

Numerous studies have shown that urban agriculture can contribute to social, health, economic, and ecological benefits:

HEALTH

- Access to healthy food
- Food-health literacy
- Healthy eating
- Physical activity

SOCIAL

- Empowerment & mobilization
- Youth development & education
- Food security
- Safe spaces
- Socially integrated aging

ECONOMIC

- Local economic stimulation

ECOLOGICAL

- Job growth
- Job readiness
- Food affordability
- Awareness of food systems ecology
- Stewardship
- Conservation
- Storm water management
- Soil improvement
- Biodiversity & habitat improvement

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Learn Grow, Eat & Go! Takes Garden to Table to New Heights	2
Presenting EFNEP as Main "Act" at the Rittiman WIC Clinic	2
Texas Community Futures Forum Goes Español	3
Extension Thanks Volunteers for Supporting its Vision	3
Meet the Staff - William "Roy" Flora	4
A Message from the County Director	4

Backyard Basics Expo Provides A Dose of Urban Agriculture and Taste of Homegrown, Homemade Foods

More than 200 people participated in the 2015 Backyard Basics Expo held March 28 at the James Madison High School Agriscience Magnet Program facility.

The expo, presented by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (Extension), featured urban agriculture (ag) concepts, as well as products and services related to the production, preparation and preservation of homemade and homegrown foods.

More than 20 urban ag sessions were presented by Extension staff from Bexar and surrounding counties involved in the self-reliance endeavor as well as other experts from organizations and area businesses with ties to horticulture and agriculture.

Concurrent sessions included making soft cheeses, yogurt and buttermilk; using herbs in cooking; sausage-making; seasonal vegetable gardening; permaculture; container gardening; backyard fruit trees; egg production; food preservation; aquaponics; drip irrigation and rainwater harvesting; and raising small quantities of hens and bees.

Demonstrations were conducted on building a rain

barrel, chicken coop and raised-bed garden.

Vendors at the expo provided information on products and services from more than a dozen local businesses and organizations.

"We're glad so many people attended the expo and were able to get a good idea of the variety of Backyard Basics information offered through our agency," said Nelda Speller, County Extension Director, for Bexar County.



“Learn, Grow, Eat & Go!” Takes Garden to Table to New Heights



The April 28 Learn Grow Eat & Go! (LGEG) volunteer training at ESC-Region 20 in San Antonio was attended by 33 teachers from various elementary, middle and high schools.

The training was provided by Rusty Hohlt, Extension program specialist from College Station. Hohlt introduced educators, volunteers, and Extension staff to each component of the agency’s new LGEG curriculum.

Learn Grow Eat & Go! is a 10-week curriculum for any school that wants to incorporate a nutrition component into their youth garden-based instruction, said Ruby Zavala, Youth Gardens Program Coordinator for Extension in Bexar County.

“This in-depth curriculum of the Junior Master Gardener program offers the opportunity for students to learn about math, history, reading, writing, horticulture and nutrition, while also

developing good team-building skills and physical activity habits,” Zavala said. “The skills that they learn can be shared with their family and used throughout their lives.”

According to Zavala, teacher feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and several teachers told her how much they enjoyed the training and were anxious to implement the new curriculum.

Presenting EFNEP As the Main ‘Act’ at the Rittiman WIC Clinic’s Nutrition Carnivals

Debra Contreras, Lupe Cruz, Sylvia Guerra, Norma Maldonado, and Maricelli Vasquez, certified nutrition educators of the

empowered 121 Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), families by providing information and education at four separate eye-catching booths.

food challenges and provided them measuring cups, reusable grocery lists and thermometers to put into practice.”



Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) participated in two Nutrition Carnivals, at the Rittiman WIC Clinic on the city’s northeast side.

During these events, nutrition educators

“Sometimes parents can have little or no access to this type of information and education. We helped by bringing the information and education to them,” said Debra Contreras, an EFNEP nutrition education associate who presented at one of the event booths. “We gave them practical advice to their

The booth topics included My Plate, Making the Most of Your Food Dollars, Starting with the Basics, Plate It Safe, Get Moving for Good Health and Mealtime Miracles. Parents also helped prepare recipes that promote healthy food choices, are easy to prepare, and encourage family mealtime.

Texas Community Futures Forum Goes Español

On April 28, the agency and its Leadership Advisory Board facilitated a Spanish-language Texas Community Futures Forum at Stafford Elementary School in the Edgewood

Independent School District. 16 people participated in the process, which identified high-priority community-based issues which the agency can tackle over the next few years.

Issues identified through the process were cottage food production and operation, including cottage food laws and income generation; community gardens, including community harvesting and farmers' markets; nutrition and diabetes education; and 4-H youth development awareness and participation.

"The Spanish TCFF gave us an opportunity to explore avenues for extending educational experiences to all groups," said Nelda Speller County Extension Director for Bexar County.

"Developing educational programs based on community needs is the foundation of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's success," said Nelda Speller, County Extension Director for Bexar County.



Extension Thanks Volunteers for Supporting Its Vision

On May 16, Extension presented a volunteer appreciation event at the Children's Vegetable Garden (CVG), located on the grounds of the San Antonio Botanical Gardens. The event combined a vegetable contest among CVG youth participants, a picnic, and program volunteer recognition. Approximately 240

people attended, including family and friends of youth program participants, Bexar County Master Gardener volunteers, and others involved in supporting the program.

On June 24, a volunteer appreciation event was held at MacArthur Park to thank all volunteers who support Extension

programs and activities. Volunteers were presented with certificates of appreciation and were treated to breakfast and a variety of fun activities coordinated by Extension staff.



William "Roy" Flora is the new County Extension Agent for agriculture and natural resources in Bexar County. Roy has experience in

Meet the Staff: William "Roy" Flora

production agriculture, starting with his family's small cow-calf operation, as well as owning a commercial turkey farm and cow-calf herd. He currently owns and operates a small show-pig operation with his daughter and business partner.

Roy has a master's degree in agricultural education from Texas A&M University-Kingsville. He was previously an agricultural science

instructor at Tarkington High School in Cleveland. He has served as an assistant principal in Goliad and Shiner and taught at Lee College, Dayton High School, Alvin High School, Refugio High School, Gonzales High School, and Sharyland High School. He also served four years in the United States Army as a medical specialist. Please join us in welcoming Roy to our Extension family.

Leadership Advisory

Board of Bexar County

OFFICERS

Jackie Van De Walle

President

Barret Kolle

Vice President

Glenn Faulk

Secretary

MEMBERS

Reina Acosta

Velica Calvert

Mike De La Garza

Jill DeYoung

Charles E. English

Christopher Gill

Michael Imbimbo

Julie Jonas

Judge Laura Parker

Thea Platz

Scott Steele

A Message from the County Extension Director

As the newly appointed County Extension Director for Bexar County, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers and community partners who help us address agency identified grand challenges that face us all:



It is through such collaborations that we can better serve the citizens of Bexar County with educational programs that focus on local needs without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status. Additionally our programs do not and cannot support groups and organizations that discriminate in any of these areas.

Together we strive to help individuals and families through education now and for the future.

Calendar of Events

JULY

- 27-30 Entomology Youth Camp / Bug Camp
- 28-30 Summer Junior Master Gardener Adult Training
- 31 Wonderful World of Insects Camp

AUGUST

- 3-6 Nature's Garden Summer Camp
- 7 Spider Camp
- 8 Small Acreage Water Conservation
- 10-13 Nature's Garden Summer Camp
- 10-13 Junior Entomology Camps
- 13 Feral Hog Management Workshop
- 14 County 4-H Awards Program
- 19 30 Bugs Every Gardener Should Know

For more information about these and other events, please call 210-467-6575 or visit our website: <http://bexar-tx.tamu.edu>.



CONTACT US

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Bexar County Office
3355 Cherry Ridge St., Suite 212
San Antonio, TX 78230
TEL: 210-467-6575
FAX: 210-930-1753

E-mail: bexar-tx@tamu.edu
Web: <http://bexar-tx.tamu.edu>

In Cooperation With...

BEXAR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

Nelson W. Wolff, County Judge

Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez
Commissioner, Pct. 1

Paul Elizondo
Commissioner, Pct. 2

Kevin Wolff
Commissioner, Pct. 3

Tommy Calvert
Commissioner, Pct. 4

Editorial Team

Paul Schattenberg, Editor
Communications Specialist

Nelda Leyba Speller
County Extension Director

Carrie Huntzinger
Office Supervisor