

Here's the Dirt

KIMBERLY MAYER, CEA - HORTICULTURE

Brazoria County

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
EXTENSION

May Happenings



You probably think I'm going to talk about turfgrass and lawn care in the newsletter this month. *Inserts Cinco de Mayo joke. However, I am nacho average Horticulture Agent and decided to share fun facts about Cinco de Mayo instead.

What did the guacamole say to the salsa? Avo good day.

Cinco de Mayo, or the fifth of May, is a holiday that celebrates the date of the Mexican army's May 5, 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War. The day, which falls on Sunday, May 5 in 2024, is also known as Battle of Puebla Day. While it is a relatively minor holiday in Mexico, in the United States, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a commemoration of Mexican culture and heritage, particularly in areas with large Mexican-American populations.

Where do birds go to celebrate Cinco de Mayo? Someplace cheep.

How do you and your family celebrate Cinco de Mayo?

The Mayer family usually has taco night with chips and my mom's famous salsa. The same salsa that should have won in the Agent's Salsa contest this month. Me han robado. Estoy jugando.

How does Darth Vader like his quesadillas cooked? On the dark side.

I really love bad Cinco de Mayo jokes. That's just how eye roll.

What's Growing On...

May 4th - JMG Lesson at Harvest for the Hungry
9:30 am - 11:00 am

May 7th- Board Meeting at BEES
9:00 am

May 9th - Keep Pearland Beautiful Garden Lecture on Facebook Live
7pm, Garden Destinations

May 10th- General Meeting at AgriLife Offices 10 am to 12 pm
Educational Speaker - August Vandiver, Natural Habitats and Wetlands

May 11th - Open Garden Days - and Workday at BEES from 9am to 12pm

May 14th - Alvin Community College, Composting Lecture 7pm

May 18th- JMG Lesson at Harvest for the Hungry with Texas Garden Guy

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May Horticulture Hero: Jessica Chase



No, she's not technically a Master Gardener, but over the past few years she has done some really great stuff for our organization. If you're new here, Jessica is our Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent. Back in 2021 when we were without a Horticulture Agent, she stepped in and advised and guided BCMGA on top of her already busy schedule. That in itself deserves an award, but there's more!

Recently, Jessica has taken time out of her day to make trips to the Houston area for dozens of tomato cages that were donated to our organization and others. She made another trip for me to Baytown to pick up 50 donated trees from Trees for Houston. This allowed me to be able to offer a Tree Giveaway at our upcoming Tree Planting 101. This was a HUGE help! Jessica also ensures that the County's Maintenance Department as well as County Parks Department is kept in the loop when it comes to service or repairs out at BEES. She plays a vital role in keeping the lines of communication open with them which allows us to get projects completed in a timely manner. She is also responsible for some health and safety devices that will be installed out at BEES in the coming months. If that isn't enough, she always supports our plant and vegetable seedlings sales with her own personal purchases of plants. In fact, she was the main person to help get two raised beds from Tractor Supply donated to The Warriors Refuge. This was one of the first donations that helped them get their Community Garden started. She even set up two raised beds here at the AgriLife Offices and has planted some herbs and tomatoes for all of us to take care of. If that doesn't say Horticulture Hero of the month, I don't know what does. Please help me thank Jessica Chase for all that she does for our Brazoria County Master Gardeners.



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Nominate a Horticulture Hero

We truly have an amazing group of individuals within the Brazoria County Master Gardener Association. I wanted to make sure that we recognize and fully appreciate our volunteers on more than just a yearly basis. That's where this program comes in to play. I would love for you to send me your nominations for a monthly Horticulture Hero. The requirements are simple. Just send me an email with a paragraph explaining why this individual should be nominated for this award. I will make the final decision each month and then award that person at the General Meeting. Some examples could be: above and beyond service at an outreach event, behind the scenes planning and coordinating, or even an outstanding presentation to a local group. The possibilities are endless. Get your nominations to me by the last day of the month. Email me : kimberly.mayer@ag.tamu.edu



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Upcoming Continuing Education Opportunities



Garden Lecture on Facebook
Live- May 9th at 7pm
Garden Destinations with
Master Gardener Mark
McKee



May 14th at 7pm
Garden Lecture on Composting

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April Outreach Volunteers



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April Outreach Volunteers



Thank you to members who volunteered to lead or assist at the 2024 Intern Class. We had a great tour of Harvest for the Hungry as our final class and Field Trip. Members shown: Loretta Allen, Linda Ulmer, Cindy Ducros Kimberly Mayer, Rose Wagner and Ann Hughes.

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April Outreach Volunteers



Thank you to members who volunteered to lead or assist at the April BCMGA outreach events! We love our partnership with Harvest for the Hungry.

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Agent's Corner

Triple T Trees, Turf and Tomatoes

<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Trees</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;">January 27th\$15</div> <p>Join us for a class on how to grow Citrus Trees in Brazoria County. Learn from qualified Master Gardeners before you plant your trees from the Fruit and Citrus Tree Sale.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;"> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Turf</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;">July 11th\$15</div> <p>Join us for a time of intrigue and clues. Come learn how to spot the signs and symptoms that your lawn might be facing after the brutal heat and summer drought. Find out ways to restore some vigor and density to your turf. Let's prepare now for a healthy lawn.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;"> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Tomatoes</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;">March 16th\$25</div> <p>Our very first Tomato Basil Bash! Come learn from Brazoria County Master Gardeners who will teach you the basics of growing tomatoes and basil. A fabulous combination.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;"> </div>
<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Trees</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;">April 26thFREE!</div> <p>Join us to celebrate Texas Arbor Day by learning all about tree planting 101 and what trees grow best in our area. *Tree giveaway pending.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;"> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Turf</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;">April 13thFREE!</div> <p>Join your local Horticulture Agent, Kimberly Mayer for tips on keeping your lawn green. You'll make your neighbors green with envy after this class that teaches the basics of great lawn care.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;"> </div>	<div style="background-color: #4CAF50; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Tomatoes</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;">June 8th\$25</div> <p>After you've grown your tomatoes in the spring and early summer, come join us for a tomato tasting and question and answer period with knowledgeable Master Gardeners. We'll also have time for a canning demo from Agent Shana Kutac.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; align-items: center;"> </div>

To register: <https://brazoria.agrilife.org/events/>

Here's a snapshot of the 2024 Program Plans that we have coming up! Lots of great events!

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Destinations: Bamberger Ranch Preserve

By: Master Gardener Ellen Armistead

If you have an interest in spending time at a property that showcases how a conservation minded landowner has transformed thousands of acres in Blanco County to its natural habitat, then Selah, Bamberger Ranch Preserve, is an ideal destination.

In 1969, J. David Bamberger purposefully bought 3000 acres of what was considered to be among the worst pieces of land in Blanco County. He added an additional 2500 acres in later years. Inspired by a book gifted to him at an early age, Louis Bromfield's "Pleasant Valley", Mr. Bamberger began a decades-long process that is still in the works today to restore the land to its original health and abundance. Throughout the years, he has struggled with invasive plants, an abused and neglected landscape and mistaken conventional wisdom.

A \$30 ticket provides a guided 3 – 4 hour tour narrated by local experts eager to share their knowledge of how the land was transformed through the use of the 5 tools of land management: axe, cow, plow, fire and gun, as well as bringing back native trees and grasses. The guides pointed out many native trees that have been planted, some of which include the Texas Madrone, Texas Pistache and Texas Snowbell.

The Ranch is now vibrant and healthy. Benefits of the hard work include an increase from only 48 bird species at one time to over 200 species now, an increase in the size of the average deer from 55 pounds to 120 pounds and the return of natural streams throughout the property after the removal of thousands of invasive Ashe Juniper and Cedar trees. Mr. Bamberger has also added 2 Oryx herds on 5 square miles of the Ranch and built a manmade cave that over 400,000 Mexican free-tailed bats call home. The Ranch also offers seminars on ethical land stewardship and serves as a research lab for botanists and scientists as well as providing hands on science classes and nature camps for over 2000 children each year.

When leaving the Ranch, one is encouraged to Stop, Pause and Reflect. It's a beautiful way to end a tour that left Preston and me grateful for the opportunity to see how Nature has healed itself.

If visiting the area, we highly recommend staying at the Tillman Resort Blanco that offers cute cottages and RV hookups and an onsite restaurant that serves delicious breakfasts and the best green salsa. Dining options we enjoyed were the Old 300 BBQ in Blanco and Pecan Street Brewing in Johnson City.

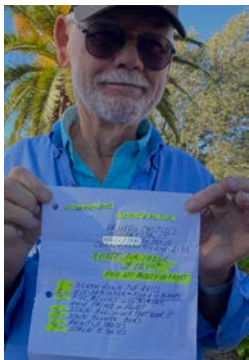
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Agent's Corner



This month's newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Master Gardener Larry Lewis. May he rest in peace in the most beautiful garden of all.



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Writers wanted!



If you enjoy writing about gardening and would like contribute an article or two to our newsletter, please feel free to reach out and let me know. I'd love to have you participate in this newsletter. I am looking for short but informative articles that speak to a variety of interests. It can be a question that you get quite often from friends and neighbors or maybe a subject that is near and dear to your heart or we can do something like a plant or tree of the month and share some great information on that. If you are interested, email me at kimberly.mayer@ag.tamu.edu.

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Community Outreach Needs



**JMG Lesson at Harvest for the Hungry -
May 4th and May 18th
from 9:30 am-11am**



***Please reach out to Preston or Ellen Armistead to sign up or for more details.**

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979-864-1558

<https://brazoria.agrilife.org/horticulture/>

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