

Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter



Volume XII, Issue 4

Official E-Newsletter of the Ellis County Master Gardeners Association, Waxahachie, Texas

April, 2019

Welcome to the Ellis County Master Gardener's E-Gardening Newsletter. The purpose of this newsletter is to give you a month-by-month agenda of what you should be doing with your landscape. We will feature horticultural articles that we hope you will find interesting, and important dates where you can find the Master Gardeners speaking, demonstrating, and passing out information relative to your garden. If you would like to receive this newsletter monthly via your email address, log onto our website www.ECMGA.com and click on subscribe. Best of all; it's FREE! Editors and Newsletter Team: Susan Ellis, Donna Hubbard, Bree Shaw

What's Happening in April?

Every Saturday from April to October from 8am-1pm 410 S. Rogers (across from City Hall in the old lumberyard building)

Visit the Master Gardeners' Booth!

- Useful gardening tips
- Plants and herbs for sale
- Free handouts...Some items for a fee
- Tell a friend to sign up for the E-Garden Newsletter... it's FREE!

Join us April 27th at the Downtown Farmer's Market for the season opener and meet all our wonderful vendors. The market offers locally grown pro-

duce, eggs, honey, local beef, a wide variety of baked goods, jams, jellies, plants, home décor, and much more. Every week at the Market there is a unique theme designed to highlight vendor products, in-season produce, children's activities, or interesting garden subjects. More information to come in the May issue.

EXPO 2019

Thanks to all our sponsors, vendors, speakers, volunteers and especially all the folks who came out despite the chilly temperature, this year was a huge success.





Listen to KBEC

Saturday mornings at 8:10 a.m. on 1390 AM and 99.1 FM.

The Ellis County Master Gardeners have a fifteen minute segment every week, offering you helpful information on what you need to be doing in your landscape, as well as "happenings" around the county. Be sure to listen in!

Scott Rigsby

Inside this issue

inside this issue:	
t's April, What Needs to be Done?	2
Wildflower of the Month	3
Recipe of the Month	3
Dak Wilt Disease	4
Weed All About It	5
Master Naturalists	5
EXPO Photo Contest Winners	6
Fexas Superstar	7
EXPO Awards—Best Booths	8
Garden Checklist	9
	9
ighthouse for Learning	10
EXPO Spansors	11



It's April—What Needs To Be Done?

Planting

- Plant warm-season annual flowers. For sun (6+hours per day): angelonias, copper plants, firebush, lantana, moss rose, purslane, pentas, ornamental sweet potatoes and zinnias. For shade (less than 4 hours per day): begonias, coleus, impatiens and perilla. Select short, compact plans.
- Plant okra and southern peas (black-eyed peas, etc.) Squash, cucumbers and melons can still be planted.
- Many herbs can also be planted from transplants (dill, parsley, fennel, mint, oregano and thyme).
- Now is the best time to plant Bermudagrass and St. Augustine grass sod. Grade and smooth area prior to installing sod to ensure good soil contact. Keep moist until roots are established.
- Seeded varieties of Bermudagrass may be sown starting mid-month. Keep soil moist until seed germinate and grass has established a good root system.
- Select caladium tubers now, while ample stocks are available., for May planting.

Fertilizing and Pruning

- Apply a high-nitrogen fertilizer to established lawns. Use product containing at least half of its nitrogen in slow-release form.
- Mow common Bermudagrass at 1½ inches and St. Augustine grass at 2½ inches. Frequent mowing with sharp blades will keep an established lawn thick and healthy; but avoid removing more than one-third of the leaf surface each time.
- Fertilize roses every four to six weeks from now to September. Start with a balanced fertilizer, then apply ammonium sulfate or other high-nitrogen fertilizer as new growth appears, following a flowering cycle.

Garden Watch

- Check new plant growth for aphids. A few can be tolerated but large numbers should be controlled. Washing them off with a strong spray of water may be all that is necessary for control.
- Look for rose rosette disease. New growth on diseased roses exhibit elongated/enlarged canes, reddish leaves and stems and excessive thorns. Remove and destroy infected plants and roots immediately. There is no proven control for this fatal disease.
- Soil purchased for use in beds, low areas and containers should be examined closely. Nutsedge and other weeds are often brought into the yard through contaminated soil sources.
- ® Watch newspapers and other media for information regarding wildflower trails, garden tours and plants sales.



E X P O 2 0 1



Save The Date! Saturday, March 28, 2020



Featured Texas Wild Flower of the Month

Submitted by Melinda Kocian Ellis County Master Gardener





Blue-Eyed Grass – Iris Family (Iridaceae) Sisyrinchium spp

Region: 1 through 10 (Ellis Co. is region 4)

Size: 6-20 inches

Blooms: March - July, Annual/Perennial

Blue-eyed grass, of course, is not grass. Nor are all species of Sisyrichium blue, for their flowers range from white, yellow, mauve and scarlet to purple-rose. The common name is not very appropriate. Members of this genus overlap in range and hybridize, making species difficult to distinguish, but all have dime-sized flowers. The six petals are usually tipped with a small point and nearly all have a yellow center, or "eye." Flowers emerge from paired bracts that form a spathe. Stems of most species are flat or winged, resembling the grass-like leaves. Alternate leaves are basal and sheath the stem. Blue-eyed grass sometimes blankets large areas, each clump forming a little blue nosegay.

Featured Recipe of the Month Garlicky Braised Collards

Good Housekeeping 2002 Submitted by Susan Ellis, ECMG

Prep: 20 minutes

Cook about 45 minutes

Makes about 7 cups or 12 accompaniment servings

(I have made this many times over the years. I approximate quantities to get end result for two usually, with leftovers. I have never used the stems, though.)

Ingredients:

4 lb. collard greens, ends trimmed

2 tbsp. olive oil

3 large garlic cloves, thinly sliced

1 c. chicken broth

1 tbsp. cider vinegar

1 tsp. salt

1 tsp. sugar

1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper



- 1) Rinse greens well. Remove stems from leaves. Cut stems into 1-inch pieces; cut leaves into 2-inch pieces.
- 2) In 8-quart saucepot, heat oil over medium heat until hot. Add garlic and cook 30 seconds or until golden, stirring constantly. Add as many collard stems and leaves as possible, broth, vinegar, salt, sugar, and crushed red pepper, stirring to wilt greens. Add remaining greens in batches.
- 3) Cover saucepot and cook greens 45 minutes or until very tender and most of liquid evaporates, stirring occasionally.

Oak Wilt Disease Threatens Texas Oaks In Spring

Reprinted from Texas A&M Newsroom Article



Feb. 19, 2019 – AUSTIN, Texas – From February through June, oak trees should not be pruned or wounded to prevent the spread of oak wilt disease. Texas A&M Forest Service reminds Texans that it is especially critical to avoid pruning oaks in Texas counties affected by oak wilt.

When springtime comes, oak trees produce new leaves for the coming growing season. While the seasonal transition may leave oaks looking thin with yellowed leaves, new green leaves will soon emerge.

At this time of year, red oaks that have died of the disease during the previous summer and fall may produce spore mats under the bark that sap-feeding beetles may visit as a food source. These beetles may then fly to a fresh wound on any oak tree, infect the tree and start a new oak wilt infection center that can pass to adjacent oaks through root grafting.

All oaks are susceptible to oak wilt disease. Spring is the time of high fungal mat production, high insect populations and the highest susceptibility to disease for oaks.

Any new wound may be susceptible to infection including those produced by pruning, construction activities, livestock, land or "cedar" clearing, lawnmowers, string trimmers and storms.

To decrease the attractiveness of fresh wounds to these insects, always cover or paint wounds on oaks, no matter the time of the year. Any kind of paint will accomplish this task.

Remember, it is extremely important to avoid wounding and pruning oaks from February through June.

Millions of trees have been killed by this disease in over 76 counties of Central, North and West Texas. In order to keep new infection centers from starting, Texans must avoid wounding oaks in the spring and paint any fresh wound that occurs at any time of the year.

For more information or for answers to oak wilt questions, please visit https://texasoakwilt.org/ or the Texas A&M Forest Service website at https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/.

Some cities and municipalities, including Austin, the City of Lakeway, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston and Round Rock, have oak wilt programs in place with municipal foresters dedicated to managing the disease, which can be accessed on the Texas Oak Wilt website.



For a PDF guide to Oak Wilt Disease from Texas A&M Forest Service, visit http://bit.ly/2GPG7sm

Protect your oak trees by following critical preventative measures. Please contact Texas A&M Forest Service with any questions you may have about this devastating disease.

Contacts: Jim Houser, Regional Forest Health Coordinator, Texas A&M Forest Service, 979-229-7461, jhouser@tfs.tamu.edu Texas A&M Forest Service Communications Office, 979-458-6606, newsmedia@tfs.tamu.edu

GARDEN CHECKLIST FOR APRIL

by Dr. William C. Welch, Professor & Landscape Horticulturist, TX A&M

- Removing spent flowers, trimming back excessive growth and applying fertilizer to an established annual bed can do wonders towards rejuvenating and extending the life of the planting.
- As soon as azaleas have finished flowering, apply an acid type fertilizer at the rate recommended. Don't over fertilize, as azalea roots are near the surface and damage can occur. Water thoroughly after fertilizing.
- Seeds of Amaranthus, celosia, cosmos, marigold, portulaca, zinnia and other warm-season annuals can be sown directly in the beds where they are to grow. Keep seeded areas moist until seeds germinate. Thin out as soon as they are large enough to transplant. Surplus plants can be transplanted to other areas.
- It will soon be time for bagworms to attack junipers and other narrow-leafed evergreens. Control measures, such as a dust or spray, should be applied while the insects and the bags are about one-half inch in length.
- When caterpillars attack live oak trees en masse, it is very alarming, but usually nothing can be done. A healthy live oak will usually regrow its leaves and resume normal activities.
- For instant color, purchase started annual plants. Select short, compact plants. Any flowers or flower buds should be pinched to give plants an opportunity to become established.
- Many flower or vegetable seeds left over after planting the garden can be saved for the next season by closing the packets with tape or paper clips and storing in a sealed glass jar in your refrigerator.
- ◆ Turn the material in your compost pile to speed up decomposition. Water when needed.
- Start weeding early in the flower garden. Early competition with small plants can delay flowering. A mulch will discourage weed growth and make those that do come through easier to pull.
- Soil purchased for use in beds, low areas and containers should be examined closely. Often, nut grass and other weeds, nematodes, and soil-borne disease are brought into the yard through contaminated soil sources.

Tips to help control weeds in your lawn and garden

Submitted by Joan Brammer, ECMG

Spring is just around the corner and gardeners, both seasoned and not so seasoned, dream of lush lawns and beautiful beds filled with their favorite flowers. Winter brown starts to turn to great, but wait, is that green color we see out our kitchen window a weed?



April, 2019 — Page 5

What do we do?

The best thing is not to let the lawn weeds grow. Adequate fertilizer, water, mowing and precautionary measures prevent the growth of lawn weeds. Work to eliminate insects, disease and soil compaction. Every wrong doing last summer comes back to haunt you twofold this spring. Control is the answer. Grab your hat and sunscreen before you start.

Control

There are basically two types of weed control. The simplest one is to take the weeds out by hand or use your favorite garden tool. Before digging up those dandelions, grab your phone and dial 1-800-China and ask them to let go of those pesky taproots. You'll have to dig again if you leave any root in the ground. You can always let them bloom for the bees and then dig.

If the area is too large, you may need a herbicide. When applying herbicide, you need to follow the prescribed quantity and time the application found on the product label. Reading the label is the most important piece of advice any gardener can follow.

Herbicides

To kill weeds in your lawn there are two types of herbicides. Pre-emergent herbicide to prevent the weed seeds from germinating. This type should be applied before seeds germinate, generally during late February or March. If the problem of lawn weeds exists in the spring, post-emergent herbicide maybe necessary. Post-emergent herbicides are manufactured as two different types, selective or non-selective. Selective herbicides work on a specific species of plants such as broadleaf plants (net like veins and showy flower) without harming your grass (hollow, rounded stems and parallel veins). Non-selective herbicides work on any plant they touch.

Weed Types

Crabgrass, goosegrass, sandbur and dallisgrass are the major types of grassy weeds. The first three weeds are annual that emerge from seed each spring. Dallisgrass is a perennial grass that comes from rhizomes but also produces seeds that spread all over the lawn. Crabgrass, goosegrass, and sandbur can be controlled with pre-emergent herbicide in early spring. Dallisgrass must be treated with the post-emergent herbicide. Choose one specific for the type of lawn you have.

Cool season weeds such as ryegrass, weedy grass or rescue grass can be controlled with pre-emergent herbicide applied in early fall or by post-emergent herbicide applied when your permanent lawn is dormant. Broadleaf weeds such as dandelion, chickweed, henbit, and clover can be controlled with selective post-emergent herbicides. Again, choose one that is specific for the type of lawn you have. Nutgrass is difficult to control and will spread rapidly. Hand weeding is one control for this weed. The tuber or bulb of an emerged shoot must be removed. One missed tuber will maintain the infestation and another weeding cycle will be required. There are many selective post-emergent herbicides that can be used effectively to control nutgrass in warm turf grasses. Herbicide applications are most effective when applied to nutgrass plants having at least three to eight leaves. Choose one that is specific for the type of lawn you have.

Please contact your Extension office for specific weed questions. Happy spring!

Indian Trail Master Naturalists Events



Join the Indian Trail Master Naturalists at their monthly meeting on **Monday**, **April 22**, **2019**. The program for the evening is entitled "Wildlife Tracking". Dwight Wilson will introduce the fundamentals of tracking wildlife commonly found here in North Texas. Dwight will also share several stories of his personal experience learning to track and applying this skill in the field. The program is free and follows the 6 p.m. Master Naturalist meeting that is also open to the public. Meeting location: First United Methodist Church, Family Life Center 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie. For more info, call (972) 825-5175 or

email ellis-tx@tamu.edu

Saturday, April 20, 2019 - 9am, Wildflower at Mockingbird Nature Park. Members will be leading a walk at Mockingbird Nature Park. Join in this ½ mile stroll along the trails to identify wildflowers. Free to the public. Participants should bring drinking water and wear comfortable shoes. The walk will be canceled if raining. Info at: http://txmn.org/indiantrail/ or email: Information@itmnc.com.

Friday, April 26, 2019—8 to 10pm, "Moth Night" at Mockingbird Nature Park. As part of the City-Nature Citizen Science challenge, ITMN will be documenting some of the critters that live at the park. There will be special moth lights set up to attract, photograph and identify moths and other insects found in the park. Learn about how to use the Citizen Science tool and app iNaturalist. Stay only as long as you like and dress according to the weather. Bring a flashlight to use on the trail and a camera or smart phone to document your sightings. For more information visit: http://citynaturechallenge.org/



EXPO 2019 Amateur Photo Contest Winners



1st Place Camaleisha Spencer

"In the Garden"



2nd Place Camaleisha Spencer



3rd Place Jesse VanWey



1st Place Kyla Chandler

"Single Specimen"



2nd Place Camaleisha Spencer



3rd Place Heather Chandler

Ellis County Master Gardener Monthly Meeting—You are invited!

Second Tuesday of the month



Tyler Mays, our new Hillsboro extension agent for IPM (Integrated Pest Management) who runs the field crop scouting program in Hill County, will be speaking at our monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 9, 2019. Tyler will be talking about what is creepier than being bitten by tiny, sometimes unseen bugs? Biting pests are the number one search subject on entomology websites. In this presentation we'll examine the biology and behavior of common biting pests. Come and learn to separate fact from fiction about biting mites, ticks and household spiders. Websites include the popular Insects in the City (http://citybugs.tamu.edu) and Mosquito Safari web sites (http://

mosquitosafari.tamu.edu) websites include the popular insects in the City (<u>ntip://cityougs.tamu.edu</u>) and Mosquito Sajari web sites (<u>n</u> mosquitosafari.tamu.edu)

Social time begins at 9:30am and the program begins at 10am. Please be our guest! The meeting takes place in the Fidelis "Banquet" Hall of the First United Methodist Church, 505 W. Marvin Ave., Waxahachie. For information call (972) 825-5175.

Texas Superstar—Tomatoes Submitted by Susan Ellis, ECMG

It is tomato time in our area, and two good choices for tomato growers might be one, or both, of these Texas Superstar tomatoes. Having been named Texas Superstars means they have been through many trials, testing's and tastings. Both grow well in various soils, are disease resistant to many tomato diseases, they are heat tolerant and the taste of each equals or exceeds some of the other favored varieties of Texas tomatoes.

The Tycoon Tomato is the large variety of the Texas Superstar tomatoes. It has characteristics that rival or best the Celebrity tomato, the traditional favorite. The Tycoon tomato has superior resistance to diseases and nematodes, and it can produce very large fruit of superior quality. The BHN-968, a cherry tomato, is the second Texas Superstar tomato. This tomato is highly disease resistant as well. The BHN-968 is a high producer with good fertility, particularly nitrogen is

needed. It has also received very favorable ratings in many taste testing's, in all age ranges.

From texassuperstar.com

Tycoon' Tomato Solanum lycopersicum 'Tycoon' (Pictured above)

'Tycoon' is an exceptional large round tomato variety. The plant is determinate and is known for its heat setting ability as well as its resistance to tomato yellow leaf curl virus. This particular virus has become a major problem in the fall the past few years as the virus is transmitted by white flies which have become worse due to the serious drought conditions across most of the state. In addition, the plant is resistant to

Verticillium, Fursarium races one and two, tomato spotted wilt virus as well as nematodes. The fruit is firm and more oblate than round.

Exposure: Full sun for optimum production

Size: Height — 3 to 4 feet high; width — 2 to 3 feet wide

Planting time: In early spring after the danger of frost has passed and in the summer 80 to 90 days prior to the first freeze in the

fall; best to use high quality transplants; if seed is used it should be started 6 to 8 weeks prior to the planting date

Soil type: Numerous as long as well drained

Suggested uses: For the garden or commercial planting

'Dwarf Cherry Surprise', 'BHN 968' Tomato Solanum lycopersicum 'BHN 968'

'BHN 968' is a determinate plant which produces an abundant yield of cherry tomatoes. The fruit are one half to three quarter inches in diameter and are four times sweeter than regular cherry tomatoes. The plant is resistant to Verticillium, Fusarium, Tobacco Mossaic Virus, and Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus as well as nematodes.

Exposure: Full sun for optimum production

Size: Height — 3 to 4 feet high; width — 2 to 3 feet wide

Plant type: Annual and determinate

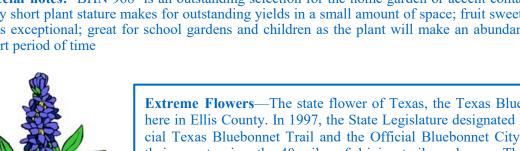
Planting time: In early spring after the danger of frost has passed and in the summer 80 to 90 days prior to the first freeze in the fall; best to use high quality transplants; if seed is used it should be started 6 to 8

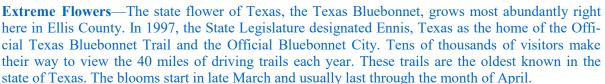
weeks prior to the planting date

Soil type: Numerous as long as well drained

Suggested uses: For the garden or commercial planting

Special notes: 'BHN 968' is an outstanding selection for the home garden or accent containers; the naturally short plant stature makes for outstanding yields in a small amount of space; fruit sweetness and quality is exceptional; great for school gardens and children as the plant will make an abundance of fruit in a short period of time







EXPO 2019 Exhibitor Booth Winners

Most Colorful Large—HEB



Most Creative Large—Greenery



Most Impressive Silverado Lawn Landscape





Most Colorful Small Donathan Studio Glass



Most Creative Small Next Level Construction



EXPO 2019 CHILDREN'S WORKSHOP AREA

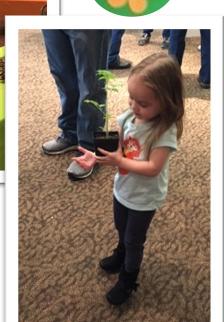












Light House for Learning

(With the Ellis County Master Gardeners)

For reservations, call Melissa Cobb at (972) 923-4631 or email at mcobb@wisd.org

Register online at http://www.wisd.org/default.aspx?name=CO_LighthouseforLearning

Join Ellis County Master Gardeners and Ellis County Extension Agency in a variety of classes to prepare your gardens and yards for spring



Monday, April 1: Container Gardening: Gardening in a container can be as simple as filling a pot. However, there are specific plants that like each other and others that do not. Come to this class and learn some new and old ideas on space, plant choices, soil, sun and water ideas including a demonstration on how to plant a simple container garden. Bring questions, pictures and anything you may want to inquire about. There will be plenty of time to ask questions and get personal answers.

Instructor: Jane Sloan

Thursday, April 4: Hobby Greenhouses: The world of greenhouses is a magical one, a place where seasons and climates don't matter. This class will take you through the basics of setting up and maintaining a greenhouse. We'll talk about different types of greenhouses, how to assess your needs and how to be successful growing in the greenhouse environment.

Instructor: Susan Knapp

Monday, April 8: Vegetable Gardening: This timely class will tell you how to grow vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, asparagus, kale, onions, squash and broccoli. It will also cover site selection, soil testing, weed management and provide instruction on planting seed, using fertilizer, pesticides and much more.

Instructors: Arlene Hamilton and Jessie Mellon

Thursday. April 11: Irrigation: How to Cut Your Water Bill in Half! If you have a home irrigation system, chances are you could be wasting over 50% of your water usage due to an inefficient system.

Learn the basics of designing an efficient irrigation system. Gain the knowledge to install a system yourself or have the tools to ask the smart questions of an irrigation contractor. Information will be provided to help you maintain an existing system; test procedures to determine if any adjustments are required to keep your system in top condition. No matter if you intend to install a new system, maintain an existing system or just want to know more about one of the most ignored systems in the home, this class is for you.

Instructor: Jim Derstler and Allan Paxton

Monday, April 15: Texas Superstars: Learn a brief history of how plants have been named Texas Superstars and how they have been found. Highlights of these superstars include annuals, perennials, fruits, trees and many more.

Instructors: Susan Ellis and Gayle Johnston

Thursday. April 18: Perennials for All Seasons: Perennials are valued mostly because they return to the garden each year. However, the gardener needs to know which ones will bloom the longest, when they bloom and how they add to the landscape in other ways before choosing new additions to their gardens.

Instructor: Maureen Nitkowski

Monday. April 22: Plant Propagation: Want to learn how to propagate plants from some of your favorites or some of your friends? This class will give you information on growing from seeds as well as different methods of propagation such as layering, cuttings, and plant division. You will have both classroom and hands on activities.

Instructor: Walt Friis

Thursday. May 02: Firewise: You can't control wildfires, but you can increase the chances of saving your home if you create defensible space around your property. Attendees are encouraged to bring a flash drive or CD with pictures of their home (up close and from about 50-60 feet away) to discuss areas of concern and possible solutions. *Instructor: Lee Dann*



Thank You All!

Thanks to the sponsors, exhibitors and visitors for making the 2019 Ellis County Master Gardener's Lawn & Garden Expo a great success!



Platinum Sponsors



















Green Sponsors

Bronze Sponsors

Amerigrafix, CNB, Texas Tree Farm, TexScapes Greenery, Holcim, Adam Rope State Farm, 03 Home Solar, Boyce Feed & Grain

Exhibitors

360 Painting of South DFW **Adam Rope State Farm Angie & Teresa's Garden Store Artisan Outdoor Lighting Barris Pottery & Ceramics Beldon Dallas Best Bug Bait** Bertha's Best **Blue Moon Soaps Bluebonnet Worm Farm Boyce Feed & Grain** C & J Farms Central Kubota **Chautauqua Preservation Soc Concrete and More**

Costco Wholesale

Co.

Creative Quilters Guild, Ellis

Custom Fence & Pergola DFW Custom Decks Earth Tones Greenery Ellis County Engineering Ellis County SPCA Ennis Garden Club Flamingo Food & Beverage **Garden Charms Garden Variety Organics** Gardenscapes by Diane **Girl Scouts NETX** Goss, Karl & Jim Greenery, The **H. Summit Enterprises** Habitat for Humanity, Ellis Co. H-E-B

Hollyberry Herb Farm

Homestead EQ./Maint-BCS Hot Produx Imagine That Indian Trail Master Naturalists Jams, Jellies and More **JL Glass Designs KA-Ranch Koke Gardens Landmark Equipment** Lazy River Pool Co. **LeafFilter North Texas** Living Earth Technology Co. **Native Solar Ovilla Garden Club Peachy Page Farm** Perline Company Inc. Prairielands Groundwater GCD Waxahachie Equipment Co.

Rain Drop Studio Real Time Pain Relief Renewal by Andersen Rigsby's Garden Center **RiverMist Pools & Spas** Rolen's Honey Bee's Silverado Lawn & Landscape **Skinkle Tools Synthetic Turf of North Texas Texas Rustic Works Texas Toffee Texas Tree Farms Tex-Scapes Greenery Tommy's Bird Houses Tommy's Hot Dog**

Travis Equipment