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ANTIOXIDANT VEGGIES -----

As scientists learn more of the disease-fighting capabilities of fruits and vegetables, we learn that grandma was right to insist that we eat our vegetables. New research by Dr. Creighton Miller, Dr. Luke Howard and a graduate student, Mohamed Al-Saikhan, at A&M has revealed that potatoes are second only to broccoli in terms of antioxidant value. On a scale of 100, broccoli rated 96 while potatoes rated 69, carrots 32, onions 25 and bell peppers 15. Moreover, the greatest amount of antioxidants in potatoes is in the skin.

Julian W. Sauls
Professor & Extension Horticulturist

NEW USES FOR PLASTIC -----

Colorup and Sunup are two new plastic materials developed by Specialty Ag of Reedley, CA. Both materials are laid in the middles of orchard rows to reflect sunlight back into the tree. Colorup has caused increased coloring of fruit such as stone fruits, apples and grapes while Sunup increases plant growth, the difference in response being because the two products are formulated to reflect different wavelengths.

Currently, costs to install and remove the materials runs from \$160 to \$220 per acre.

Julian W. Sauls
Professor & Extension Horticulturist

BUG TRAPPING -----

We're all familiar with the yellow, sticky traps used to monitor certain insects in crops and orchards. Taking that concept a step further, AZ Export Management of Tempe, Arizona, has developed Insect-A-Peel—50-foot cylindrical rolls of the material.

Insect-A-Peel stationed at intervals of 120 feet around the field perimeter has provided considerable insect reduction in melons, broccoli and avocado in California, trapping aphids, armyworms, whitefly, cabbage looper, leafhopper, leafminer, thrips and other insects. Presently, it is available in Texas (I don't know where) at about \$30 per roll. At \$30 for the stand and a spacing of 120 feet, the cost for stands could get a bit much.

It will be interesting to see if this product holds up in tests in crops in south Texas.

Julian W. Sauls
Professor & Extension Horticulturist

RESERVOIR LEVELS -----

On August 1, Falcon was down 48.6 feet, a slight improvement from rains upstream and from reduced irrigation usage. Amistad was down 50.5 feet, which has remained fairly steady for about a month. Falcon levels had been fairly steady for the last couple of months (about 47 feet down), prompting many to consider the crisis to be less real than it is. Such doubters should look not just at Falcon but also at Amistad—Falcon has remained fairly static because of some rains, less irrigation and because of releases from Amistad, i.e. Amistad levels dropped about 4 feet during June, mostly to replenish Falcon.

Julian W. Sauls
Professor & Extension Horticulturist

TEXAS PLANT DISEASE HANDBOOK ON THE WEB -----

The Texas Plant Disease Handbook can be accessed at <http://cygnus.tamu.edu/>. It is being revised, which is a slow, painful process. Although the text portion of the book is available, only certain sections are illustrated at this time. My illustrated sections on palm, aloe, avocado, mango and papaya diseases are now available. Fungicides registered for these plants are listed where applicable. The Chemical Control Supplement for Vegetables, edited by Mark Black, can also be found at this site.

Tom Isakeit
Assistant Professor & Extension Plant Pathologist

PEPPER CREAM FOR PAIN -----

Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability or national origin.

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

While many people are aware of the use of pepper sprays for personal self-protection, only recently have the benefits of pepper creams been shown to alleviate the pain that sometimes persists on surgical scars. The active ingredient in hot peppers is capsaicin, which has been incorporated into a cream that is available over-the-counter.

Some surgical scars remain painful for months after healing, apparently because of damage to the nerves. Normal painkillers don't work, but the capsaicin creams may eliminate or reduce the pain significantly. Apparently, it blocks a chemical that carries pain impulses between nerve cells, much like the tolerance to the burn that pepper-eaters develop. The only reported side effects of the capsaicin creams are redness and burning.

Julian W. Sauls
Professor & Extension Horticulturist

TEXAS PRODUCE CONVENTION -----

This annual event is scheduled for September 18-21 at South Padre Island. Registration is \$120 for members before August 19, \$170 for non-members. Single-day registration is \$65 for members, \$90 for non-members. The fees are a bit steep for the budgets of most Extension personnel, although some meals and the trade show variety tend to make the educational program more affordable.

Julian W. Sauls
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HICKORY SHUCKWORM/STINK BUGS -----

Complaints were very common last year of fully-formed pecans that were totally dried up inside—no meat whatsoever. Others which had more or less full pecans had black, bitter spots on the kernels.

The first was due to hickory shuckworm damage to the shuck, which prevented nuts from filling. The second was due to a severe infestation of leaf-footed plant (stink) bugs.

The correct spray-timing to prevent the problem is when the pecan shell (inside the shuck) has hardened halfway down its length. The most common spray to use is Sevin®.

The timing is usually late July to early August in Weslaco. Shell hardening at Weslaco ranged from halfway to fully hardened, depending on variety, during the last week of July.

Julian W. Sauls
Professor & Extension Horticulturist

DEPARTURE -----

Dr. Merritt Taylor, Extension Economist here at Weslaco for several years, has opted for a different kind of management—effective September 1, he will become Director of the research center in Atoka, Oklahoma.

Merritt believes that he will be replaced as soon as possible by the Agricultural Economics group—we'll have to wait and see.

Julian W. Sauls
Professor & Extension Horticulturist

NEW EXTENSION PUBLICATION -----

Extension publication B-6034 "Weed and Brush Control for Pastures and Rangeland" was recently sent to us and it shows some promise particularly as a tool for training others in the identification of many of our native brush species. I know it sounds a little crazy for a vegetable person to bring this up, but you know as well as I that many of the questions you receive in the County office include the "I've got this bush near my house and I'd like to know what it is".

Authored by Tommy Welch and Suzanne Hyden, the guide covers improving range and pasture land, identification of weeds and brush, control methods and chemical application. The section I was really impressed with was the section on weed and brush identification, because it includes a lot of species native to our part of the state. This part of the guide not only includes over forty color pictures of different weeds and brush, but it also includes a brief synopsis of each species with information on its range, how it reproduces, control methods and the plant's characteristics. If you wanted to utilize the guide for work with students or 4-H youth, there are even study questions at the end of each section.

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