



**Kerr County Soil & Water
Conservation District**



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January 2016
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Scholarship Opportunity!

The Kerr County Soil & Water Conservation District is proud to offer youth from Kerr County sponsor scholarships to conservation minded camps this summer!

Some of these camps are already taking applications! Please contact us today if you think you would like to apply to one of these camps!

Texas Brigades Camps - www.texasbrigades.org

Youth Range Workshop -
www.rangeland.org/texas/youtheducation.shtml

KERR CO. SWCD NEWS

Kerr County Soil & Water Conservation District January 2016 Volume , Issue I

Tips for Pricklypear Control

By Kelly Umphres, USDA-NRCS

Many of us have dealt with the sometimes considered “pesky” state plant of Texas, pricklypear cactus. Depending on the objective, pricklypear can be either beneficial or a pest. Pricklypear is utilized by many wildlife species for food, and cover. Pricklypear is also edible for human consumption both the young pad and fruit can be consumed either raw or cooked. Some people may also like this plant for aesthetic reasons and use it for landscaping. However, if your goal is livestock and forage production, this plant is usually seen as a pest and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can assist in controlling it.



Controlling this plant can be a challenge because of its capability to spread rapidly vegetatively. When a pad breaks off the parent plant, it is capable of starting a whole new plant. This is why precautions must be taken when deciding which method of control to use.

Mechanical treatment has been used over the years for controlling a variety of brush species, including pricklypear. Mechanical control can be very effective for pricklypear control if conducted properly. If caution is not taken when using mechanical methods for pricklypear control it can cause more harm than good. If all the pads are not disposed of by piling and burning following chaining, disking, roller chopping, root plowing, grubbing, etc., they are capable of starting new plants. This can double or even triple the number of plants in the treated area.

Prescribed burning is another form of control for pricklypear. In order to get a desired kill on pricklypear with a burn, the fire needs to be hot enough to rupture the cells of the plant, and physically damage the plant. Summer prescribed burns are the most effective burns used to kill pricklypear. Summer fires can be dangerous due to their high intensity, and the dry conditions they are conducted under.

The use of herbicide is becoming the more common way of controlling pricklypear. Picloram is currently the popular chemical used to control pricklypear. This chemical can be used on pricklypear anytime of the year, but it is most effective in late summer through fall. However, the landscape and vegetative community on a site and method of application can change the most effective time to apply herbicides. Individual Plant Treatment (IPT) is probably the most effective method used to control pricklypear because it is applied directly on the targeted species. However, if there are a high number of plants/acres this method can be very labor intensive. If applying herbicide aerially, it is best to apply during the winter when the deciduous trees have lost their leaves so they won't intercept the majority of the chemical. It has been shown in recent studies that soil moisture or rain following application increase the percentage of plants killed.

It is more practical to apply herbicides with broadcast methods rather than IPT when the number of plants/acre exceeds 400. The number of plants/acre can be determined by using a simple sampling technique; pace off a 66' x 66' square (10th of an acre) and count the number of plants within the square then multiple it by 10. This will give the estimated number of plants/acre.

Though this plant has its benefits to wildlife, people and even livestock in drought situations, it can be a pest if not managed properly. Refer to Texas A&M AgriLife Extension publication ERM-1466, “Chemical Weed and Brush Control Suggestions for Rangeland” for application rates and timing. If you would like more information about managing prickly pear, or would like help determining which method would work best for your situation, contact your local NRCS office.
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Dates of Interest:

- Jan 17 - 23 : HCDJLS Show & Sale
- Jan. 30 : Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop
- Feb. 6: Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop
- Feb. 13 : Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop
- May 6 : Tentative Date for SWCD Spring Field Day
- FISH SALE : Date to be announced!

NEW EMPLOYEE IN THE KERRVILLE NRCS OFFICE

Shannon Miller joined the NRCS's Kerrville Resource Team as the new Program Assistant. Shannon, from Kerrville, will be assisting all of the field offices on the team, including Kerrville, Boerne, Junction, Rocksprings, and Bandera. Please welcome her to our NRCS team!



Welcome!

Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshop - January 30, February 6 & 13

The Riverside Nature Center and Texas Park and Wildlife Department present a series of workshops titled Wildlife Tax Valuation Workshops!

Have you had agricultural tax valuation on your land for the last five years, and are you interested in managing wildlife? This in-depth workshop is especially for landowners with 20 or more acres. It emphasizes wildlife management strategies that improve native habitat and increase species diversity. Our presenters will help you gain land management knowledge, understand the history of this Texas tax valuation law, and fulfill requirements to qualify for a wildlife management tax valuation. Many participants will complete this workshop with a developed plan and are ready to apply!

January 30, 9 AM - 1 PM : Session 1: Overview and Property Inventory

February 6, 9 AM - 2:30 PM : Session 2: Management Practices and Habitat Assessment

February 13, 9 AM—1 PM : Session 3: WTV History and Update on the Law, Application Procedures, and... Putting It All Together

All sessions of this workshop will be located at the Riverside Nature Center at 150 Francisco Lemos Street in Kerrville. Registration for members of the Nature Center is \$90/person or \$110/couple. Non-member registration fees are \$110/person or \$130/couple. Classes are limited so an RSVP is REQUIRED. Preregistration is required by January 23, 2016. Coffee and snacks will be provided, feel free to bring a sack lunch!

Riverside Nature Center 830-257-4837 www.riversidenaturecenter.org RNC.kerrville@gmail.com

USDA-NRCS & TSSWCB Programs Available

Several programs are available for Kerr County residents to apply for and receive assistance in implementing management practices for agricultural land.

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) is designed to assist agricultural producers in enhancing their land with certain management practices. Practices that address and improve water quantity and domestic animals are given high priority in Kerr County and include such practices as brush management, livestock water systems, fencing, and seeding.

The NRCS office accepts applications for this program year round and more information can be gained by contacting the Kerrville office at 830-896-4911 x 3 or visit the NRCS Texas homepage at: www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov.

The Water Quality Management Program (WQMP) is a state-funded program made available through Senate Bill 503. It is a site-specific plan developed through and approved by the local soil and water conservation district for agricultural or silvicultural lands. The main goal of these plans is to abate agricultural and/or silvicultural nonpoint pollutant contributions to impaired or threatened waters as prioritized. A WQMP covers the entire operating unit and includes required practices applicable to the planned land use. The first step in obtaining a WQMP is to contact the Kerr County SWCD. There is no charge for the development of a WQMP, but there may be costs for implementing required practices outlined in the WQMP.

Financial assistance is available at this time in the form of a cost-share program for WQMPs in Kerr County. You may read more on this program at TSSWCB's website at: www.tsswcb.texas.gov (click on Programs, then select WQMP). You may also contact the Kerr County Soil and Water Conservation District's office at 830-896-4911 x3 and ask for Deanna (SWCD) or Laura (NRCS) for assistance or to start the application process.

NRCS is an equal opportunity provider & employer.

UPCOMING EVENTS

SWCD's Spring Field Day

May 6

SWCD's Spring Fish Sale

Date TBD

CONTACT US TO GET ON THE LIST FOR MORE INFO!!

NOW AVAILABLE!!

From The
**Kerr County Soil & Water
Conservation District**

With a Minimum \$20 Donation



Please visit our office to get your copy today!
2104 Memorial Boulevard #103, Kerrville
(In the USDA Service Center, NRCS office)
830-896-4911 x 3 or 830-459-1701 (Deanna Pfeffer)

2016 Hill Country District Junior Livestock Show & Sale - January 17 - 23, 2016

The Hill Country District Junior Livestock Show Association, Inc., (a Volunteer Organization) is dedicated to promoting agriculture, as well as, providing monetary support and scholarships to 4-H and FFA members in 33 counties in Texas. Come out and support our youth as they show off their agricultural projects and compete for a place in the Sale on Saturday! The Kerr County Livestock Show is held in conjunction with HCDJLS.

Sunday, 17th: County Gilt Show, County Registered Angora Show

Monday, 18th: Texas Open Commercial & Registered Angora Goats Show, District Gilt Show

Tuesday, 19th: Ag Mechanics Judging, Fastest Torch Contest, County Breeding Sheep Show

Wednesday, 20th: State Registered Breeding Sheep Show

Thursday, 21st: County Market Lamb Show, County Market Swine Show, County Market Meat Goat Show, County Market Steer Show, County Heifer Show

Friday, 22nd: District Lamb Show, District Swine Show, District Meat Goat Show, District Steer Show, District Registered Heifer Show

Saturday, 23rd: 1:00 PM - HCDJLS Auction

For More Info, Show Times or to Donate, please visit: www.hcdjls.org or call 830-792-4102

UGRA Water Enhancement Cost Share Program

The Upper Guadalupe River Authority (UGRA) promotes water enhancement through brush management by funding a supplemental cost share program. UGRA's Water Enhancement Cost Share Program is implemented in conjunction with the Natural Resources Conservation Service's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board's Water Supply Enhancement Program.

The program is available for brush control projects located in the North Fork, South Fork, or Johnson Creek watersheds. Landowners who have a contract in one of these watersheds may be eligible to receive an additional 25% reimbursement from UGRA. For more information, contact UGRA at (830) 896-5445 or visit www.ugra.org.

