



MAKING A DIFFERENCE

TARRANT COUNTY

Meet your new Home Horticulture Agent, Brittney Meyer!



I would like to introduce myself; my name is Brittney Meyer, and I am the new Home Horticulture Agent in Tarrant County. I am very excited to be here and can't wait to see what the future holds.

I have a Bachelors in Horticulture and Crop Science from Sam Houston State University, with a Master of Science in Plant Pathology and Micro-biology from Texas A&M University.

Therefore, I have the knowledge to help with not only what and how to grow a beautiful garden or landscape but help determine what is potentially wrong with your plants when they are not performing well. I have worked in the commercial landscape industry and public gardens for 6 years. Realizing the gap between consumers and industry/research I wanted to be a part of Extension to help bridge that gap.

I grew up in agriculture and have loved every minute of it. Growing up I rode horses, raised cattle and swine, and played outside in the dirt at every opportunity. I love to learn and believe learning never stops! Though my degrees are both in horticulture I have a diverse knowledge base that includes both small and large animals, as well as construction. I love to read and play boardgames, or any other nerdy thing. I have 3 ridiculous cats that drive me insane, but I love a ton. If there is anything you would like to know about me just ask!

I am passionate about agriculture and gardening education in both adults and youth within the county. I look forward to working with current members to improve the program and bring in new members and ideas for the future.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out via email brittnay.meyer@ag.tamu.edu or call me at 817-884-1946.

Supporting Tarrant County 4-H is easy... and delicious!



Choose From Four Great Flavors

Peppered Hickory



Sweet Smoked



Brown Sugar BBQ



Valle Sagrado Chile



The Texas 4-H Foundation has teamed up with legendary rodeo announcer Bob Tallman to sell his Authentic Cowboy Beef Jerky. The proceeds will help fund club projects right here in Tarrant County.

Bob Tallman's jerky comes from high-quality, grass-fed, Texas-raised beef. The jerky comes in four delicious flavors. You can enjoy it sweet, peppery, smoky, or spicy. Each package is just \$10.00. Scan the QR Code to place your order today!

Be sure to mention **"TARRANT COUNTY"** when ordering so that 100% of the proceeds go directly to our Tarrant County 4-H program!

Thank you for your support!



Ranch Brigade

Written by Cadet Chappell Carter



The Ranch Brigade has been one of the best experiences of my life. As a teenager, through school, we've been taught about all the basics- English, Math, Science, etc. But working on our family's ranch has filled in the other gaps in my education-- leadership, agriculture, and basic life values. The Ranch Brigade was a concentrated 5-day camp for all of these. Once we arrived at the Warren Ranch, we were all greeted by the wonderful staff and carried on into our rooms. At that point, about the only way we knew each other was our "name tags", the bag of coal with our names on it. Why this? Well as

one may know it takes heat, time, and pressure to make a diamond. We didn't have much time, so the Ranch Brigade turned up the heat and pressure.

To take this bag of coal off us, we must speak about our silver bullets. These are important quotes about life that we must memorize and elaborate on to earn our more permanent name tags. We recited our silver bullets when we had some free time, which was rather seldom. Much of our time was in the classroom, listening and learning about ranching topics. From cattle anatomy, economics, nutrition, low-stress handling, beef cuts, soil types, erosion prevention, land stewardship, and so many more topics, we learned so much. But the 'big question' for the entire camp was how to feed the world, a major issue that needs to be addressed. But not only did we learn and interact in a classroom setting, but we also went out in the field and experienced what we have learned. In our big, open-aired yellow school bus, we discussed and elaborated on what we see out in the pasture.

Personally, my favorite field activity was our grass collection. As part of the curriculum, we learned to identify a lot of the Texas grasses. From Bermudagrass to the bluestems to the wildryes, we covered quite a few species. We then continued to collect samples and press them to create a plant collection. I still have many of my samples! But with all of this, we did what all summer camps do-- compete. Us cadets were split into four herds -- Brahman, Angus, Charolais, and Hereford. Throughout the camp, we earned points for our herd through trivia games, our ranch competitions, grass identification, and even marching. Overall, those team experiences are what made us cadets transform from total strangers to great friends and valuable resources.

Along with competition, great friends, copious amounts of great information, we were taught basic values. Our nightly talks, ones of faith and life, have greatly affected me and have brought me to think in different and better ways. As one can see, this was a great experience and luckily, the Ranch Brigade has an opportunity to return as an alumni leader. As we go out and spread the word and support the Brigades in our community, we can earn points to return and even win scholarships. Overall, the Ranch Brigade has been an amazing, ongoing experience and is an extraordinary organization doing their part to fulfill their motto-- "conserving a resource, preserving a tradition."

For more information about the multiple Brigade opportunities, contact County Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural Resources Jacklyn Jones-Doyle at 817.884.1296.

Tarrant County 4-H Youth Celebrate Accomplishments at Annual Awards and Scholarship Reception

Jacqui Frampton, County Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development



Pictured: Members of East Fort Worth 4-H pose together for a picture at the 2021 Tarrant County 4-H Awards Reception on August 13, 2021.

Fall 2021 brought with it the end of one 4-H year and the beginning of another. Each August Tarrant County 4-H youth are honored for all their hard work and accomplishments at a reception hosted and sponsored by the Tarrant County 4-H Adult Leaders Association (ALA). This year, Nolan Catholic High School in Fort Worth provided the venue space for a socially distanced, in-person awards reception. After the cancellation of the 2020 reception due to the COVID-19 pandemic, youth and families were eager to be able to gather once again and celebrate as a group. Over 60 youth and their families were able to be in attendance. Forty graduating seniors were recognized and given well wishes for their future endeavors in college, careers, and beyond. There was also a total of \$2,000 in scholarship money that was awarded to 4 of those seniors. These scholarships are made possible by the fundraising efforts of the ALA. Other notable achievements included 6 youth who were awarded Presidential Community Service awards and 1 youth who received the coveted Gold Star award, which is the highest award a Texas 4-H member can achieve. Next year's Tarrant County 4-H Awards Reception is scheduled for August 11, 2022.



4-H member receives scholarship to Prairie View A&M University

Jordan Peldyak, Extension Agent, Cooperative Extension Program, 4-H Youth Development



Emmanuel D. Veal is a Tarrant County 4-H Alumni that graduated from Nolan Catholic High with a 3.6 GPA in 2021. Emmanuel has enjoyed his time while in high school as he began to see himself evolve into the young man he is today. Emmanuel is passionate about advocating in the community for social injustice and equality for all. While in high school he was determined to be well rounded and try new things. He played football and held a leadership position on the team, participated in dance class, engineering courses, 4-H club and participated in youth community advocacy and education. He used these skills to help peers with self-care and mental health while in a global pandemic.

Emmanuel was a 2-year member of Everything 4-H club in Fort Worth, where he participated in various agriculture activities such as learning how to rope a cow, to growing a bean in a bottle, to cooking meals for elderly family members, growing fresh vegetables from the club's garden but most of all he had enjoyed repairing a John Deer tractor with the club's leader.

Emmanuel looks forwards to attending Prairie A&M University while studying mechanical engineering to continue his passion with building and repair ranch/farm equipment. In addition, to continue to participate in the 4-H club when he returns back home and assist with recruiting other minorities in his community and throughout Tarrant County or wherever he decides to live after college.



Emmanuel would advise younger 4-H members to stick to the process, get involved, encourage your peers and be innovative. Emanuel was one of the recipients of the S.A.LE Scholarship this year to attend Prairie View A&M University this year. Emanuel's hard work has led him to great success so far and we look forward to seeing what successes he has in the future!

So Long Summer.... Hello Fall!

When the world wearies and society fails to satisfy, there is always the garden. — Minnie Aumonier

Brittnay Meyer, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

Howdy gardening fans! I am Brittnay Meyer the new Home Horticulture Agent for Tarrant County! I am so excited for this opportunity and cannot wait to get started with new class offerings and programs! Updates are coming so pay attention to Tarrant County's AgriLife Facebook page and website for details. Let's get our hands dirty!

This month I had the honor of assisting our Family and Community Health Agent Fralonda Aubrey and 3 of our Master Gardeners with the reestablishment of the school garden at Glen Park Elementary in Fort Worth. We guided the students in prepping the existing raised beds by getting them engaged in the work themselves! It was exciting to hear how many students garden at home with their families already! Gardening together can add years to your life and life to your years!

The students donned gloves, trowels and shovels to take care of every step needed to ensure gardening success from weeding to watering in fertilizer! Multiple classes were able to participate, and I can't wait to see what the future holds for these budding plant enthusiasts! They were full of questions and couldn't wait to share stories of their at home gardening adventures.

Remember cool season vegetables are here! Though our warm weather season can last well into November, nighttime temperatures are starting to drop. Switch out summer vegetables, such as tomatoes and squash, for broccoli, sprouts, and leafy greens! The addition of soil coverings, such as straw or black plastic, can help keep soil temperatures constant and warm, ensuring roots are happy and toasty.

It's that time of year when temperatures can't decide what to do and each day can be drastically different. Now is the time to start planning cold protection for those plants in the landscape or containers that have low cold tolerance. Whether you are bringing them inside, replacing annuals, or covering shrubs, plan now so you aren't caught off guard and lose plants to frost damage overnight. Watch the forecast and tuck your plants in on those cold nights!

If you have any gardening or other horticultural questions, please call the Master Gardener Help desk at (817) 884.1944 or send an email to TarrantMG@ag.tamu.edu.



Preparing for Winter

Laura Miller, County Extension Agent, Horticulture

The Texas Winter Storm of 2021 was one for the record books, the first billion-dollar weather disaster of a long and severe weather year <https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/>. Not all those billions of dollars were made up of plant related losses, but billions of plants were lost on farms and in landscapes in North Texas.

While we can't control the weather, there are some simple things that we can do to help our plants make it through whatever this winter brings.

Top Tips for Winter (plant) Wellness

- Turn off the irrigation system

You too can save thousands of gallons of water with one finger. In the winter months, precipitation often exceeds the amount of water that mostly dormant North Texas landscapes require. Excess irrigation can contribute to disease development and unnecessarily large water bills. Save water and your irrigation budget for when it is needed most. There is another big benefit to turning the system switch to the off position: avoiding man-made ice events and any subsequent accidents.

- Mulch

There is a reason that leaves fall before winter. Using leaves as mulch is a simple and effective way to recycle organic material and improve the landscape. Leaves can be used as mulch in vegetable gardens, flower beds and around shrubs and trees. Apply a 3-to-6-inch layer of shredded or crushed leaves around the base of trees and shrubs. Avoid the dreaded mulch volcano effect by keeping mulch away from tree trunks and shrub crowns. In annual and perennial flower beds, a 2-to-3-inch mulch of shredded leaves is ideal. Mulching is especially important in establishing newly planted trees, shrubs, and perennials. If the natural look of shredded leaves isn't what you like, top off the leaf mulch with a thin, inexpensive layer of bark mulch. You'll get all the benefits of bark at a fraction of the cost.

- Water right before a freeze

When extremely cold temperatures are expected, watering plants thoroughly before temperatures drop will hold heat in the soil. A "wet cold" may be unpleasant for people, but it is warmer than a "dry cold." Moist soil holds about four times more heat than dry soil and the air temperatures above moist soil



can be as much as 5°F warmer than air temperatures above dry soil. Mulch will help hold that moisture in the soil and minimize temperature fluctuations in the root zone.

- Consider containers

Plants in containers are more susceptible to cold damage than those with roots in the ground. On the other hand, because they are not in the ground, they can be moved indoors or at least into a more protected outdoor area such as under a covered patio. Simply grouping containers together will help them stay warm. Covers placed over containerized plants should reach all the way to the ground, just as they should for in ground plants to hold heat that will radiate from the soil or driveway or patio surface.

- Prune prudently

Trees should be regularly pruned to minimize the potential for damage during snow and ice storms. The strongest tree has a central leader, or a trunk that extends all the way to the top of the tree, and branches that are attached at wide angles. A nearly horizontal branch is not more likely to fail than one that is nearly upright. Dead branches are going to fall eventually, and even a light snowfall can knock them right out of a tree. Always prune to remove dead or damaged branches as soon as you notice them and to avoid additional damage to people, plants, and power lines below. Hiring an ISA Certified Arborist is the best way to protect the largest and most valuable components of your landscape. Find one at <https://www.treesaregood.org/>

Cutting back herbaceous perennials such as salvias, buddleias, and Turk's Cap after the first hard freeze and applying fresh mulch over their roots will help them survive the winter. Ornamental bunch grasses can use frozen foliage to protect the growing points of the plant which are down at the base of the clump. Another benefit to not cutting back ornamental grasses until new growth comes out in the spring is the color and texture that they continue to provide in the landscape.

- Get outdoors!

Both you and your plants will be healthier if you spend time outdoors even in cold weather. Take time to enjoy those brave winter bloomers and tough trees and shrubs.



EFNEP Helps Spread Hope and Empowerment Throughout the Community

Robin Hall, Extension Agent, Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

Tarrant County's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program's (EFNEP) partnership with The Women's Center of Tarrant County recently celebrated one year of partnering together to empower and improve the lives of Tarrant County residents.

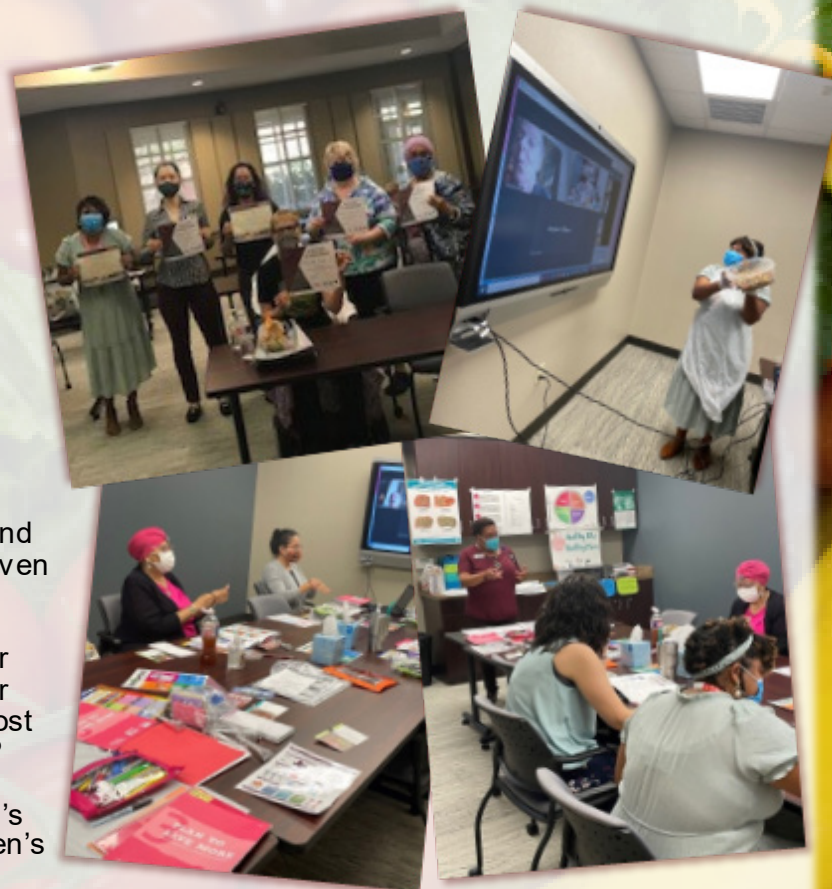
The Women's Center has inspired and empowered women, men, and children in the Tarrant County Community to overcome violence, crisis, and poverty for more than 40 years. They provide comprehensive programs which help people overcome obstacles and discover a path to a brighter future. One of The Women's Center's programs specifically targets families living in the Presbyterian Night Shelter, Union Gospel Mission, and Arlington Life Shelter. The services offered to these families provide connections to resources, as well as parenting and life skills education to help them transition out of homelessness.

EFNEP's partnership with The Women's Center began with a simple contact made to Maggie Phillips of The Women's Center who then passed EFNEP program information to other staff members, including Cynthia Thomas, Homeless Case Manager and Project Coordinator; the partnership took off from there. EFNEP started out offering virtual lessons to parents living at Union Gospel Mission, followed by Arlington Life Shelter, and the partnership continues. Over the course of the year, through their partnership with The Women's Center, Tarrant County EFNEP has provided both virtual and face-to-face nutrition education to multiple groups living at Union Gospel Mission, Arlington Life Shelter, and Presbyterian Night Shelter. Through the height of the pandemic, EFNEP adult educator, Dolores Haley was able to connect with participants in a way that encouraged genuine engagement and interest in the program. Participants expressed their appreciation for what they learned while attending the EFNEP nutrition education series. After completing the program, they had a desire to make healthier food choices for themselves and their families, and they felt empowered to do so with the practical skills they learned while attending.

Most recently, EFNEP enjoyed working with a group made up The Women's Center staff members and individuals participating in their Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives (PEARLS). This group, headed up by Sofia Varela, PEARLS Case Manager, met for face-to-face EFNEP sessions that were also streamed for participants to sign into virtually if they were unable to attend in person. Partnering with the PEARLS to provide EFNEP proved to be a rewarding experience for participants, as it provided them an opportunity to fellowship with others while learning new ways to enhance their nutrition and physical activity behaviors.

The Women's Center of Tarrant County envisions a community of strong, empowered women and families. It has been an honor and a pleasure for EFNEP to assist in bringing that vision to fruition, one participant at a time. In one year, EFNEP has reached over 50 families served by The Women's Center; imagine how much hope and empowerment that will equate to after two, five, even ten years down the road.

Tarrant County EFNEP would like to express their sincerest appreciation to The Women's Center for such a steadfast partnership during one of the most challenging times in our county's history. EFNEP partnerships come and go; some are short-lived while others span over the course of years. Here's to many more years of partnering with The Women's Center to spread hope and empowerment across Tarrant County.



Texas Brigades - North Texas Buckskin Brigade

Written by Cadet Kaitlin Lavender

In July 2021, I had the opportunity to attend North Texas Buckskin Brigade (NTBB). I went with a basic knowledge of deer and their habitats, but I returned with a wealth of resources, a passion for deer management, and a bunch of lifelong friends.

When I arrived at camp, I immediately felt at home. All the instructors and staff members went out of their way to make sure that we were settling in alright, getting food, and talking to people. Right after lunch, classroom instruction began. We learned about the creation of our camp, met our instructors, and created our herd names (my group was the Trophy Hunters). Then, we headed out for our first hands-on session: deer anatomy. Before camp, Texas Parks and Wildlife officials had harvested a deer so we could truly understand its complex organ systems. We learned about a deer's digestive and reproductive systems and got our first Plant I.D. lesson as we examined stomach contents to see what the deer had been eating (hint: this deer really liked prickly pear cactus).



It was after this first hands-on activity that my fellow herd members really started to open up. We started really talking to each other, learning about their lives back home and what they do in their free time. I learned one guy was a volunteer firefighter, another was on a competitive shotgun team. We all came from completely different backgrounds, but at camp, we all had common goals: learn all that we can and become the Top Herd.

The Top Herd is determined by adding up our scores on the various competitions at camp. Every Plant I.D. quiz, room inspection, Deer Trivia, and presentation was given a point value and went on the board. Every herd's goal was to become Top Herd because that herd would earn a free guided whitetail deer hunt. I worked especially hard for it because I've never gone hunting. To prepare all of us for the chance to go hunting, we were given gun safety courses and had a rifle competition.

The shooting safety and target practice sessions were some of my favorite parts of camp. Before NTBB, I knew how to shoot a shotgun, and that was because of Waterfowl Brigade, another Texas Brigades camp. NTBB taught me how to stand, shoot a rifle, and stay calm under pressure. By the time of the competition, I had an 80% hit rate.

My team did well throughout the competitions. We won almost every Deer Trivia, aced the Plant I.D. quizzes, and gave our all throughout the various events the instructors threw at us. Because of our hard work, we were named Top Herd. I can't wait to meet up with my crew this winter for our hunt!

Another award that is granted at camp is Top Cadet. The instructors, staff members, herd leaders, assistant herd leaders, and cadets all vote for a cadet that showed leadership, teamwork, and knowledge at camp. I received the honor of Top Cadet, and I will be going on a second hunt this winter because of that.

Now that camp is over, I've been working hard to attend as an assistant leader next summer. Wish me luck!

For more information about the multiple Brigade opportunities, contact County Extension Agent-Agriculture & Natural Resources Jacklyn Jones-Doyle at 817.884.1296.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Celebrates Family Mealtime through Instructional Cooking Video!

Fralonda Aubrey, County Extension Agent, Family & Community Health

Since the start of the pandemic Destiny Empowerment Enterprises, Inc., Mona's Heart Outreach, and Destiny Pointe Christian Church have partnered with the Tarrant Area Food Bank to provide a Monthly Mobile Food Pantry. In efforts to assist families with suggestions for their ingredients; Extension teamed up with the food pantry coordinators to provide an instructional video on healthy meal options. The recipes provided were modified recipes from the Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School Recipe Collection. Dinner Tonight provides cooking tips and techniques, nutrition topics, and meal planning tips for busy families. The theme of the instructional video was, "Celebrate Family Mealtime." During September, *Celebrate Family Mealtime* is a month-long celebration to highlight the commitment Extension has to encouraging the adoption of healthy behaviors through eating with family at any meal.

FAMILY MEALTIME INTERESTING FACTS

Family meals help children develop a diverse vocabulary	The preparation for, eating of, and clearing up after a meal all shape family routines and traditions and every family's routine is unique.	Children tend to model their parents' attitudes about food, and the family is the primary place children learn their eating habits and food choices.	Distracted eating, like watching television during a meal, can undo the positive effects of eating as a family.
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Dinner Tonight Healthy Cooking School with Food Pantry Ingredients recording at Destiny Pointe Christian Church.

<https://youtu.be/2C88QHRH4qI>

Left: **Marva Bracks**, Destiny Pointe Christian Church Cook & Coordinator & Tarrant County 4-H Program Intern
Right: **Fralonda Aubrey**, County Extension Agent - Family and Community Health



The future of health begins with *you*.

Become Our Partner

What is precision medicine?

Precision medicine is health care that is based on you as an individual. It takes into account factors like where you live, what you do, and your family health history. Precision medicine's goal is to be able to tell people the best ways to stay healthy.

What is the All of Us Research Program?

The All of Us Research Program is a large research program from the National Institutes of Health. The goal is to help researchers understand more about why people get sick or stay healthy.

We hope that more than one million people will join the All of Us Research Program. People who join will share information about their health, habits, and what it's like where they live. By looking for patterns in this information, researchers may learn more about what affects people's health

The All of Us Research Program will last for 10 years or more. This will allow researchers to study health over time. If you decide to join the All of Us Research Program, you will be contributing to an effort to improve the health of generations to come. You also may learn about your own health.



To start your journey, go to Participant.JoinAllofUs.org and:

- 1 Create an account
- 2 Give your consent
- 3 Agree to share your electronic health records
- 4 Complete the Consent to Get DNA Results
- 5 Answer health surveys
- 6 Have your measurements taken (height, weight, blood pressure, etc.) and give blood and urine samples, if asked

To learn more and to enroll, contact us at:

JoinAllofUs.org/together
help@joinallofus.org
(844) 842-2855

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