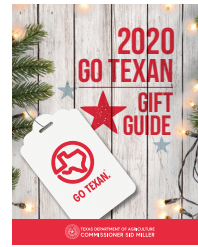




**TX Agriculturalist**  
A pecan orchard with deep Texas roots that has been passed down for generations.



**Choose N' Cut**  
Looking for that perfect Christmas tree this season? Look no further than these Texas farms.



**TDA Updates**  
You Art What You Eat Art Contest, Round Table Discussions, Shop GO TEXAN and more!



# TEXAS AGRICULTURE Matters!

Your monthly connection to the Texas Department of Agriculture.

Volume 1  
Issue 12  
December 2020



## Howdy Neighbors!

Welcome to the Texas Agriculture Matters newsletter, your monthly connection to the Texas Department of Agriculture.

We are closely watching the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff members at TDA have transitioned to working remotely for the time being. Rest assured we are hard at work everyday to support farmers, ranchers and Texans with their agriculture endeavors.

Our operations will continue to serve you and we have plenty of opportunities available. Whether you're a young farmer, want to learn how to get a hemp license or need to read something that brings you joy, this newsletter will serve you well.

Remember friends, Texas Agriculture Matters!

Sid Miller  
Texas Agriculture Commissioner

## POINSETTIAS: *A Texan's Favorite Christmas Flower*

The poinsettia is a beloved symbol of the Christmas season. Much like the Christmas tree, wreaths, mistletoe, and holly it is used to bring natural beauty into homes, offices, and places of business throughout the month of December. While the red poinsettia remains the top selling variety each year, new breeding techniques have added many new shades to match almost any holiday décor. Today, one can find shades of white, yellow, pink, orange and salmon as well as many with marbled patterns.

Those colorful showy parts of the poinsettia are not actually petals as most would assume but leaves that are called bracts. The actual flower is the small cluster of yellow blooms in the center of each set of bracts. It's important to look at these yellow clusters when purchasing your poinsettia. Try to find a poinsettia with flowers that have not yet blossomed or opened with visible pollen for a longer lasting plant.

The poinsettia is a native plant to Central America. There, in its natural tropical climate, the wild plant can grow to



heights of 12 feet with leaves measuring 6-8 inches across. It was discovered and brought to



TEXAS AGRICULTURE *Matters!*



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

*Produced by the Office of Communications  
Editor, Katlyn Gast*

[www.TexasAgriculture.gov](http://www.TexasAgriculture.gov)  
(800) TELL-TDA



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## ABOUT COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

Sid Miller is an eighth generation farmer and rancher and the 12<sup>th</sup> Commissioner of Agriculture for the great State of Texas. Commissioner Miller has devoted his life to the agriculture industry, and supporting Texas producers and the communities they call home. He is a businessman, rancher, community leader, former ag teacher and former school board member. Commissioner Miller is a rodeo cowboy and holds 12 world championship titles. He is an honors graduate of Tarleton State University in Stephenville, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Vocational Agriculture Education.

America by Joel Roberts Poinsett, the first appointed U.S. ambassador to Mexico. Poinsett, an amateur botanist, collected some of the plants that he found and sent them back to his greenhouses in South Carolina to study and propagate. December 12 is National Poinsettia Day in honor of the date of Poinsett's death.

The origins of the poinsettia as a traditional Christmas plant go back to a Mexican legend of a young girl who had no gift to present to the Christ child at the altar on Christmas Eve. Her cousin assured her that any gift, no matter how humble, would be acceptable if it were given in love. Hearing these words of encouragement, she picked a small bouquet of weeds as they walked toward the church. As she laid them at the altar the weeds suddenly burst into blooms of brilliant red and all who witnessed her humble gift were certain that they had seen

a Christmas miracle right before their eyes.

One of the best ways your family can celebrate this Christmas miracle is by purchasing a Texas grown poinsettia! Texas greenhouses are among the top three producers of poinsettias growing approximately 3.7 million pots per year. That is an economic boost of over \$16 million dollars to the Texas economy.

Texas grown poinsettias are delivered to local retailers throughout the season. Be sure to request a locally grown poinsettia to ensure the freshest, longest lasting plant to enhance your holiday. Once your poinsettia is home, remove any outer wrapping which may obstruct drainage and water only when the soil feels dry. Keep at a temperature between 65° and 70° and give it plenty of light for at least 8 hours per day. These tips will help to ensure that your poinsettia will last and provide plenty of enjoyment for you and your family. 🇺🇸



The Texas Department of Agriculture is committed to providing the same high level of service to our customers during the COVID-19 emergency as they've come to expect. Whether we're helping Texas farmers and ranchers continue to provide a safe and dependable food supply, ensuring Texas school children continue to have access to regular, healthy meals or supporting our vital rural hospitals and clinics, the Texas Department of Agriculture is here for Texans.

Due to the Coronavirus emergency, the Texas Department of Agriculture is now working remotely and will continue to do so until directed to return to state offices by agency leadership. As a result, we are asking all constituents, customers, licensees and others to contact TDA by email, as there will be limited staff in the office answering the phones. Additionally, TDA is not accepting external visitors in the office during this time. If you need to make a payment, you may do so online or via USPS.

Please visit our [website](#) for updated information or view our [COVID-19 Resource Guide](#) for additional resources and information.

## ABOUT TDA

The Texas Legislature established the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) in 1907. The agency's key objectives are to promote production agriculture, consumer protection, economic development and healthy living. The agriculture commissioner oversees the agency and is elected every four years. The current commissioner, Sid Miller, was elected in 2014. TDA is a diversified state agency that provides value-added services through our regulatory and marketing and initiatives. TDA is headquartered in Austin and has five regional service offices, two sub-offices, three laboratories and five livestock export facilities.

### Mission:

TDA's mission is to partner with all Texans to make Texas the nation's leader in agriculture, fortify our economy, empower rural communities, promote healthy lifestyles, and cultivate winning strategies for rural, suburban and urban Texas through exceptional service and the common threads of agriculture in our daily lives.

# Texas Agriculture Profile



**womacknursery.com**  
Your Texas source for fruit and pecan trees since 1937

## Womack Nursery De Leon, Texas

**W**omack Nursery has deep Texas roots. In the mid-1920's, James Womack moved from West, Texas to Erath County looking for a job and soon began working at Fitzgerald's Nursery in Stephenville. Womack joined seven other families who lived and worked on the nursery. The work was hard; they grew fruit and nut trees that were dug by hand and delivered throughout the United States.


In 1937, Womack moved to De Leon, just outside of Stephenville, and purchased the 180 acres of land

where Womack Nursery Company still stands today. In the mid-forties, he began publishing a mail order pamphlet which now serves as the Womack Nursery catalog today. The catalog is still being mailed all over the United States and is a reputable source of information about fruit, berry, and nut trees.

James' son, Larry Jim Womack, came to the nursery assist his father in their growing business after graduating from Texas A&M University in 1958. Larry Jim continued to operate the business after the passing of his

father in 1964. Today, Larry Jim still assists in the operation of the company, while his son Larry Don Womack, has taken over the leadership role. The Womack family operation now consists of over 3,000 acres of owned and leased land that includes approximately 100 acres of nursery stock alongside other agricultural enterprises.

Womack Nursery carries a full line of pecan trees, fruit trees, flowering trees and shrubs as well as tools and supplies needed to take care of your purchase after planting.

Their online catalog gives helpful planting tips and their website offers videos to help ensure your success. You can visit the nursery in De Leon or buy direct from their online catalog at [www.womacknursery.com](http://www.womacknursery.com). 



The Womack family, courtesy of [womacknursery.com](http://womacknursery.com)



Picking and sorting pecans, courtesy of [womacknursery.com](http://womacknursery.com)



James and son Larry Jim, courtesy of [womacknursery.com](http://womacknursery.com)

shop now!

# 2020 GO TEXAN

## GIFT GUIDE



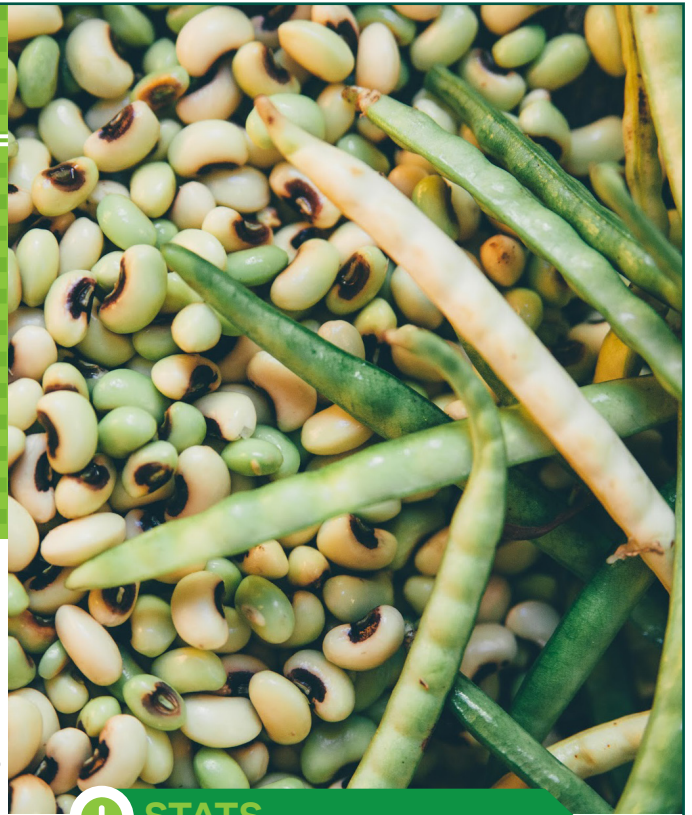
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

# SIDES PEA FARM

## FARM PROFILE

This month's featured farm is Sides Pea Farm, located in northeastern Texas, where Sides Pea Farm started in 1957 after Winford and Virginia Sides bought 70 acres of land just south of Canton, Texas. When Winford first started farming, he tried growing all kinds of vegetables including squash, tomatoes, potatoes, okra, watermelons, cantaloupes, peas and beans. Winford learned that he was better at raising peas and beans than anything else. So he started growing only peas and beans, and soon became the largest grower of fresh market peas in Texas.

Winford did all the farming and Virginia did the selling — both at the farm and at farmers markets in the area. Since 1957, Sides Pea Farm has gotten bigger every year and now has hundreds of acres of peas. You can find Sides Pea Farm's fresh peas at fruit stands, markets and stores all over Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana.



Peas grown at Sides Pea Farm

### + STATS

**Owner:** Virginia Sides

**Founded:** 1957

**Location:** Canton, Texas

**Specialty:** Peas



Peas grown at Sides Pea Farm



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**COMMISSIONER SID MILLER**

This product was funded by USDA. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.





## TDA's Annual Art Contest Feeds Creativity for Young Texans

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) is now accepting entries for the 2021 You Art What You Eat student art contest. It offers a fun and creative way for young Texans to share their vision of good nutrition using artwork. During the six years of the contest, illustrations from young Texans in grades K-12 have imagined healthy foods as video game characters, spaceships, superheroes and more. One winner explained how she used last year's space-exploration theme, Blast Off with a Healthy School Breakfast, to create winning artwork.

"I wanted to incorporate what I thought a healthy breakfast was," said Austin's Sean Hernandez, the winner in the middle and high school division for the artwork promoting School Breakfast Week. "I thought about outer space and the things in space like planets and the milky way and turned them into breakfast items."


This year's themes are Feed Your Creativity with a Healthy School

Lunch and Feed Your Creativity with a Healthy School Breakfast. The winning artwork will inspire posters and promotional materials appearing online and in schools across Texas during National School Lunch Week in 2021 and School Breakfast Week in 2022. Winners and runners up are also featured on the TDA Food and Nutrition Division website and in an exhibit at the Texas State Capitol. The deadline for submitting entries is April 2, 2021.

The art contest is part of TDA's strategic efforts to teach children about healthy lifestyles and increase participation in its school nutrition programs. When students exercise their creativity by illustrating fruits, vegetables, lean meats, milk and whole grains for the contest, they promote school meals and Texas agriculture in a way that appeals to their peers.

"Each year these students amaze me with their talent in their You Art What You Eat works of art," said Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller. "I am beyond

proud of these kids for joining TDA to advocate on behalf of Texas agriculture and good nutrition."

Parents and teachers are encouraged to make entering the contest a fun and educational experience for children. There are two divisions for the contest — Primary (kindergarten - 5th grade) and Secondary (6th grade - 12th grade). Winners will be announced in May 2021. For guidelines and a submission packet, please visit [SquareMeals.org/artcontest](https://SquareMeals.org/artcontest). 



Londyn Davis - Johnson  
1<sup>st</sup> Place Elementary | National School Lunch Week

# TDA HOSTS *Round Table for* INTERNATIONAL TRADE



**T**DA joined with USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) to host a Texas agriculture round table discussion. This event was focused on the foreign agricultural trade attachés who are stationed at their country’s embassy (most of them in DC) and work on global trade opportunities on behalf of their home nation. Typically, USDA FAS hosts an annual tour for the group, going to different states each year. This year Texas presented the first-ever virtual gathering and TDA is planning for their return in person next year.

Participants from nearly 50 countries participated, and we were able to highlight agriculture in Texas through an informative video, a presentation by TDA, and insight from five Texas agriculture leaders – a rancher, a cotton and sorghum farmer, a pecan grower and retail market owner, a grapefruit grower, and an agricultural communications professional.

As a follow-up, “Taste of Texas” packages were sent to each

participant. These packages featured products donated by our partners and GO TEXAN partners and helped promote Texas agriculture in a tasty, tangible way to the agricultural trade leaders working on behalf of the countries we trade with – and other we would like to trade with! The boxes featured Texas pecans, grapefruit, oranges, peanuts, beef jerky, beef seasoning, BBQ sauce, salsa, rice, olive oil, and informational materials on shrimp, wine, and other Texas agriculture sectors.

For more information about international trade please visit our [website](#). 🇺🇸



**Tami Sorrells**  
Sorrells Farms  
Comanche, TX

## *Speakers*



**John Locke**  
J.D. Hudgins  
Hungerford, TX



**Dale Murden**  
Texas Citrus Mutual  
Mission, TX



**Michelle Martin**  
AgMag & Farmer Who  
McAllen, TX



**Shelley Heinrich**  
Heinrich Brothers Farm & Kitalou Gin  
Lubbock, TX





# SPINACH

HARVEST OF THE MONTH  
DECEMBER



**Spinach** is one of the most popular members of the leafy "greens" group. In the 1930s, the cartoon character Popeye helped make spinach famous. It won't actually make you super-strong like Popeye, but it does have nutrients for your skin, eyes and a healthy body. Texas is ranked second in the country for growing spinach. It has flat, smooth leaves but some types have dark green, curly leaves. It can taste great raw in a salad or cooked in a sauce.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Spinach grows rapidly and becomes full-grown in about six to eight weeks after it is planted. Farmers pick it when it has about 10-12 leaves, by pulling the plant out of the ground.

## FUN FACT

The spinach-growing town of Crystal City, Texas built a statue of Popeye in 1937.



## SPINACH GROWING REGIONS

1. The High Plains
2. Winter Garden
3. Rio Grande Valley



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# Choose N' Cut Christmas Trees

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## Kelumac Christmas Tree Farm Bed & Breakfast *Bryan, Texas - (979) 279-3931*

A 22 acre Christmas Tree Farm with Farm Stay accommodations. A working Christmas Tree Farm, this 22 acre farm has been growing Christmas Trees since 1988 when they planted their first 1000 trees and have replanted 300-500 trees each year since that time.

## Merket Christmas Tree Farm *Beckville, Texas - (903) 678-2359*

There's fun for the whole family at Merket Christmas Tree Farm! On weekends, Santa is here to visit with kids of all ages. You can even leave a letter in Santa's mailbox. Along with Christmas trees we have petting critters, hot cider, wreaths and more. Open Thanksgiving Day from 12 Noon to 6 PM and every Monday through Friday from 3 PM to 6 PM and Saturday and Sunday from 9 AM to 6 PM till Christmas Eve.

## 4 Ceasons Tree Farm *Caddo Mills, Texas - (903) 274-6387*

A family owned choose n cut Christmas tree farm in Hunt County Texas. Growing Virginia Pine, Leyland Cypress, Carolina Sapphire. Come and make family memories choosing the perfect tree for your home. Open on weekends starting the Friday after Thanksgiving. Saturdays 10-5pm; Sundays 1-5pm until the second weekend in December.

## Old Time Christmas Tree Farm *Spring, Texas - (281) 370-9141*

The farm has been family owned and operated since 1996. The farm has over 40 acres planted in trees and has thousands of Virginia Pines to choose from along with Cypress trees.

## Spring Creek Growers *Magnolia, Texas - (281) 259-8114*

Third and fourth generations of the Michel family to operate this farm located in southwestern Montgomery County near Spring Creek. Today, they grow and harvest approximately 20 acres of Virginia Pine and Leyland Cypress trees for the Christmas season.



**GO TEXAN.**<sup>®</sup>

**FIND THE MARK**  
*that matters*



TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER

## WHAT

**does it mean?**

When you see the mark, you know the product or place has been proudly certified as authentically Texan.

## WHERE

**do you find it?**

Look for the mark anywhere you shop, from local farmer's markets to national retail chains.

**Support Texas.**

Want to learn more?  
[gotexan.org](http://gotexan.org)

**#GOTEXAN**



# Fresh From the Field



## Shop

### GO TEXAN Today!

This holiday season you can shop GO TEXAN products online! The virtual GO TEXAN Market features quality Texas made sauces, drink mixes, leather goods, candles and more. This website is unique in that each product page highlights the partner and their business.

Make the Texan in your life giddy this Christmas with a gift you



can say was made right here in the Lone Star State. Make this Christmas a GO TEXAN Christmas!

Visit [shop.gotexan.org](http://shop.gotexan.org) today! 🇹🇽

## NEW MEMBERS!

GO TEXAN.

- ★ Bloomer Scents
- ★ Snows Shack LLC
- ★ South Texas Coffee Initiative
- ★ Taste of Texas Beef
- ★ Mama T's LLC
- ★ Fort Worth Meat Packers LLC
- ★ Alzheimer's Alliance Tristate Area
- ★ Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce
- ★ Spicy Food Productions
- ★ Global Animal Partnership
- ★ Pekoe Inc
- ★ Literally Good Coffee Company
- ★ Happy Hollow Ranch
- ★ Farmers Market
- ★ Abilene Rotary Club
- ★ Tri State Fairgrounds
- ★ Texas Tidbits LLC

**THE GO TEXAN MARKET**

GO TEXAN Market GO TEXAN Champion Sponsors About GO TEXAN Contact 0 Items

Sort by product name Z/A

LOOK FOR OUR FEATURED PRODUCTS

MISS GINA COOKS Zesty Avocado Salsa \$9.74

TOO GOOD! TREATS Zebra Drizzle Popcorn \$29.00

TEA IN TEXAS Yellow Rose Of Texas \$14.00

PADDLE TRAMPS Wooden Magnetic Bottle Opener \$37.89

THE COOKIE CRAVE White Chocolate Snickerdoodle 3 Pack \$9.56

MILD BILL'S SPICES WHITE CHICKEN CHILI MIX \$5.50

COFFEE ROASTERS Texas Whiskey Roast Medium Roast - Special Blend 100% Arabica Coffee

WHAT RHYMES WITH FRIDAY? beer

SNOWFLAKE

## Did You Know?

### **TDA protects consumers**

by displaying consumer information stickers on scales and measuring devices throughout Texas to inform consumers how to contact TDA, and the requirements for businesses to post each device's registration certificate in the view of the public.

**TDA inspects** trees for diseases and pests. Other forestry issues are handled by the Texas A&M Forestry Service.

**TDA operates** livestock export pens. The agency has no official role in animal health, as that's the responsibility of the Texas Animal Health Commission.

**TDA operates** road station inspections and utilizes DPS to stop commercial vehicles for inspection of agricultural plant products entering the state.



## Texas Ag Stats:

- ★ There are about 800 blackberry farms in Texas.
- ★ The average age of the young farmer is 29 years old.
- ★ Texas is home to 9 mushroom farms.
- ★ There are 125 Christmas tree farms in Texas.
- ★ The average size of a farm owned by Texas farmer with military service.
- ★ There are about 385 wind turbine farms in Texas.

## Recipe of the Month

### **PB&J Peach Cobbler**

Chuck Burgess

*The unexpected addition of peanut butter makes this cobbler a dish reminiscent of your favorite childhood lunch. To make the mixing easier, warm the peanut butter and preserves in the microwave for 10–15 seconds.*

#### **Ingredients:**

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, plus more for greasing the dish  
3/4 cup crunchy peanut butter  
3/4 cup milk  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup flour  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 can (29 ounces) sliced peaches in juice, drained  
3/4 cup peach preserves  
1/2 cup brown sugar

#### **Directions:**

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a 13-by-9-inch glass baking dish with butter.
- 2.** Melt remaining butter in a medium bowl. Whisk in peanut butter then milk until blended.
- 3.** In another bowl, mix the sugar, flour, baking powder and salt. Add the butter mixture and stir until blended. Pour into baking dish and spread evenly.
- 4.** In a medium bowl, mix peaches, preserves and brown sugar. Then spoon evenly over batter. Bake 40–50 minutes, or until the top is golden brown and juices are bubbly.



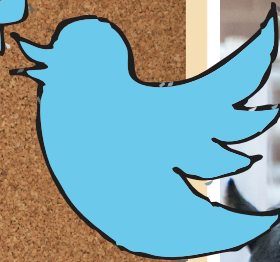
# Your Thoughts...

*on a November crop of strawberries...*



KVUE.COM  
Sweet Berry Farm has unusual November crop of strawberries available for picking

Tweet



Cheyenne Marie  
I love going to Sweet Berry Farm, Marble Falls for their strawberries 😊

Charlotte Beth Reienburg Rieth  
love the strawberry any time, great that they can get such good harvest.

Michelle Rendon



DECEMBER 2020

**Tell Us...** *what are your favorite Christmas traditions?*



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