

# *what's buggin' ya?*

AN EDUCATIONAL NEWSLETTER ON MANAGING INSECTS IN OUR ENVIRONMENT  
Molly E. Keck, IPM Program Specialist, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service – Bexar County

*Spring usually means starting to enjoy some time outdoors. And being outdoors usually means insects! Read on to learn what you should expect to find outdoors this spring.*



Molly Keck

## GALLS ON OAK LEAVES

Galls on leaves are nothing to be concerned about, although they can look odd. This time of year, when the oak trees start to shed their leaves to make room for the new leaves, you will notice little balls all over the back side of the leaves. These are galls.

Galls are not eggs or pupae of insects, but they are caused by insects. They are actually the plants own tissue responding to an insect laying their egg or feeding on the plant tissue. Most of the galls you see on oak leaves are small wasps that lay their eggs in the tissue of the oak leaf and the leaf grows around it and protects it as it develops. These wasps are harmless to humans and other animals and extremely small (almost gnat sized).

Another concern people often have is that the galls are causing the leaves to drop. Every year, oak leaves drop, making room for the new growth. The galls have nothing to do with excessive leaf loss or early leaf loss. It is merely coincidental.

Overall, galls are relatively harmless to the tree, and management is not recommended, feasible, or economical. They may look funny, but they are actually one less thing to worry about!



Photo by: Bart Drees

## GENISTA CATERpillARS ON MOUNTAIN LAURELS

With the up and down temperatures we have been experiencing, Mountain Laurels may be blooming a little earlier than normal this year. They may also be putting out some new growth sooner than expected. With new growth, you may start to see some feeding and damage. This is most likely from the Genista Caterpillar – a caterpillar that feeds on Mountain Laurels and is often associated with webbing on the leaves.

While these caterpillars will not harm the overall health of the tree, they will keep it from growing much larger if they feed on all the new growth. And odd temperatures and lack of significant rain last year may have your trees in a state of stress, which may make any insect damage seem more significant.

Caterpillars can be managed by *Bt* for caterpillars or Spinosad very effectively. Both are organic products and *Bt* is target specific to only caterpillars, which means you won't be harming any other insects or animals that come in contact with it.

## 30 BUGS EVERY GARDENER SHOULD KNOW!

If you are interested in learning more about what bugs may be out and about this spring, I am hosting an educational seminar called “30 Bugs Every Gardener Should Know”. This will be held March 24<sup>th</sup> from 10am-12pm at the Texas A&M Extension Office, 3355 Cherry Ridge, Suite 208. The cost for this program is \$10.

I will cover the 30 Bugs that will likely be making their presence known this spring and summer. I will have actual specimens and pictures. We'll cover who's good, who's bad, and who you can leave be.

Please RSVP to me (Molly) at [mekeck@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:mekeck@ag.tamu.edu).



## BACKYARD BASICS EXPO

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension is hosting an AMAZING program, Saturday March 28<sup>th</sup> at Madison High School. This EXPO happens only once a year, and we pack the place to the gills! We bring in specialists of all sorts of expertise to speak about various agricultural programs you can do in your own backyard: beekeeping, gardening, canning, aquaponics, rainwater harvesting, chickens and poultry and so much more. There is something for everyone. The presentations will go on throughout the day in concurrent sessions and vendors will be present to answer questions and/or sell goods (Alamo Area Beekeepers Association, Bexar County Master Gardeners, etc). This EXPO is geared for those who garden, enjoy agriculture as hobby, and those who want some self-sustaining projects in their backyard.

If you are interested, we still have some spots. Be sure to register at <http://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/BackyardBasics> before the date of the event.

### Ask about this summer's BUG CAMPS!

Bug Camp – ages 7 and up  
NISD CAMP 1 – June 22-25

Camp 1 – July 14-19

Camp 2 – July 21-24

NISD Camp 2 – July 27-30

We will collect insects, perform experiments with insects, learn all about entomology, and so much more.

Campers will receive a collection kit. Time is 9am-12:30pm.

Junior Bug Camp – ages 4-6  
August 10-11

For more information and registration forms, contact Molly at 210-467-6575 or [mekeck@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:mekeck@ag.tamu.edu)

## Backyard Basics EXPO

March 28, 2015

A colorful poster for the Backyard Basics EXPO. It features a green logo with the text "BACKYARD BASICS THE ART OF SELF-RELIANCE". Below the logo is a list of educational sessions: Homemade Foods, Backyard Poultry, Water Conservation, Food Preservation, Garden Basics, Home Aquaponics, Beekeeping, and More.... To the right, it mentions the keynote speaker, Daphne Richards, County Extension Agent—Horticulture &amp; Augie the Plant Doggie as seen on Central Texas Gardener, KLRU-TV. It also states that vendors will be on-site for shopping opportunities and lists demonstrations: Building a Chicken Coop, Rain Barrel Making, Raised Garden Bed Construction, and More.... The poster includes images of a mortar and pestle, a chicken, and various garden items.

Madison High School AgriScience Program

5005 Stahl Rd., San Antonio, TX 78247

Saturday, March 28, 2015, 9:00 am–3:00 pm

\$20 Per Person (Children under 16-Free)

Register Online at: <https://agriliferegister.tamu.edu/BackyardBasics> or call (979) 845-2604

Registration Deadline March 25, 2015 - For more info call: (210) 467-6575

Individuals with disabilities who are planning to attend class and who may need special service, accommodations, or auxiliary aid, please contact the Bexar County Office at 210-467-657 at least five (5) days prior to the date so appropriate arrangements can be made.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or veteran status.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

For More Info on Insects or Pest Management  
Contact:

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