



TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION

FEBRUARY 2024 AG NEWSLETTER



February marks the ideal period for initiating garden preparations ahead of spring planting. Despite lingering frost risks, there's a comprehensive checklist to tackle now.



Planning: Strategize placements of plants by planting long-term crops away from short-term ones, don't allow tall plants to shade shorter ones if full sun is required, and decide on succession planting or rotations. Start seeds like beets, carrots, and leafy greens, and transplant broccoli, cabbage, and onions.

Soil: Amend native soil with sand and organic matter for improved texture and water retention, or consider using raised beds instead. Turn over old mulch and lay fresh mulch to help retain moisture. Start composting dead plant material for later use.

Transplant: Harden off indoor seeds, transplant tomatoes and peppers to larger containers. Opt for transplanting after rain on cloudy days or evenings to minimize stress. Water well and fertilize before transplanting.

Diseases and pests: Check for bagworms on trees and treat with insecticides or destroy by hand. Look out for fire blight on fruit trees and take preventive measures. Black shoots, flowers, and young fruit are signs that will show in spring.

Maintenance: Remove weeds, turn over old mulch, and lay new mulch to help retain moisture. Disinfect tools with household cleaners to prevent diseases. Prune roses and fruit trees, cut back perennial flowers, and prune woody shrubs and trees. Avoid pruning oak trees until after June to prevent oak wilt. For more pruning information, visit this link: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/landscape/proper-pruning-techniques/>



Upcoming Events



The Texas Climate Smart Initiative (TCSI) is a five-year \$65 million program led by Texas A&M AgriLife. It is in partnership with the Texas Soil & Water Conservation Board, Tarleton State Univ., Prairie View A&M Univ., UT-Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas Forest Service, and two private companies. The goal is to foster growth in understanding and implementation of practices that are deemed “climate smart.”

Mission Statement:

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service works daily to make Texas better by providing innovative solutions at the intersection of agriculture, natural resources, youth, and health, thereby improving the well-being of individuals, families, businesses, and communities through education and services.

These include four- and five-year plans for tillage reduction, soil health principles—especially building soil organic matter/soil carbon, and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide). The practices for each participant are tailored to fit the individual cooperator’s interest. More information and applications can be found here:

<https://agrilifetoday.tamu.edu/2024/01/03/texas-climate-smart-initiative-opens-producer-application-period/>



Owning a Piece of the Texas Hill Country

March 21, 2024
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Community Resource
Center

206 US 281
Johnson City, TX 78636

Registration:

\$12 per person

Link:

https://qualtricsxmzbdvk6qmc.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6yhO60IIHpYkROC



Range Stewardship
Megan Clayton



Livestock Grazing Management
Karl Harborth



**New and Small Acreage
Landownership**
Liz Tidwell



Water Conservation
Rachel Seets

For more information, please contact Carley Howell, Agriculture and
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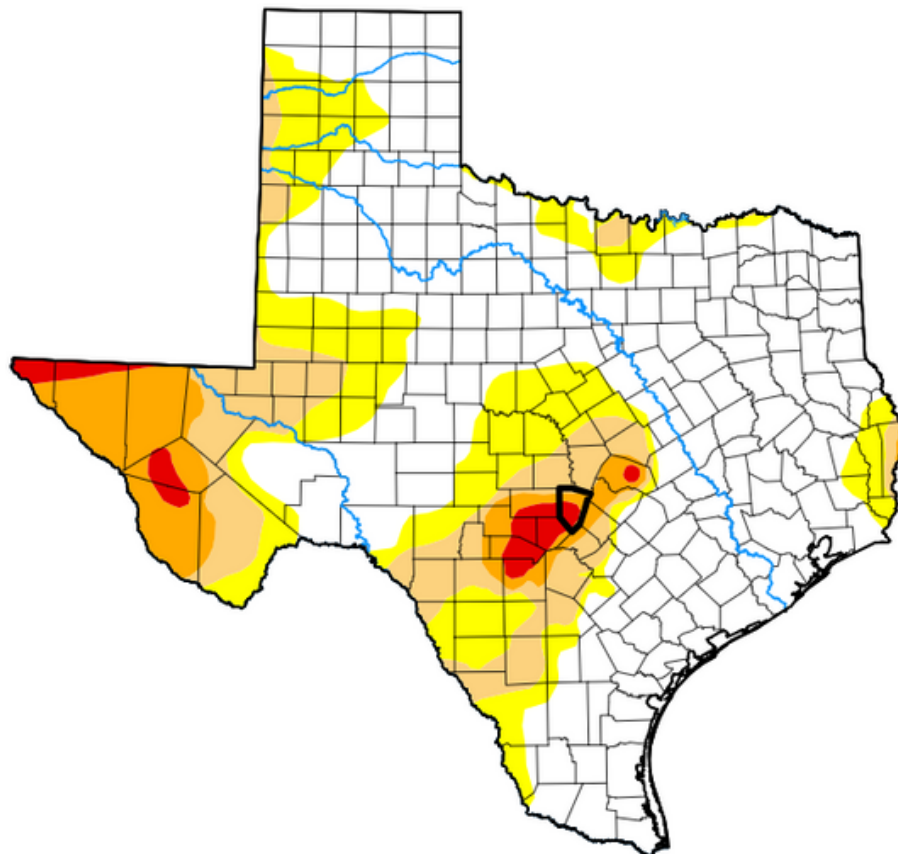
Drought in Blanco County

**OUR WORK MAKES
A DIFFERENCE.**
IN THE LIVES OF TEXANS AND
ON THE ECONOMY.

Despite the recent rainfall, drought conditions persistently worsen in Blanco County. With warmer weather on the horizon, now is an opportune moment to explore strategies to alleviate the moisture deficit.

Planting native grasses offers a sustainable solution. Native grasses grow well in the areas of their natural adaption with minimum inputs of water, fertilizers, and pesticides. Because of their physiological adaption to drought and poor soil environments, native grasses are effective conservation tools for soil erosion control, stabilization of roadsides, disturbed areas, and steep slope sites, and reclamation of abandoned cropland.

Blanco County, TX



Map released: Thurs. February 8, 2024

Data valid: February 6, 2024 at 7 a.m. EST

Intensity

- None
- D0 (Abnormally Dry)
- D1 (Moderate Drought)
- D2 (Severe Drought)
- D3 (Extreme Drought)
- D4 (Exceptional Drought)
- No Data

Making a Difference in Blanco County

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