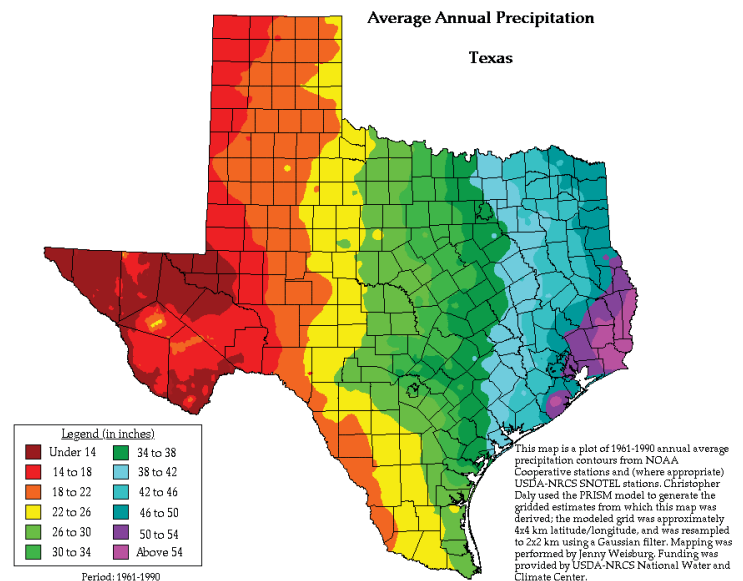


OVERVIEW:

Here in Central Texas, winter is the perfect time to get preparations done for your garden. Whether it's for a veggie garden or for a landscape bed, this class will go over some preparations and techniques to get those beds ready for planting in the spring season.

The Central Texas Climate:

Central Texas winters can seem to start abruptly and tend to stay around a bit longer than we would all like. Here in Bastrop, we are in zone 9a, which means that our average minimum temperature is somewhere in between 20 to 25 degrees Fahrenheit. We rarely drop below these temperatures, but it happens. Our soils range greatly, with the most widespread common trait being the alkalinity of most of the soils and each having their own challenges. Every homeowner here in Central Texas will have varying experiences and challenges. This region is very microclimate heavy and can change and evolve how you learn how to best garden in your home landscape. Spring brings us late frosts and sometimes early heatwaves.



Soil and Bed Preparation:

Understanding where you are planting your landscape or veggies is the first step to spring preparation. Determine if you plan on making a raised bed or in-ground. For raised beds you determine where you have the most access to water and preferably sun in the morning and shade in the afternoon for the best results, same goes for in-ground beds.

For raised beds, you are choosing your soil mixtures yourself; people add sticks or wood into the bottom to help fill, then fill it with well-draining garden soils mixed with compost to create veggie beds. For in-ground amendments are determined by soil type. For sandier soils, organic matter that captures water is best such as leaf mold. For clay soils, amendments with organic matter and things like shale help add porosity (air space) so it drains better.

Getting a soil test for in-ground beds or landscape beds can help determine if you need to add things like acidifier (raise Ph), blood meal (raises nitrogen), or other amendments to improve soil quality to what you desire. Texas A&M soil test can even tell you what your amendments to make for certain goals such as fruit trees or just shrubs.

Then comes dealing with weeds, everyone's favorite challenge in the world of gardening. There is no perfect answer as everyone's situation is different, but one of the most common techniques is called solarizing. This is where you take a clear plastic and bury the edges over the bed so that it can kill the weeds present and it can help control fungus, nematodes, etc. in those areas if they are present. This can take place anywhere there is direct sun, and once clear plastic is removed, usually a layer of wet cardboard is added, and new soil/compost is added on top so no seeds can germinate due to them reacting to sunlight. No sunlight means no germination of dormant grass seeds. There are also pre-emergent available and herbicides but use at your own risk. When consulting these, do your research and follow the instructions exactly as they direct. During these cooler months where grasses are growing slow some people opt to just use cardboard, then soil, then mulch to suppress the weeds which work just as well if there is not available sun or enough heat!

Choosing What to Plant:

This is considered the most fun part of gardening by most people! Whether it's veggies, herbs, perennials, or annuals, this is the time to come up with a plan for those garden and landscape beds. While everything is dormant and not a lot of plants are moving, having a plan of what to plant and where it's going is never a bad idea. Whether it's a list, a diagram, a loose sketch, there are multiple ways to hit your goals but there are some things to go over and consider when choosing what to plant.

These are some questions to ask yourself: What is the purpose of this bed? How big do I want the plants to be? How many hours of sunlight does this get over the day? Does this bed have a possibility of flooding? How accessible is this to water? If it's a veggie, what ones can I best pair each other with? How much work am I willing to invest in the plants? What is my budget?

Answering some of these questions can help narrow the lens of the plants you are looking at and help you determine what will work best for you and your garden bed!

**THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING! HERE'S
A PERK WE WANT TO SHARE:**

BENEFITS:

- Wholesale Pricing on Plants
- Discounts on Events
- Discounts on Venue Rentals
- Discounts on Vendor Booths
- Discounts on Delivery!
- First to know of Plant Deliveries!
- More to come!

ONLY \$5 PER MONTH!

Sign-Up
Here



Texas Sage - A Texas Native Plant

Winter into Early Spring Maintenance:

During this period, most plants have entered dormancy, the weather is cool, and this gives us time for planning for the coming year. But with the winter season also comes some basic maintenance that needs to be done before we hit spring. Things such as applying pre-emergent, fertilizing our lawns, pruning, and general bed upkeep has to happen before we hit spring to give our beds the best look and health for the coming season.

Pruning is an essential part of winter maintenance for both the health of your plants and the look of your garden. Valentines is for pruning roses, all through winter you can prune trees, bushes, perennials, and grasses back to the ground, if necessary. For perennials and grasses, prune back to the ground. For things such as shrubs or trees, your goal is to never prune more than a third of the whole plant at a time or else it can suffer more than it will reap the benefits.

This is also a suitable time to prep irrigation systems, to make the infrastructure for things such as drip lines, or soakers, and to build them to get ready to make spring watering easier. This is a good time to set up or do maintenance to structures such as pvc pipe frames for netting or shade cloth and can be set up during this time as well.

Seeds for spring planting can be started as early as late January through February indoors, with starts for veggies showing up in Nurseries around late February. Though we have a chance of a freeze all the way up into March. Some choose to make an early crop of more cold hardy varieties, with a late crop followed by more heat tolerant varieties.