

**News From Your County Agent**  
**by Marcel Valdez, CEA-ANR**  
**Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service**  
**Zavala County**

Greetings to all of you and thank you so much for reading this week. Well we escaped the first freeze of the year last week as we were close to freezing but not cold enough and we will continue to await our first freeze which is now on average one week late. Besides being very cold, gloomy we received very beneficial rainfall across the area which should get our native cool season grasses and Forbes off to a good start.

**Annual 4-H Weigh Day and Showmanship Clinic To Be Held Saturday**

Our annual 4-H animal project weigh day and showmanship clinic will take place this Saturday December 17 beginning at 9:00 a.m. at the show barn in Crystal City. There is no charge for this event. All 4-H animal project exhibitors will have the opportunity to bring their animals to the show grounds and have their animals weighed and evaluated. Goats needing to have horns clipped will be dehorned at this time. An opportunity to practice showing your animals will begin at 1:00 p.m. for all animal species. Everyone is encouraged to bring their animals to this event which is being held to assist all 4-H animal project exhibitors and their families and prepare both the animal projects and the exhibitors for the show, which will be held January 12, 13 and 14, 2017. For more information about this event please contact the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 or by e-mail at [mj-valdez@tamu.edu](mailto:mj-valdez@tamu.edu) and also view announcements on Facebook on various 4-H club Facebook pages.

**Pesticide Applicator CEU Meetings to Be Held**

It's that time of year when most private pesticide applicator license holders are looking for opportunities to obtain the necessary Continuing Education Units(CEU's) to keep their current licenses active and in good standing with the Texas Department of Agriculture. Private Pesticide license holders must obtain 15 CEU's in 5 year to comply with re-certification requirements while commercial applicators, city and county employees with a political subdivision pesticide applicator license must obtain 5 CEU's every year.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Dimmit County will be offering 3 CEU's for private and commercial pesticide applicators next week on Tuesday December 20, 2016 at the Dimmit County Rodeo Arena and Multi-Purpose Building located at 539 Industrial Blvd. in Carrizo Springs Texas. The CEU's being offered at this event are 1 in IPM, 1 in Laws and Regulations and 1 in Drift Minimization. Cost for the program will be \$10 per person at the door, no pre-registration will be required. All that is asked is that you bring your Pesticide applicators license number and scan-able card with you. For Additional Information contact Richie Griffin County Extension Agent Agriculture Dimmit County 830-876-4216 Ext #1539 Industrial Blvd. Carrizo Springs TX, 78834 or by Email at [r-griffin@tamu.edu](mailto:r-griffin@tamu.edu)

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Zavala County will be offering 6 CEU's for private and commercial pesticide applicators next week on Wednesday December 28, 2016 at the La

Pryor Independent School District High School Cafeteria in La Pryor Texas. The CEU's being offered at this event are 1 in IPM, 1 in Laws and Regulations and 1 in Drift Minimization and 3 general CEU's. Cost for the program will be \$10 per person at the door, no pre-registration will be required. All that is asked is that you bring your Pesticide applicators license number and scan-able card with you. For more information about this event please contact Marcel Valdez, County Extension Agent-Agriculture and Natural Resources at the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 or by e-mail at [mj-valdez@tamu.edu](mailto:mj-valdez@tamu.edu)

### **Tip of the Week: Gift Ideas for Your Gardeners in Mind**

Christmas shopping is now in full swing, some brag about having done all their Christmas shopping while others like me are scrambling to get it done. Perhaps this week's tip can help you if you have a gardening friend, neighbor or family member. Great gifts for gardeners will be ones that either help them garden, make them happier in the garden, or help them recover from a gardening session. Here you'll find tools, decorations, and cleaning items that will make their lives even better. Here are a few ideas.

1. Every gardener needs a place to sit, and this gardener's seat is especially designed to hold all the things they need, while remaining highly portable. They'll use it all the time, thinking of you each time they do. Great gardener gift!
2. Make sure they have all the tools of the trade when you equip them with a gardening tool set. They come in 5-10-15 piece sets. They'll of course have spades and shovels, but there are a lot of other tools in this a set that will come in handy, and they all fit perfectly in the box.
3. Help them keep their compost in order with a compost container. If you're not sure whether they compost or not, most gardeners compost, so this will be a thoughtful gift. Even if they already have a compost system, this can supplement what they already have.
4. Humming Bird Swing-This swing is specially designed to attract hummingbirds to it. These birds are some of the farthest flying birds out there, and with so much energy expended they deserve a place to rest. Gardeners will enjoy watching the birds make use of this swing.
5. Folding Utility Wagon- Many wagons let them haul around heavier things, or lots of their tools, or several plants. Most are sturdy and won't break on them. They fold up for easy storage, so when gardening season is over, it gets out of the way so they can get to other things.
6. Bug Hat-It might make them look like a beekeeper, but if you've ever tried gardening when aggressive south Texas gnats are in full force, you'll know that this is a great gift that will help them stay out there and garden more. It provides full facial coverage against all types of bugs.
7. Growing mushrooms at home has never been easier than with pre-inoculated mushroom growing kits. Shiitakes are one of the most delicious mushrooms, and chances are if you are shopping for a gardener, they also love to cook! This mushroom kit gives the same satisfaction as growing a vegetable patch, but it is even easier. All you have to do is maintain a humidity level by spraying it with water, and soon you will see mushrooms start to pop right out of the sides. A single kid can provide multiple harvests.
8. Gardening can be very hard on the knees, since it involves so much kneeling down to plant, weed, dig, etc. A good pair of kneepads can be a real lifesaver. They make an excellent practical gift on their own or combined with other useful gardening tools.
9. Deer, rabbits, dogs and other critters can be an issue across Zavala County. You have a gardener on your Christmas list that has this issues with these animals nibbling or digging on their greens and gardens then the Contech Scarecrow motion activated sprinkler might be just what they need. This sprinkler

provides a safe, humane method of deterring the varmints from eating away any garden. The motion sensor detects movement in an area then activates by firing a stream of water in the direction of the movement scaring off any would-be bandits.

10. Easy Gardening Publications, if it is tomatoes, greens, squash, corn, strawberries, cucumbers, potatoes etc. perhaps a copy of the Texas A&M AgriLife Easy Gardening Publications might be the perfect stocking stuffer for your gardener. The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service office in Zavala County has these publications available and we will be happy to get you a copy for you, just in time for Christmas. Contact Marcel Valdez, County Extension Agent-Agriculture and Natural Resources at the Zavala County Office of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service at 830-374-2883 or by e-mail at [mj-valdez@tamu.edu](mailto:mj-valdez@tamu.edu) and give us the kind of publication you need.

Have a great Christmas shopping week. M.V.

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