VOL 2 ISSUE 3 • MARCH 2023

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION - FRIO COUNTY

FRIO COUNTY AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES NEWSLETTER

Dear Agricultural Producers:

We are pleased to be able to provide you with information contained in this newsletter. The Frio County Agriculture & Natural Resources Newsletter is a Monthly newsletter beginning January 2023. Best efforts have been made to include Agriculture & Natural Resources information that should be of interest to you and helpful in the management of your agricultural operations. A wide variety of educational publications are available upon request or by accessing the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension website at www.agrilifeextension.tamu.edu. Our office hours are from 8:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m., (Monday-Friday). It is recommended that office visits be scheduled in advance or by appointment as there will be times that I'm not in the office.

You are encouraged to read this newsletter and keep informed of all on-going agricultural events and activities. Try to do your best to attend Extension educational programs, workshops, etc., throughout the year as they are sponsored by your local Extension committees for your educational benefit. We would like to acknowledge the Extension Agricultural Specialists and cooperators including: The Cattleman, TSCRA, The Peanut Grower, AgriLife Today, Aggie Horticulture, and the Texas A&M Beef Cattle Browsing, who contributed and provided the educational information for this educational newsletter. For any further questions regarding your agricultural operation, please contact the Frio County Extension Office (830) 334-0099, located at 400 S. Pecan St. Pearsall, Texas, or e-mail brianna.gonzales@ag.tamu.edu. Visit the Frio County AgriLife Extension website at https://frio.agrilife.org.

Sincerely,

Brianna Gonzales

Brianna G. Gonzales
County Extension Agent- Agriculture & Natural Resources
Frio County

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION 12

Inside this issue:

Helpful Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Websites:

agrilifeextension.tamu.edu
texaswater.tamu.edu
aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu
livestockvetento.tamu.edu
animalscience.tamu.edu
texashelp.tamu.edu
SouthTexasRangelands.tamu.edu

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION 12

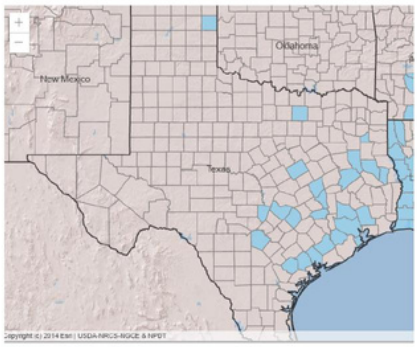
BQA TIP

- Cattle identification ear tags can be a very useful management tool.
- However, in some situations after tagging an infection may develop around the point of insertion especially in young calves.
- To help reduce the risk of infection try to keep hands clean and disinfect ear tags (focus on the part that will touch or penetrate the ear) and the end of the applicator that holds the tag with alcohol or another disinfectant.
- Watch for any ears that are drooping and signs of infection.
- With calves it may be necessary to temporarily remove the tag to allow for healing.

For more information please visit:
https://texasbeefquality.com/bqa-tips/
or animalscience.tamu.edu.

RANGELAND PLANT IDENTIFICATION

By: Stacey Hines Ph. D., Assistant Professor, Rangeland Habitat Management Specialist



Distribution Map Credit: USDA Plants Database @ plants.usda.gov

Macartney Rose Distribution

Macartney Rose is a non-native, invasive plant that occurs on more than 494,211 acres of TX Coastal Prairie.

It is native to China and Taiwan and was introduced to the United States almost 200 years ago. In Texas, Macartney Rose was planted as a living fence.

The seeds are effectively dispersed by birds, wildlife, and livestock. It can also spread aggressively after top-removal (fire, mowing) from re-sprouts of the root crown and lateral roots. If not treated, it is estimated that grazing losses can be as high as 75% from the invasion of this thorny shrub into Texas grasslands.

Effective management includes combination treatments of herbicides and disturbance (such as prescribed fire or mowing) applied at 18-month intervals. See Brush Busters article on AgriLife Learn, keyword search Macartney Rose, for more details.

Macartney Rose

Rosa bracteata

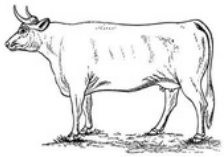
Livestock sometimes feed on the fruits, aka rose hips, and spread seeds in feces.

Plant Identification Tips

Macartney Rose is an evergreen shrub that can reach 10-feet in height and diameter. Along the main stems, it has paired (opposite), hard and curved thorns that are similarly seen on many ornamental rose bushes.

The alternate leaves are composed of 5-9 thick leaflets with thorny prickles along the rachis or leaf stem. The leaves are shiny on top and dull underneath.

The flowers can occur as a single flower on one short stalk or in groups of 1-3 flowers. The flower is composed of 5 white petals with yellow reproductive parts. This species typically flowers in the spring. The fruits are round or spherical in shape. The green-yellow fruits develop late summer through winter and turn red when ripe.



Livestock & Wildlife Value

Browse, not consumed. Fruits are consumed by birds, livestock, and wildlife. Provides escape cover for small animals.

ISSUE WITH MACARTNEY ROSE — **Aggressively Spreads**

It quickly spreads in disturbed pastures (overgrazed, burned, mowed) by root-sprouting from the root crown and lateral roots. Seeds are consumed and spread. It invades grasslands and reduces diversity. It is one of the named threats to the decline in the endangered white bladderpod (Lesquerella pallida). White bladderpod is endemic to San Augustine Co. in TX.

Parts of this article were derived from:
Enloe & Lauer. 2016. Seasonal variation in Macartney Rose (Rosa bracteata) Response to Herbicide Treatment. Weed Technology 30:758-764.

Stacy L. Hines, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor, Rangeland Habitat Management Specialist
361-265-9203| stacy.hines@ag.tamu.edu

Hay supply near 50-year low, prices near record highs

Hay supplies remain short, and prices continue to rise as Texas cattle ranchers try to feed herds through winter, according to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service experts. The 2022 drought and subsequent poor hay production resulted in stressed hay supplies going into winter, according to AgriLife Extension specialists. Those short hay supplies and demand have now pushed hay bale prices toward record high prices. The U.S. Department of Agriculture Jan. 27 Texas Hay Direct Report priced large round bales of good-to-premium Bermuda grass between $70 and $175 each with prices for the same quality hay reaching $410 per ton in the Panhandle. Most counties across the state are reporting decent quality bales above $100.

Deeper than usual culling in preparation of that winter feeding shrunk Texas cattle numbers and the national herd to lows not seen since 2012, said David Anderson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension economist, Bryan-College Station. Cattle producers expect good calf prices in the future but feeding cows until spring forages are ready to graze is the concern now.

Anderson said drought and high fertilizer prices were the two major factors that led to near-record low hay production. Grass needs soil moisture to grow during the summer hay season, but pastures also need fertilizer, especially nitrogen, to maximize growth and yields.

Vanessa Corriher-Olson, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension forage specialist, Overton, said $160 per bale was around the breakeven point during the 2022 season for hay producers who maintained pastures with average inputs due to the cost of fertilizer, weed and pest control applications. High commodity prices for grains, which are ingredients in supplemental feeds added alongside hay rations during winter, are exacerbating tight hay supplies. “It’s no shock that hay prices are so high,” she said. “The drought, poor range and pasture conditions and high feed costs have all worked together against producers.”

Hay yields, supplies near 50-year low

Anderson said Texas pastures produced the lowest amount of hay since 2011. Hay yields averaged nearly 1.95 tons per acre over the last decade but totaled 1.56 tons per acre in 2022. Texas produced 4.44 million tons of hay in 2011 compared to 6.5 million tons in 2022. The number of hay acres cut and baled was also down to 4.19 million compared to a 10-year average of almost 5 million acres.

U.S. hay production followed the Texas trend. According to the December 2022 hay stock reports, the 71.9 million tons of hay on hand was the smallest amount since the USDA began tracking forage supplies in 1973. Texas hay supplies were 37% below the December 2021 report and other Plains states like Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska were all at least 30% below their stocks last year. Hay stocks in southeastern states were also down except for North Carolina.

“So, you have less hay production in Texas, but you also have less production in all the states around you that might be a source to have bales shipped in,” Anderson said. “Usually, one region is dealing with drought and lower supplies and producers can go elsewhere for relief. Having less hay everywhere at the beginning of winter puts a strain on producers, even if there are fewer cattle to feed.”

Long-term outlook depends on rain, pasture management

Corriher-Olson said supplies are the concern now, but that pasture management will determine the long-term production in pastures. Many hay producers avoided input costs like fertilizer and herbicides during the drought. Some pastures received reduced fertilizer applications while other fields received nothing. The reduced management and overgrazing during the drought could cost producers this season, she said.

Hay supply near 50-year low, prices near record highs

Fertilizer prices have fallen some, but they remain relatively high, she said. Much of the state, especially the hay-producing region of East Texas, received good winter moisture and is poised for production while other parts of the state like West Texas, South Texas and the Panhandle remain relatively dry. Long-term outlooks show the state has equal chances of moisture or drought until July, Corriher-Olson said. East Texas has higher chances of receiving rainfall after July.

Producers who maintained their pastures and avoided overgrazing in 2022 should be in good shape if good soil moisture is available, she said. Fields that were not fertilized or sprayed for weeds and/or overgrazed could have a difficult time bouncing back. “Hay production in 2023 will depend on management in 2022,” she said. “Fields that were not managed will have a harder time recovering even with moisture and fertilizer because the first thing to respond will be annual weeds, and they will be competing with perennial forages.” Whatever the case may be, Corriher-Olson said hay producers should be ready to capitalize on appropriate management, whether that is applying fertilizer or monitoring and treating weeds and pests like fall armyworms.

Cutting corners now could hurt future calf crops

Jason Cleere, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension beef cattle specialist, Bryan-College Station, said high grain prices have compounded the short supply of hay and high winter feed prices. In 2011, ranchers could rely on heavier rations of grain-based feed and less hay to meet the daily nutritional needs for cattle. However, global events and the drought of 2022 have pushed grain prices much higher during this current drought cycle, he said.

Most producers culled their herd deeper than usual to reduce the number of mouths they must feed through winter. Some producers are looking for other supplemental feed options to cut costs where they can, but many options relate to availability and weighing the logistical cost and capabilities of each operation.

Whatever producers incorporate into their winter feeding plans, Cleere said they need to maintain cow body condition scores well enough to ensure those cows are ready to breed following this spring calving season.

“It’s a challenging year, but indications point toward extremely good prices for next year’s calf crop,” he said. “I suspect producers are going to be short on hay if we don’t get an early spring green-up. My main message would be: Don’t cut too many corners now that you can’t take advantage of good calf prices in the future.”

Weekly Crop Report - South Region

Northern parts of the district reported adequate to very short moisture levels while western and eastern areas reported very short soil moisture levels. Southern areas reported adequate soil moisture. Temperatures were cooler, and some scattered rains delivered trace amounts of rainfall up to 1.25 inches. Winter pastures failed to emerge. Overall rangeland and pasture conditions were improving in some areas and continued to decline in drier areas. Some pastures were very poor due to drought and freeze, and others looked bare. Pastures in better condition were being grazed, and black brush was starting to bloom early. Grasses that were growing were burned back by a freeze in northern parts of the district. Supplemental feeding of livestock continued. Hay and feed prices were high, and hay supplies were short with local producers reporting square bales of hay selling for $14.50 and round bales for $160. Cattle were in fair condition. An increased number of cattle were marketed, and prices were steady. Producers continued to prepare for spring planting, and some began planting corn. Grain sorghum plantings were expected to follow corn. Crop plantings were expected to accelerate over the next two weeks. Crops under pivots looked good. Vegetables, citrus, sugarcane and fall-planted corn were being harvested. Citrus producers were hoping for higher yields as trees continue to recover from Winter Storm Uri.

FARM & RANCH - agrilifetoday.tamu.edu

New Growth Threatened By Freeze:

Tips from AgriLife Extension on encouraging root systems, winter plantings, fruit trees

Texas had generally mild weather conditions across the state after the “Arctic Express” swept through in December, resulting in new growth on some trees and plants. The recent freeze across much of Texas means that new growth could be in trouble.

While the warmer-than-average temperatures may feel pleasant in the midst of winter when we do get them, your garden may suffer from the roller coaster of temperatures experienced since the new year.

“Due to lack of chill after Christmas and the subsequent regrowth that has occurred on plants, even on cold-tolerant crops, this new growth will be very susceptible to freeze injury as our temperatures drop again,” said Larry Stein, Ph.D., horticulture specialist at the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Uvalde. Stein is also an associate department head and professor within the Department of Horticultural Sciences in the Texas A&M College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

“These plants may need some protection as the temperatures drop,” he said. “And limb support could reduce limb breaking due to ice accumulation.” However, this recent cool, wet weather is perfect chilling weather for fruit trees, which up until this point was lagging, Stein said. For areas where the lack of rain continues to be a problem, irrigation will be critical prior to budbreak. While waiting to see what weather Mother Nature will dole out as spring approaches next month, Stein offered the following gardening guide for February.

Plant or transplant new trees and shrubs

Continue to plant or transplant new trees and shrubs. The sooner you get them planted, the sooner the plants can initiate new roots to really take off and grow when warmer weather comes.

Treat with herbicides

Preemergent herbicide needs to be applied and incorporated via water into your lawn now to prevent spring weeds from germinating. Those concerned about ball moss can treat it now with a copper spray.

Pot frost-sensitive plants

Frost-sensitive transplants such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplants can be purchased and potted into larger containers. This will make for a larger plant with a vigorous root system to set out mid-to-late March.

Prune roses, plant potatoes and leafy greens

We typically use Valentine's Day as the day to prune rose bushes and plant Irish potatoes, Stein said.

Continue to stagger plantings of leafy greens, leaf lettuce, kale and collards. You still have time to plant onion plants.

Care for fruit trees and woody ornamentals

Complete the pruning of your fruit trees as they begin to bloom. Treat fruit trees with dormant oil prior to budbreak.

Fertilize woody ornamentals with a 3-1-2 slow-release fertilizer toward the end of the month.

Remove thatch, utilize mulch

Scalp your lawn toward the end of the month to remove any thatch layer you may have and promote spring green-up.

Thatch is the layer of intermingled living and dead and organic matter that accumulates between the actively growing grass and the surface of the soil. It can help provide an excellent growing environment for grasses, but excess thatch can prevent water and oxygen from reaching plant roots and create conditions for diseases. As live oaks drop their leaves, collect them to use as mulch in your garden and flower beds.

Learn more: http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/

Agricultural Pesticide Waste Collection Event

Wednesday, March 1, 2023 | 8 AM - Noon

City of Hondo Fairgrounds
733 FM 462 N
Hondo, TX 78861

Scan the QR Code for directions

Unwanted or Surplus Agricultural Pesticides?
Dispose of them Free and Anonymously without leaving your Vehicle!

MATERIALS ACCEPTED

- Outdated, Discontinued or Unwanted Agricultural Pesticides
- Insecticides
- Herbicides
- Fungicides
- Rodenticides
- Nematicides
- Growth Regulators
- Empty, Triple-Rinsed Plastic Pesticide Containers
- Empty or Partial Metal Drums

PESTICIDES MUST BE KEPT IN ORIGINAL CONTAINERS, EVEN IF THE LABEL IS NOT PRESENT.

Unknown pesticides will be sampled and identified on site.

MATERIALS NOT ACCEPTED

- Explosive ordinances and ammunition
- Petroleum-Based Products
- Paints
- Medical Wastes
- Radioactive Substances
- Household Chemicals and Waste
- Tires
- Fertilizers
- Propane or Butane Cylinders
- Fumigant Canisters
- Used motor oil and automobile fluids
- Auto Batteries
- Empty Totes
- Methyl-Bromide Cylinders
- Dioxins (2,4-5T, Silvex, TCDD, etc.)

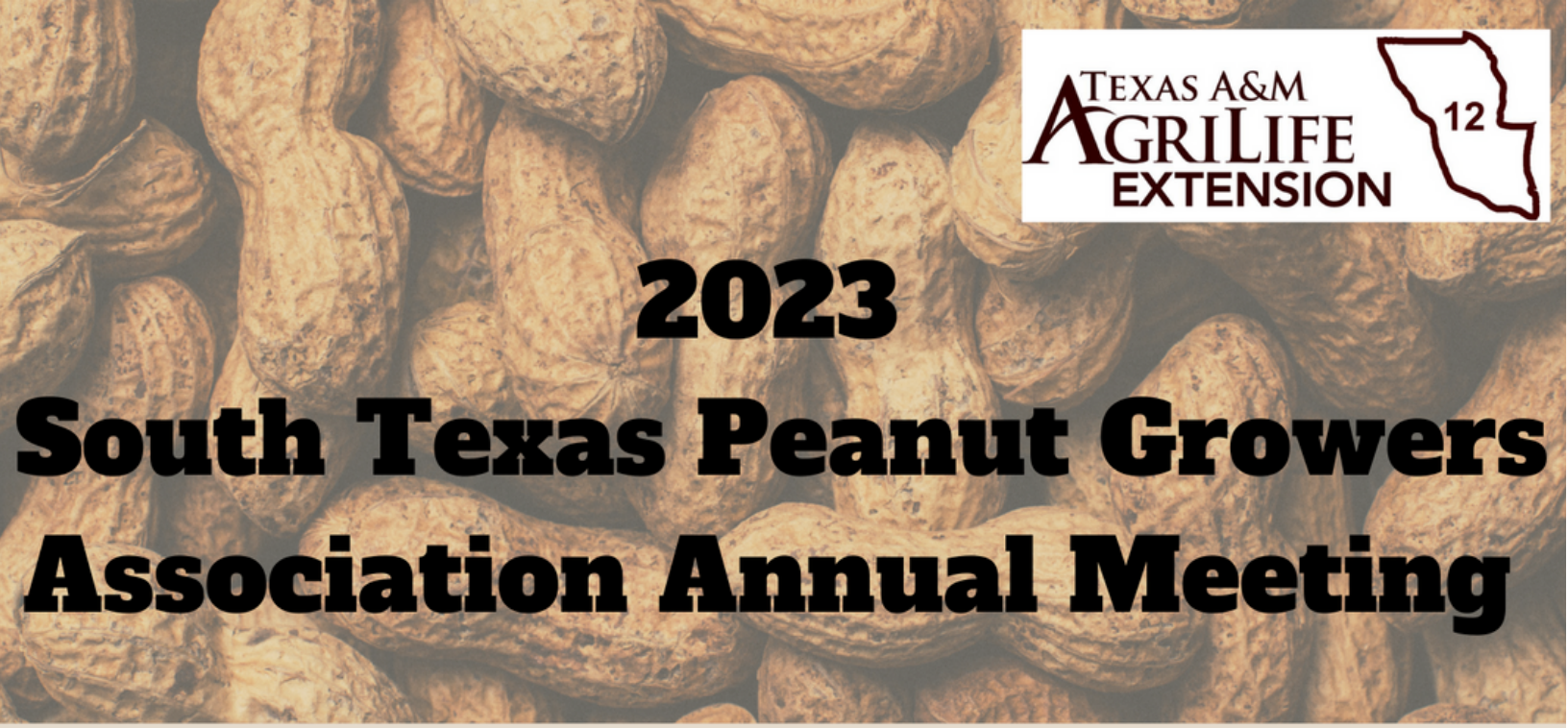
For questions or additional information contact the Texas Dept of Agriculture (TDA) at (512) 463-7622, TDA San Antonio Regional Office at (210) 820-0288, or the Medina County AgriLife Extension Office at (830) 741-6180.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

CleanEarth

USAg Recycling

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



2023
South Texas Peanut Growers Association Annual Meeting

TUESDAY, March 7, 2023

Frio County Extension Office
400 S. Pecan St.
Pearsall, Texas 78061

PROGRAM:

- Registration will start at 2:00PM & the program will begin at 2:30PM.
- Topics to be covered include Auxin Training, Peanut Variety Trials, Herbicide Update, Evergreen Underground Water Conservation District Water Outlook Report, Sesajal Update, Texas Peanut Producers Board Update, etc.
- 3 Continuing Education Units (CEU's) will be given with a $10.00 (Cash Only) fee towards your Texas Department of Agriculture Private Pesticide Applicator License.
- Supper will be served at 6:30PM.

***Please RSVP by March 3, 2023 with Brianna Gonzales, Frio County Extension Agent at (830) 334-0099 or Dale Rankin, Atascosa County Extension Agent at (830) 569-0034.**

For more information please contact:

Brianna Gonzales-Frio County Extension Agent, at

(830) 334-0099

brianna.gonzales@ag.tamu.edu.

Frio County AgriLife Extension