



Contact Your County Extension Service



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We are pleased to provide you with the information contained in this report. Current educational information is supported by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.

Included in this report are monthly updates from our different departments; 4-H & Youth Development, Agriculture & Natural Resources, Better Living for Texans, Family & Community Health, and Horticulture.

If you are interested in participating in any of the mentioned AgriLife Extension educational programs throughout the year, please feel welcome to do so.

All Extension programs are sponsored by AgriLife program area committees for anyone's educational benefit. We would like to acknowledge the Extension volunteer base, Extension Specialists, and cooperators who contributed to the planning of all educational information compiled in this educational newsletter.

4-H & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Steven Baringer, 4-H and Youth Development Extension Agent



Above: Our 4-H participants are quite the creative chefs! Here they are participating in the District Food Challenge Contest and displaying their awards.

Denton County 4-H members showcased their culinary prowess in the recent District Food Challenge Contest, turning the kitchen into a battleground of skills and innovation. From appetizers to desserts, these talented youth demonstrated their culinary expertise, competing against peers from neighboring counties. The challenge not only tested their cooking abilities but also emphasized teamwork, time management, and creativity. Participants carefully crafted dishes under the pressure of the clock, presenting their creations to a panel of judges. We are proud of all the youth who competed and represented us proudly! There were over 200 youth in the contest. Special shoutout to the following teams who placed:

- 3rd Place Junior Main Dish – Bermuda Eels
- 2nd Place Junior Side Dish – Golden Blooms
- 3rd Place Intermediate Healthy Dessert – Midnight Snackers
- 1st Place Intermediate Side Dish – Slice, Slice Baby
- 3rd Place Intermediate Appetizer – Cooking Cats
- 1st Place Senior Main Dish – 2 Cowgirls & A Cajun

Our senior team has qualified to compete in the state competition. It will take place in June at Texas A&M University in College Station.

AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

Zach A. Davis, Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension Agent

In November, we held our quarterly applicator training for local producers. In addition, we worked with our Denton County Master Gardener Association and Master Naturalist organizations in planning programs and developing training courses for new volunteers.

In addition, we continued planning for the National County Agriculture Agents Association meeting this summer in Dallas. We also collaborated and supported the 4-H department with major show entries night to answer questions as youth signed up to attend statewide livestock shows.



Above: Photos provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Services training programs.

BETTER LIVING FOR TEXANS

Dusty Fife, Better Living for Texans Extension Agent

Agent Dusty Fife has been eager to get back into action after her brief hiatus in Denton County. With a renewed sense of purpose, she has been working tirelessly to reestablish her footing and make a positive impact on the community.

November was a busy month for Agent Fife as she embarked on training to prepare for the new programs she will be teaching in the upcoming months. She has dedicated this time to honing her skills and expanding her knowledge, ensuring that she would be the best possible instructor for these programs.

In addition to her training, Agent Fife also spent a significant amount of time networking and meeting new prospects for BLT programs. She understands the importance of building strong relationships to attract participants and make a lasting impact. Fife eagerly awaits the new programs that are upcoming at Little Elm Library and Senior Center and Ann Windle School for the Young in Denton.



Above: Participants from a Better Living Texans program hosted earlier this year.

FAMILY & COMMUNITY HEALTH

Chandani Kothari, Family and Community Health Extension Agent

We had our first water bath canning workshop sponsored by the City of Denton Environmental Services & Sustainability department. Extension Specialist and Professor Dr. Anding led this hands-on workshop where participants learned the basics of water bath canning and made a jar of Blueberry spice jam to take home.

Master Wellness Volunteer, John Corkery, gave a presentation entitled "Controlling Blood Pressure" at THRIVE, Lewisville. Participants gained insight into lifestyle modifications to control and prevent hypertension.



Above: Our water bath canning workshop allowed participants to have hands-on experience to help translate the learned skills to their everyday life.

Upcoming Family & Community Health Events

Dec 9

Senior Health Fair at Flower Mound Senior Centre

Dec 12

Cholesterol Matters at THRIVE in Lewisville



Above: Agent Chandani Kothari assisting participants at the water bath canning workshop.

HORTICULTURE

Horticulture Extension

OVERWINTER YOUR CHRYSANTHEMUMS

The beautiful chrysanthemums we see in garden centers and florist shops during the fall season are generally not hardy enough to survive freezing temperatures in the winter. This is because the plant will not have had time to develop a strong enough root system to survive winter if planted in the fall. The best option is to pinch it back and bring it inside to the garage or house. Water it when the soil dries out.

Garden chrysanthemums, on the other hand, are planted in the spring and have the best chance for overwintering. Garden chrysanthemums bloom in the late summer and fall and come in many colors - white, yellow, pink, purple, bronze, red, and many cultivars - singles, anemones, decoratives, pompons, spoons, spiders, and standards.

Look for garden chrysanthemums in garden centers and plant nurseries in the spring. Here are some tips for planting and caring for them:



- Plant in well-drained soil with full sunlight (6-8 hours a day).
- Space them at least 18 inches or up to 36 inches apart to give them plenty of air circulation to mitigate fungal infections and provide enough space for them to develop a fully mounded shape.
- Layer 2 inches of mulch over the root zone leaving a gap between the mulch and the stem(s).
- Fertilize monthly from the time of planting until July when flower buds form. Use a complete fertilizer with an N-P-K ratio of 6-2-4 or 4-2-3 or a water-soluble fertilizer with an N-P-K ratio of 20-20-20.
- Each month, from May to July, pinch back new shoots to 3-4 inches to encourage a compact round shape and more flowers. Stop pinching back when you see flower buds, usually in July.
- Water deeply 4-6 inches when the soil is dry, in the morning to allow the foliage to dry.
- Check and treat for aphids and spotted mites with a labeled product, carefully reading and following the instructions.
- To overwinter, cut off the dead tops and cover with 3-4 inches of mulch. Uncover them in spring as soon as they start to show new growth. Divide the plants when they reach 4 inches in height.



UPCOMING EVENTS



**Permanent Garden Class
at Global Spheres Center
December 2**

**Senior Health Fair
at Flower Mound Senior Center
December 9**

**Denton County 4H: Storytime with Santa
at the Administrative Courthouse
December 9**

**Cholesterol Matters
at Thrive in Lewisville
December 12**

**“Earth-Kind Design”
Landscape Design Class
January 18 - 20**

For more information on these programs go to
<https://denton.agrilife.org/> or call us at 940-349-2882
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