

January, 2018

Rainwater harvesting and turf management training set for Feb. 22 in Kyle

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KYLE – Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service’s Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters Program is hosting a residential rainwater harvesting and turf management training with the Plum Creek Watershed Partnership Feb. 22 in Kyle.

The free event will be from 1-5 p.m. at the [Kyle City Hall](#), 100 W. Center St. in Kyle. Seating is limited, so attendees are requested to register with Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters at <https://hlhw.tamu.edu/workshops/2018/kyle/> or contact John Smith, AgriLife Extension program specialist, College Station, at 979-845-2761 or johnwsmith@tamu.edu.

The Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters Program aims to improve and protect surface water quality by enhancing awareness and knowledge of best management practices, coordinators said. Attendees will learn about the design and installation of residential rainwater harvesting systems and appropriate turf and landscape species based on local conditions.

Dr. Ben Wherley, Texas A&M AgriLife Research turfgrass ecology scientist, College Station, said management practices such as irrigation delivery equipment, interpreting soil tests and understanding nutrient applications can help reduce runoff and provide additional landscape irrigation water.

“These practices can improve understanding of rainwater harvesting and landscape management,” he said.

Dr. Diane Boellstorff, AgriLife Extension water resource specialist, College Station, said proper fertilizer application and efficient water irrigation can protect and improve water quality in area creeks and collecting rainwater for lawn and landscape needs reduces stormwater runoff.

Participants can have their soil tested as part of the training. Residents can pick up a soil sample bag with sampling [instructions](#) from the AgriLife Extension office in Hays County, 200 Stillwater Dr. in Wimberley and in Caldwell County at 1403 Blackjack St. Suite B in Lockhart. Bags will be available at least a week before the event and should be turned in at the beginning of the training.

For more information on the program or how to collect soil samples, contact the Hays County office at 512-393-2120 or the Caldwell County office at 512-398-3122.

Reagan Hejl, research associate in the soil and crop sciences department, said soil samples will be submitted to the AgriLife Extension Soil, Water and Forage Testing Lab for routine analysis, including pH, conductivity, nitrate-nitrogen and other parameters.

The soil sample bag and analysis are free to Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters Program participants.

During the program, there will be a review of how to understand soil test results and nutrient recommendations so residents can interpret results once they receive their analysis.

Nick Dornak, Plum Creek Watershed coordinator, will discuss updates on watershed protection plan activities to improve and protect water quality in Plum Creek.

For more information about the Plum Creek Watershed Protection Plan, go to <http://plumcreek.tamu.edu/wpp/>.

Funding for the Healthy Lawns and Healthy Waters Program is provided through a Clean Water Act grant from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The project is managed by the Texas Water Resources Institute, part of Texas A&M AgriLife Research, AgriLife Extension and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at Texas A&M University.