

# Agriculture Newsletter

COLORADO COUNTY

NOVEMBER 2023

## DESERT TERMITES—FRIEND OR FOE?

Over the course of the warm season I had about three client calls regarding desert termites. What are desert termites you might ask? For more information keep reading! The article below is from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension IPM Specialist Sarah Marsh from her weekly Upper Coast IPM Blog. If you are interested in getting weekly IPM updates from Sarah you can head over to her blog at [Upper Coast IPM](http://uppercoastipm.blogspot.com) [uppercoastipm.blogspot.com](http://uppercoastipm.blogspot.com) to sign up!

### Desert Termite Sightings in Pastures—Sarah Marsh—IPM Specialist

We have had some questions come in about these particular tunnels that producers have been sighting in their pastures lately. These tunnels are caused by desert termites, also known as agricultural termites (*Gnathamitermes tubiformans*).

Like other termites, this species is a social insect that lives in colonies deep (up to 4 feet) in the soil and contain thousands of individuals. Their biology is similar to the subterranean termite.

Worker termites are active on the soil surface at night or in cooler periods throughout the day. Peak activity is from March through September and can increase after rainy periods; moisture softens the soil and encourages new colonies.

Desert termites do not harm man-made structures but instead remove surface matter from the plants that they encase. Their diet consists of living and dry forage grasses, legumes, and other plants which become digested by symbiotic flagellated protozoans that inhabit the termite digestive system. Their tunnels, which are called "carton" tubes, can cover about 6% of the soil surface in May through September on shortgrass rangeland, particularly in over-grazed areas or dry years.

Desert termites are common in south and west Texas and are noticeable in rangelands. In pastures, their feeding activities can [reduce forage for livestock](#). However, the level of economic injury is [not generally held to be significant](#); in fact, some sources say that the [feeding activities of desert termites](#) may encourage more plant-available nutrients and moisture retention. Desert termites are medically harmless to man and animals.

Destruction of the desert termite tubes with rakes and chains is **no longer a recommended practice**. There are no chemicals labelled for use against desert termites, but research is ongoing.



*Sponsored by: Colorado County Extension  
Beef & Forage Committee*



# Colorado County Soil Testing Campaign November 1 - November 22, 2023

This campaign is open to all Livestock, Forage, and Row Crop Producers.

Soil bags, campaign forms, and directions can be picked up at the Colorado County Extension Office and select feed stores in the county.

Soil Sample bags, **CAMPAIGN ONLY SUBMISSION FORMS**, and directions for sampling are available at the following locations:

**Colorado County Extension office**

**Colorado Feed**

**Eagle Lake General Store**

**M-G Farm Service**

**Bernardo Farm & Ranch**

**J&W Farm Ranch**

**Sheridan Memorial Library**

All soil sample bags, forage sample bags, submission forms, and payments must be returned to the **Colorado County Extension office by November 22, 2023**



Prices:

Routine Analysis: \$8

Routine + Micro-nutrients: \$15

**Please make checks payable to: Texas AgriLife Extension**

**Other Locations in Austin County**

Laramie Kettler

Colorado County Extension Agent Ag/NR

316 Spring St.

Columbus, TX 78934

979-732-2082

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# Private Applicator Training



## What is a Private Pesticide Applicator?

A private pesticide applicator is someone who uses or supervises the use of restricted-use or state-limited-use

pesticides or regulated herbicides to produce an agricultural commodity on:

- Personally owned property;
- Rented property;
- Property owned by his or her employer;
- Property under his or her general control; or
- The property of another person if applied without compensation, other than the trading of personal services between producers of agricultural commodities.

Books and study materials for the course need to be purchased ahead of time for \$40.00 at the Extension Office.

A registration fee of \$10.00 will be charged for the training.

The registration fee will include the training, additional study materials, refreshments and snacks. The training will begin at 1:30 pm and conclude at 5:00 pm.

Seating is limited, so make sure to reserve your spot in the class!



When: November 20, 2023

Where: Colorado County Extension office

316 Spring St. Columbus, TX 78934

Contact: 979-732-2082

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. 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 prior to the meeting to determine how reasonable accommodations can be made.



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TEXAS A&M  
**AGRI LIFE**  
EXTENSION

# Emerging Issues

2023 Multi-County New Landowner Educational Series

**November 17, 2023**

## Washington County Expo VIP Building

1125 Old Independence Road  
Brenham, Texas 77833

Registration 1:00-1:30 pm

Program 1:30-5:00 pm

\$20/Person/Session

To register online visit:

<https://washington.agrilife.org/nlo>



Scan Here to Register

**For more information please contact:**

Stacie Villarreal  
Austin County  
(979) 865-2072  
Austin.Agrilife.org

Laramie Kettler  
Colorado County  
(979) 732-2082  
Colorado.Agrilife.org

Scott Willey  
Fayette County  
(979) 968-5831  
Fayette.Agrilife.org

Kara Matheney  
Washington County  
(979) 277-6212 ext. 2  
Washington.Agrilife.org

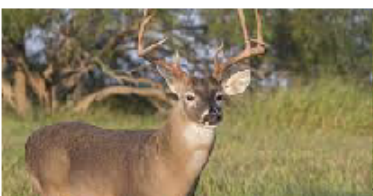


NATURAL TEXAS



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TEXAS A&M  
**AGRILIFE**  
EXTENSION



TEXAS  
PARKS &  
WILDLIFE

This Month:  
**ALL ABOUT**  
Wildlife Tax  
Valuation

# FEATHERS, FURS, AND FARMING

**December 15, 2023**

Registration 1:00pm-  
1:30pm

Program 1:30-5:00pm

**\$15/Person**

**\$20/Couple**

**Weimar Civic Center**

1754 IH-10  
Weimar, TX 78962

Laramie Kettler  
979-732-2082  
Colorado County

Stacie Villarreal  
979-865-2072  
Austin County

Mark Lange  
979-732-3458  
Colorado County

Jon McLeod  
832-595-8999  
Austin/Rt. Bend County

## TOPICS

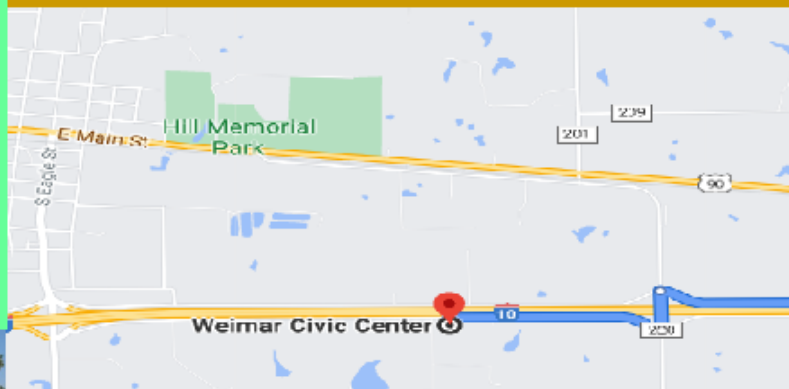
Prop 11

Wildlife Tax Valuation

Controlling Unwanted Brush

Predator Control

**2 General CEU's for TDA Private  
Applicators**



*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*





# Bluebonnet Master Gardener Association 2024 Training Class

## Course Outline

- Welcome, Interns
- Earth-Kind
- Landscaping
- Plant
- Development
- Plant Propagation
- Soil Characteristics
- Soil Improvements
- Water
- Ornamental Plants
- Lawn Care
- Vegetables and Herbs
- Fruit Trees, Berries & Pecans
- Landscape Design
- Integrated Pest
- Management
- Diseases
- Insects
- Weeds

## Training Classes each Wednesday January 10th - April 24th

Final Evaluation Tuesday April 23rd

**8:30 AM -12:30 PM**

*Field Trip classes are 8:30 to 3:00 PM*

## Washington County Expo Event Center

1305 East Blue Bell Road  
Brenham, Texas 77833

**\$200/Person includes 50+ hours of gardening education!**

The Master Gardener program is a unique opportunity for individuals interested in horticulture and in serving their community. Upon completion of 50 hours of class time, trainees must complete 50 hours of volunteer service in their local community to receive the title of "Master Gardener"

For more information on the Master Gardener program, contact the Extension office at (979) 277-6212 or visit the Bluebonnet Master Gardener Website at:

<https://txmg.org/bluebonnet>

**Washington County Open House - Expo Event Center  
Wednesday, January 3, 2024**

**10:00 AM – 11:30 PM**

**Followed by: Lunch N Learn Program at 12:00 noon**



Scan QR Code



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## Becoming a Master Naturalist – Training and Membership

***The Texas Master Naturalist Program's mission is 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.***

### What's First?

The first step to becoming a master naturalist and joining us on our mission is to enroll in the chapter's Initial Training Class. The Texas Master Naturalist program of study created by Texas Parks and Wildlife and Texas AgriLife is designed to provide you with a basic understanding of the natural world. You will receive a comprehensive textbook and attend weekly sessions taught by experts in their particular field. In addition, the subject matter is tailored to the territory served by the chapter and class field trips provide the opportunity to observe in person some of the topics you are studying in class.

The Gideon Lincecum Chapter serves a 5-county area: Austin, Colorado, Fayette, Lee, and Washington counties. You will join a group of people who, like you, enjoy the Texas outdoors and want to learn how they can better manage their own land and work with the State to promote and protect our natural resources. The 40-hour course includes the following topics:

- Master Naturalist Orientation
- Ecology Concepts, Ecosystems & Ecoregions
- Hydrology/Soils
- Geology
- Weather/Climate
- Aquatic Systems Ecology/Pond Management
- Plants
- Rangeland Ecology
- Entomology
- Ornithology
- Forest Ecology
- Mammals
- Herpetology
- Archaeology . . . and more . . .

The schedule (days and times) for the Training Class is set for Saturdays and some Monday evenings; however, it is subject to change throughout the 5 month course period. In addition to classroom sessions, there will be four or five field trips. Since it is possible that some of the class sessions will be conducted online as webinars or virtual meetings, please be aware there may be computer and internet access requirements. **Classes begin in January with graduation in May.**

Want to know more? You can visit the state website, [Texas Master Naturalist](https://www.texasmasternaturalist.org/), or contact our [training director](#).



**Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.**

Sincerely,



**Laramie Kettler**

**County Extension Agent—Ag/Natural Resources—Colorado County**

**[laramie.kettler@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:laramie.kettler@ag.tamu.edu)**

**979-732-2082**

**[colorado.agrilife.org](http://colorado.agrilife.org)**

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