

Agriculture Newsletter

COLORADO COUNTY

TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

January 2018

13+ CEUs
inside

Do Natural Products Repel Spiders?

Conduct a quick online search for “home remedies” or “natural methods” for controlling spiders and unwanted insect pests in the home, and you will be flooded with many self-proclaimed experts, product advertisements, and backyard bloggers claiming that a number of “natural” products will repel or kill unwanted insect visitors. Do they provide any evidence to support their claims? Many will sound convincing saying “scientists have found...” or they will use fancy words like “volatiles” and “essential oils” claiming that these products contain no chemicals (then what are they made of, dark matter?), and pose no health risk to humans or pets (a claim that could be challenged). They then provide “evidence” for these claims in the form of internet links that lead you to other blogs and less-than-credible sources.

Recently, researchers from two Universities in Canada and one in Germany collaborated on a project to test these “natural remedies.” They chose to test the top three substances cited most often in online searches, including peppermint oil, chestnuts, and lemon oil (which had over 1,000,000 hits on Google). They selected three species of spiders to test the effectiveness of each repellent: the Brown Widow (distributed throughout the southern US), the False Black Widow (found along US East and West coasts), and the Cross Spider or European Garden Spider (found throughout North America).

They found that Chestnuts and mint oil strongly repelled two of the species, but had no effect on the third. Lemon oil (most-cited repellent online) had no effect on any of the spiders. The researchers concluded that Chestnuts and mint oil may have value in deterring spider settlement, but lemon oil as a repellent is a myth.

Do Antioxidants Live Up to the Hype?

It’s difficult to walk through the store isles without several products boasting the power of the antioxidants they contain. Is there scientific proof to support this, or is it more marketing hype? Our body’s cells are like energy factories, burning fuel for energy. Cells use food components (mostly glucose) to produce energy. Electrons are removed from glucose, leading to its breakdown and eventual transformation to carbon dioxide. These electrons are usually transferred to oxygen, which then can bind to hydrogen, forming water. Occasionally, electrons extracted from food can go astray and produce superoxide, a free radical. Free radicals can damage proteins or DNA, which has been linked to cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. Free radicals are also produced from exposure to UV light, ozone, or tobacco smoke. Antioxidants have been found to be capable of neutralizing free radicals. However, no studies have demonstrated a benefit from increased antioxidant intake. A British study asked volunteers to avoid antioxidants for 48 hours. They were then fed a smoothie advertised as “rich in antioxidants.” Blood samples were collected periodically from the subjects. An hour after consuming the smoothies, there was an increase in antioxidant concentration, but levels quickly dropped below baseline, returning to normal after 24 hours. This is thought to be due to homeostasis, a process by which our bodies self-regulate to maintain stability in changing conditions. The opinion of most scientists is that the benefits of fruits and veggies may be due to factors other than antioxidants. Additionally, low levels of free radicals may even provide some protective response to disease and aging. This doesn’t mean that you should stop eating fruits and veggies (in fact, just the opposite), but maybe think twice before spending more on marketing hype.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/51cN0WJR5GL98tT6S0B19p4/are-antioxidant-rich-products-good-for-me>

Texas A&M AgriLife
Extension Service
Colorado County

Stephen Janak, CEA
Agriculture/Natural
Resources

316 Spring Street
Columbus, TX 78934
979-732-2082

colorado.agrilife.org

Upcoming Events & News You Can Use

Gulf Coast Grape Grower Field Day - February 2

The 26th annual Gulf Coast Grape Grower Field Day will be 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. **Feb. 2** at the Cat Spring Agricultural Society Hall, 13035 Hall Road in Cat Spring. Registration is \$35 at the door and includes lunch, presentations and a wine social. This year's field day will address the challenges that affect growing grapes and making wine in a high humidity, hot climate with corresponding research updates and information on best viticulture management practices.

Morning topics will include talks from industry experts and AgriLife Extension updates on rootstocks and diseases. Afternoon activities will include a perspective on the future of hot climate grape varieties, Pierce's disease and PD-tolerant Walker varieties, and a wine pour.

Additional topics include disease control, weed control and harvest issues.

Speakers from AgriLife Extension horticulture will include Dr. Justin Scheiner, College Station; Dr. Jim Kamas, Fredericksburg; Dr. George Ray McEachern, College Station; Michael Cook, Denton, and Pontasch. Other speakers will be Kirk Williams, Texas Tech University viticulture certificate instructor in Lubbock, and Fritz Westover of Westover Vineyard Advising in Houston.

Attendees will also have time to visit sponsor booths and view Texas A&M University graduate research posters. For more information, and to RSVP, contact Pontasch at 979-458-0131 or fmPontasch@tamu.edu. RSVP is requested to ensure an accurate meal count.



The newest grape for the gulf coast - Victoria Red.

33rd Annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference February 8, 2018

The 33rd annual Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference is a celebration of vegetable production along the upper Gulf Coast region. Counties of Waller, Wharton, Harris, Galveston, Brazoria, Colorado, and Austin join with Fort Bend to put on this event focusing on teaching sustainable practices to help producers maximize efficiencies and profitability. We have something for every producer, and as always, we will offer **5 continuing education units (CEUs) for Texas Department of Agriculture** Pesticide Applicator license holders.

Come join us at the Fort Bend Regional Vegetable Conference on Thursday, February 8, 2018 at the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds (Buildings C & D) in Rosenberg, Texas. Registration will be held from 7:30 am to 8:00 am with the conference beginning at 8:00 am and ending at 3:30 pm. The cost with lunch included is \$25 before January 24th and \$30 after January 24th and at the door.

To register, please go to agriliferegister.tamu.edu/FortBend or you may also register by phone by calling AgriLife Conference Services at 979-845-2604. There will be no in office registrations. For general questions, please contact Brandy Rader at 281-342-3034.

5 CEU Beef and Forage Educational Program - February 9th

On **February 9, 2018** the Colorado County Beef and Forage Committee will host a **5 CEU (3 Gen, 1 IPM, 1 L&R)** educational event for area producers. Topics will include: Weed Control Update, IGRs in Cattle Feed, GPS Guidance systems for Pasture Use, Invasive Species of the Texas Gulf Coast, Getting the Most out of Your Spray Tank, Preventing Livestock Parasites with Good Management, Laws and Regulations Update, and more. A catered meal will be provided. Registration opens at 8am at the Colorado County Fairgrounds Exhibit Hall (1146 Crossroads Blvd, Columbus). Program begins at 9am and will run until 3pm. Cost is \$25 pre-registered, \$30 at the door. For more information: 979-732-2082.



Viticulture Event—Planting, Pruning , Young Vine Training

Texas A&M AgriLife viticulture specialists will host a workshop to train interested individuals in the proper pruning, planting, and training of young vines. The event is scheduled for **February 15** from 12:00 - 4:00 p.m. at Darst Ranch Vineyard, 981 Travis Rd in Kenney, TX (just north of Bellville). For more information or to RSVP contact fmponsasch@tamu.edu or 979-732-2082.

Generation Next School - New Opportunity!

The Generation Next curriculum targets adult children and grandchildren of landowners who want to get involved in the family ranch, or new landowners. This online course will introduce a new topic every week for three months (12 total) and you will be able to work at your own pace. Generation Next is open to all landowners, but may be especially interesting to those who are new or recently have inherited land. The weekly topics only take 1 hour and can be done on your own time with your own computer! Classes start the week of Feb. 18th and run until May 12th. During May 3-4, an optional, in-person 2 day session will be held for all participants to gain hands-on experiences. Program features: Discuss business types, tax info, & insurance needs; Learn about financing programs and options; Gain ideas for operations you can add to an existing ranch; Learn options for setting up grazing & wildlife leases; Exposure to all the latest land management tools & techniques; Taught by professionals in each field and topic. Registration is \$120. You can register online at: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/ESSM> or you can call 979-245-2604. For more information, email me-gan.clayton@ag.tamu.edu or 361-265-9203.

Small Farms & Vegetable Conference - February 23

The Horticulture Committee of Austin County will be sponsoring a Small Farms and Vegetable Conference on **Friday, February 23, 2018**, at Cat Spring Ag Society Hall. Registration will take place from 8:30 a.m. until 9:00 a.m. with the program to follow. This year's program will focus on vegetables, aquaponics, and insect control for South Central Texas, and strategies related to raising, marketing and the economics of production. The program will begin at 9:00 a.m. and last until about 3:00 p.m. Lunch will be served and there will also be several snack breaks built-in to help get the blood flowing again.

There will be a Guarantee of **3 CEU's** with a possible **5 CEU's** offered pending TDA approval. Cost for the event is \$30.00 per person, which goes to cover speaker materials, meal cost and the handouts. To pre-register for the event, contact the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Office of Austin County at (979) 865-2072, or visit our web page, Austin.agrilife.org and click on "Event Registrations".

Ranch Management University; April 2 - April 6

The Ranch Management University is an intensive 5-day event targeting new or inexperienced ranchers and landowners and covers the fundamentals of soils and soil fertility, forage establishment, pasture management, and utilization by livestock. Basic livestock management practices such as castrating and vaccinating calves are demonstrated. Grazing management, stocking rate, and body condition scoring are also highlighted. Additionally, several wildlife management topics are covered for those interested in managing white-tailed deer, turkey, quail, feral hogs, and farm ponds. Approximately one-half the workshop involves lectures and discussion, with the remainder consisting of the field demonstrations of various how to methods of soil sampling, planting, calibrating sprayers, and inoculating legume seed. Various forage species, including bermudagrass, small grains, annual ryegrass, and clovers are studied by workshop attendees. Additional demonstrations covers deer necropsy, hog trap management, and pond fisheries management. Plenty of time is allowed for interaction with Texas A&M University faculty with expertise and experience in all management facets of the soil-plant-animal interface and wildlife management.

The course will begin at 12:20 pm on Monday, April 2, 2018 and conclude at noon on Friday, April 6, 2018. The workshop will be held at the G. Rollie White Visitor's Center in College Station. Cost is \$500 per attendee. NOTE: all meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks) and an RMU workbook with all Power Point presentations, contact information, glossary, etc. and a flash drive containing hundreds of relevant publications are provided for this cost. For more information contact Linda Francis: 979-845-2425 or visit

forages.tamu.edu/workshop.html

As always, please feel free to contact me about your individual issues, needs or concerns.

I can be reached by phone at 979-732-2082

or email at stephen.janak@ag.tamu.edu.

Sincerely,



Stephen D. Janak

County Extension Agent—Ag/Natural Resources—Colorado County

colorado.agrilife.org

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Individuals with disabilities who require an auxiliary aid, service or accommodation in order to participate in this meeting are encouraged to contact the County Extension Office at (979) 732-2082 ten (10) days prior to the meeting to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.