 4-H Adult Leaders Association Vice-President), Jordan Peldyak (4-H Extension Agent, Cooperative Extension Program) and Kenneth McIntyre (Representative of Senator Jane Nelson's Office)

The next recipient was Andrea Rosco, she is great volunteer leader that never misses an opportunity for her 4-H club to participate in contests and activities. She also spends many nights with her own 4-Hers at meetings and trainings that are offered here through 4-H. She has a great passion for the 4-H program and is always willing to help with anything, I've even asked her about how contests run and specific due dates for things. She is also the new Vice president of the Adult Leader's Association.

The 4-H program in Tarrant County has more than 100 volunteers that spend countless hours running clubs, teaching youth and guiding them through out the year. All of the volunteers allow the program to sustain and grow each year. Without all the amazing volunteers it wouldn't be possible to reach the youth and audiences we can throughout the County. We look forward to awarding many more great volunteers next year. The support Tarrant County Extension has makes it possible for all the extension agents to be successful every day. We are very lucky to have such great people in the community that have the same passion as we do.

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