TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

Dr. Shane McLellan
County Extension Agent – Ag
McLennan County
Issue 55

4224 Cobbs Drive – Waco, Texas 76710 – (254) 757-5180

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- **September Garden Reminders**
- **Facebook and E-Mail Information**
- **6th Annual Harvest Celebration**
- **Annual 7 Hour CEU Seminar**
- **November Cattle Program**
- **Supplemental Water to Lawns**
- **Annual 8 Hour CEU Program**
- **Blackland Income Growth (BIG) Recertification 5 Hour CEU**
- **Private Applicator Training and Testing (on site)**
- **Email vs Paper Mail Out**
- **Fungal Issues in Lawns**
- **Save the Date: Upcoming Programs**
- **From the Top Rail by Dr. Shane McLellan**

September Garden Reminders

The month of September is full of opportunities. It is time to plant wildflowers, fertilize flower beds with Nitrogen, add organic matter to your garden (till it in). Cut back on watering as plants are thinking about dormancy. Appy a granular herbicide with pre-emergent for fall and winter weeds. Plant trees and shrubs but wait till our weather cools down. If we stay extremely hot, you will have heat stressed plants. Fertilize your rose bushes. You can transplant trees/shrubs from Sept to Nov but again, wait until it is cooler. Treat fire ants this month. You can put out a winterizer type fertilizer on lawns.

Facebook and E-Mail Information

Keep up to date with program announcements and follow McLennan County Extension - Agriculture on **Facebook @MclennanAgExtension**. If you are not on our email list to receive information about upcoming programs, please email Nicole at nicole.kosier@ag.tamu.edu or call the office at (254) 757-5180.

6th Annual Harvest Celebration, Sept. 24

Tell a friend! The highlight event of the year will be Thursday, Sept. 24 at the Tonkawa Falls Events Center in Crawford, near the Crawford Pirate Football Field. This year's guest speaker is the great Dr. Lance Kieth, Assoc Dean of the Paul Engler College of Ag and Nat Sciences at West Texas A&M University. For six years, Dr. Kieth has been my target to speak. You will want to be in attendance to hear Dr. Kieth. Two Outstanding Extension Volunteers and two Outstanding Businesses that Support Extension Educational Programming will be recognized. Dinner will be by the wonderful cook David Meyer. Each year this event averages over 120 people, with hopes of over 200 attending this year. This fun event is an evening for the community to come together, enjoy a great meal, be entertained by our guest speaker and celebrate agriculture heritage. Don't forget about our "large ticket giveaways." There are some big prizes, so bring the truck! Giveaways, the meal, door prizes, charcuterie boards, cold drinks are all courtesy of our outstanding sponsors. While there, take a moment to browse the vendor booths and say hello. As before, Capital Farm Credit and AgTrust Farm Credit will be providing the beverages. Don't miss out! Call the office today at (254)757-5180 to RSVP. I am still seeking sponsors, by the way!

Annual 7 Hour CEU Program, Oct. 26

The annual 7 hour CEU program will be held on Monday, Oct. 26 at the Pridgeon Community Center, 351 Cooks Lane, Franklin. The cost for the program is $60. Registration will begin at 7 am and the program concludes at 3 pm. Seven (7) CEU hours will be offered for pesticide license applicators. CEU's offered: 2 General, 1 Laws & Regs, 3 Integrated Pest Management, and 1 hour of Drift. Pre-registration and payment are required prior to the program and can be arranged through calling our partner and host county, Robertson County at (979)828-4270. This is a great opportunity to knock out 7 CEUs in one day.

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November Cattle Program, Nov. 12

Last year we were partners with Hill County on a multi county beef and forage program, and we are doing it again. It will be held at the Hill County Exhibits Building, 205 Stadium Drive, Hillsboro, TX. Topics will be Pasture Renovation, Pasture Mealy Bug, New World Screwworm and working on one more topic. There will be 3 TDA CEU's, (2 IPM and 1 General). The program is in the final stages of planning and information will be available soon. Watch our Facebook page and the newsletter list for more detailed information.

Supplemental Water to Lawns

I receive a lot of phone calls on lawn problems. Most of what I see is just a lack of moisture and heat stress, but there have been a few instances of brown patch. Many homeowners unintentionally make problems worse by watering too frequently, overfertilizing or responding too quickly to wilting. Not all wilting is a sign of trouble. It is the plants natural way to respond to heat or a lack of moisture. I visited several houses today that had irrigation systems, and they said, "we water." What I found out is that they are watering frequently but not long enough. How long you water is not important, how much (volume) water you are putting out does matter. Shallow watering is a waste of water; you are temporarily cooling the plant but not allowing the roots to absorb moisture. Shallow water promotes shallow root systems. It is best to water early in the morning, but I understand, some of us are at work early and you have to water when you can. You want to water to a depth of 6 inches. If water is "running off" turn off the water and let it soak in, then water again. I like to put out a tuna fish can to see how much water I'm putting out. This time of year, when it's 100 degrees, most lawns will need an inch to an inch and a half every five to seven days. Watering less times a week, at longer durations is much better than a shallow frequent watering. Skip the heavy fertilizer for now. Raise your lawn mower height. Mine is up the highest it will go on my riding lawn mower. The taller grass height will shade the soil, cut down on evapotranspiration, and keep the roots cooler.

Annual 8 Hour CEU Program, Dec. 10

The all-day 8 hour CEU program will be here soon. This event is held across District 8 Extension Offices. All 21 counties are involved in this one-day educational program. The speakers are spread across the state, but we show them on the big screen at 13 different locations. Attendees will receive eight (8) TDA CEU's hours (2 L&R, 2 IPM, and 4 General). Topics will include: Row Crop Pest Management, Weed Control in Turf Grass, New World Screwworm Update, TDA Update on Laws and Regulations, General Laws and Regulations, Managing Unwanted Grasses Growing in Desirable Grass Stands, Forage Pest Update and Management, Harmful Algae (Cyanobacteria) Blooms. Our location in McLennan County is the McLennan County AgriLife Extension Office, 4224 Cobbs Drive, Waco TX 76710. The cost to attend is $60 and includes breakfast, lunch, and breaks. All interested persons should call the McLennan County Extension Office at (254)757-5180. If you are a commercial/noncommercial license holder you can get all your required hours in the first five hours. Registration will be at 7 am and the program will be over at 4 pm.

Blackland Income Growth (BIG) Recertification 5 Hour CEU Program, Jan. 6

The annual 5-hour recertification will be on the second day of the BIG Conference on Jan 6 at the BASE building on the grounds of Extraco Events Center. Pre-registration is required for this event. Please call the Extension Office (254)757-5180 to register. The cost to attend is $65. Registration will begin at 7:30 am, with the program starting at 8 am. It will conclude at 2:30 pm. Attendees will receive five TDA CEU's (2 Laws & Regs, 2 IPM and 1 Drift). Topics include: Aquatic Plant Management, IPM Pest Management, Drift Minimization, Weed and Brush Control, and General Laws and Regulations.

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Private Applicator Training and Testing (on site), Jan. 6

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 agriculture commodity. If you want to obtain a Private Applicator License you must attend a 3-hour training course, then you complete your paperwork and mail forms to TDA. TDA sends you information back. You then schedule a time to test at a testing center. I am happy to report that TDA and Extension are going to offer a "convenience testing." Texas Department of Agriculture and the Extension Ag & Environmental Safety Unit have partnered together to offer a few Training and Testing on site locations. I am happy to announce the BIG Conference will be a location for a Training and Testing (on site). That event will be held on January 6, 2027, at the BASE on the Extraco Events Center grounds. Zach T Davis, Hill County Ag Agent, is the local coordinator for this event. To RSVP for this training and testing, please contact Zach at the Hill County Extension Office (254)582-4022. Please understand they are still in the final planning stages of this great opportunity for producers. Holler at Zach to get registered.

Email vs Paper Mail Out

It pains me to have to move our newsletter delivery to email. Extension has moved away from bulk mail outs, and we send approximately 1000 newsletters. Postage is so expensive today. The cost to mail out each newsletter and postage for programs, it's just too much now. Nicole sent out a questionnaire to everyone on the mailing list, asking if you could switch to email. Only a few responded that they would still like a paper hard copy mailed out. I am afraid we will be losing many of our newsletter audience that does not have email. If you have a friend or hear of someone that did not get a newsletter due to not having an email, please have them call Nicole and request a paper mail out. (254)757-5180.

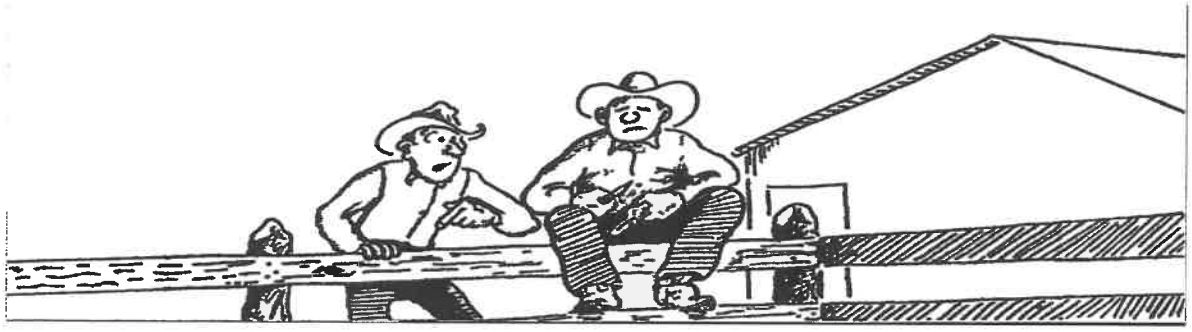
Fungal Issues in Lawns

I have seen several lawns that probably had a fungal issue before they started suffering from heat stress. People will call me and say I have a disease. I can't see the disease symptoms if your lawn is under heavy heat stress from lack of moisture. The drought stress will be the most dominant symptom. Brown Patch and Take All Patch are controllable with the use of fungicides. There are several options; you will see a Brand Name and the active ingredient. I am more interested in the active ingredient than the brand name. Two active ingredients I like for lawn fungus are azoxystrobin or propiconazole. Heritage or Fertilome Liquid Systemic II are examples of azoxystrobins; Honor Guard or BioAdvanced Fungus Control are propiconazole products. An important step with fungus applications is to use the fungicide of choice, twice. Some products will say to spray again in 7 days; others say to spray after 14 days. You must read the label and follow application directions! My experience with fungal affected lawns with heat stress is this: 1) water deeply, 2) apply the fungicide of choice, 3) water two to three days later. 4) follow the label directions for that second application of fungicide. 5) DO NOT APPLY a Nitrogen fertilizer. You are just feeding the fungus if you fertilize a fungus affected lawn. Heat stressed lawns do not need fertilizer. They are under stress, just water! Water long enough to allow for deep soil absorption. Let it dry out for a few days. Then water it deeply again. If you cannot stick a screwdriver into the soil to a depth of three to four inches, you need to water.

Save the Date: Upcoming Programs

Sheep and Goat Seminar 2027

I am planning a program to be held August 26, 2027. Many speakers and topics are already confirmed. More details at a later date.



From the Top Rail: The Sweet Innocence of Youth

Growing up as a farm kid, one lesson kept repeating. If you mess up today, if you cut a corner, did not do something correctly, the truth will come out eventually. I learned that on repeat. To the point I worked hard to do things right the first time. Like my father, I want things to be, well .... right! That is a life lesson that makes me hard to get along with sometimes. I need things to be "right." Perfect is not possible but it's the goal, every time. For a farm kid, lessons are around every corner, even in the wheat field. If you do not overlap enough when plowing, you will have skips across the field and green weeds will be waving at you as they grow. This is not good for a tractor driving kid. Overlap better next time! Same kind of deal if you were sowing wheat or oats. Back then, we typically pulled a grain drill behind a plow. If you did not overlap correctly when sowing oats or wheat, there would be unplowed ground that would not have wheat or oats planted, and would grow the biggest, healthiest weeds. Not a good position to be in for a young plow hand. Spraying Johnson grass and Hoeing weeds in a cotton field is another great opportunity to make good, or bad decisions. If you were driving the 4 wheeler too fast through the cotton field, and probably not paying attention to the careless weeds(now we call them Pigweed) or little Johson grass, the weed will only grow taller and you will have to go back and hoe that field again. As a teenager my welding looked, um... not pretty. It would hold but it would not win a contest. Now it's time for "have you ever." Have you ever drove the tractor home with a plow lifted up in the air on the three point, with drags hanging off the back of the plow? Have you ever not slowed down to cross a washout in the road? Have you ever broke the drags clean off of the plow from bouncing them too high in the air. What goes up must come down, usually in pieces. Have you ever had to tie the drag up on the plow with old rusty baling wire you took off the neighbors fence? Have you ever welded the drag back onto the frame of the plow? Have you ever ran a grinder? Have you used the grinder to pretty a weld, on the drag, on the plow, that you broke because you did not slow the tractor down crossing a rough wash out in the road? Have you done this more than once? Twice? Three times? Sorry dad, but my welding did get better with all the practice! The hardest lesson was not digging a post hole deep enough. In that hard, unforgiving red clay soil of home, you did not want to have to dig a post out by hand, then re-dig that hole AND dig it deeper. Dad knows the length of each post and has easy access to a measuring tape. Make sure each post hole is at least 3 feet deep! It reminds me of Numbers 32:23: *"...be sure your sin will find you out."* This serves as a warning to all that you cannot outrun your actions, and the truth of your deeds will eventually be revealed. It was better for everyone involved on our place to just do things right the first time. You can say my lightbulb came on. Yes, it will take longer, Yes, it will be harder to complete the task, and Yes, it would be the longer, a more time-consuming way to do things. Sweat equity usually pays and I did not need a guilty conscience, and I sure didn't need to get in trouble. As a hardheaded boy, I could put myself in bad situations pretty easily, as I matured, I realized Shane needed to set himself up for success rather than a butt chewing or make an expensive mistake. A little extra time doing tasks the right way was much easier on me in the long run. As I share these little stories and memories, I hope it reminds you of your own life lessons, personal growth and the good ole days. Be blessed. sMc

Shane McCollum

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