

East Texas Fruit, Nut, and Vegetable Conference
Greg Grant, Tyler Morning Telegraph
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The 2025 East Texas Fruit, Nut, and Vegetable Conference will take place on Friday, February 7, at the Cross Brand Cowboy Church, located at 11915 FM 2015 in Tyler. This educational event offers invaluable tips and techniques for anyone interested in growing fruits, nuts, and vegetables, whether you're a professional grower or a backyard hobbyist.

The half-day conference kicks off at 7:30 a.m. with registration, and sessions will run from 8:00 a.m. to noon. Attendees can look forward to expert-led presentations on a variety of topics including:

Earth-Kind Pollinator Management: Dr. Garrett Slater, Assistant Professor and Apiculture Extension Entomologist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, will discuss strategies for managing pollinators effectively to enhance crop production.

Earth-Kind Pecan Production: Bob Whitney, Regent's Fellow and Organic Program Specialist with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, will share insights on pecan cultivation, including best practices for maintaining healthy and productive trees.

Earth-Kind Vegetable Production: Dr. Greg Grant, Smith County Extension Agent in Horticulture, will cover the essentials of growing vegetables successfully in East Texas, focusing on strategies that work for both home gardens and small farms.

Earth-Kind Fruit and Berry Production: Dr. Tim Hartmann, Assistant Professor and Extension Fruit Specialist, will explore tips for growing fruits and berries, ensuring a fruitful harvest season after season.

The program is designed to meet the increasing demand for practical, science-based information about fruit, nut, and vegetable cultivation in East Texas. Whether you're looking to start a new garden, refine your current practices, or scale up for commercial production, this conference will provide the tools and guidance you need to succeed. You'll learn how to improve yields, avoid common mistakes, and use Earth-Kind principles to grow sustainably.

Pre-registration for the event is highly encouraged and will close at 5:00 p.m. on February 6. The cost is \$20 per person, with a small convenience fee added for online payment. For those who prefer to register at the door, onsite registration is available for \$30 per person. Payment options include credit, debit, and cash,

and participants are advised to register early to ensure an accurate headcount for seating.

Certified Master Gardener volunteers who attend will earn four continuing education hours, making this event an excellent opportunity to expand your knowledge while fulfilling annual training requirements.

To register or learn more, visit the conference webpage at smith.agrilife.org/fnvc/. You can also find the flyer, schedule, and additional details on the “Texas A&M AgriLife-Smith County” Facebook page. If you have any questions, feel free to call the Smith County AgriLife Extension office at 903-590-2980.

Don’t miss this opportunity to deepen your expertise and connect with fellow gardeners and growers in East Texas. Whether you're interested in cultivating your first fruit tree or vegetable garden, learning the secrets to successful pecan production, or attracting pollinators to your garden, this program is your gateway to success.

Greg Grant, PhD, is the Smith County horticulturist and Master Gardener coordinator for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. He is the author of *Texas Fruit and Vegetable Gardening*, *Texas Home Landscaping*, *Heirloom Gardening in the South*, and *The Rose Rustlers*. You can read his “Greg’s Ramblings” blog at arborgate.com, read his “In Greg’s Garden” in each issue of *Texas Gardener* magazine (texasgardener.com), or follow him on Facebook at “Greg Grant Gardens.” More science-based lawn and gardening information from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service can be found at aggieturf.tamu.edu and aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu.

Image caption: *Pecan production will be one topic covered at the 2025 East Texas Fruit, Nut, and Vegetable Conference.*