



Northwest Region Newsletter September 2010 Edition

News/Events

LSU AgCenter forester to lead bike tour of Shreveport's significant trees

Vélo Dendro S Deux, a leisurely bicycle tour of Shreveport's most significant trees, will be held Saturday, Oct. 23, led by Shreveport native Dr. Hallie Dozier, an urban forester with the LSU AgCenter in Baton Rouge.

Baton Rouge Advocates for Safe Streets (B.R.A.S.S.) is partnering with the LSU AgCenter, Columbia Café, A Better Shreveport and Shreveport Green to bring the event to Shreveport for the second year. Registration and prep for the ride is at 8 a.m. with the kickoff at 8:45 a.m. at Columbia Café, 3030 Creswell.

Riders – amateur and experienced, young and old – will enjoy the camaraderie of a slow, easy, fun bike ride on the streets of Shreveport, Dozier said.

“This fun and information-filled ride encourages and supports the growth of bicycling and healthier living in Shreveport and Caddo Parish,” Dozier added.

The ride will cover approximately 15 miles in South Highlands and Broadmoor, with frequent stops along the way to look at special trees. A tree will be planted in Betty Virginia Park with assistance of Shreveport Green for "Make a Difference Day" events.

Dozier said riders will be treated to a visit to the Louisiana State Champion sycamore tree at A.C. Steere Elementary School. Dozier attended Steere, Broadmoor and Byrd schools and graduated from Centenary College in 1982.

“We'll learn about the trees, their care and their benefits and we will wind up the event with food and beverages at Columbia Café,” she said.

The cost of the tour is \$10 for each rider, which includes a commemorative T-shirt. Children 5 and under are free, but must ride on their parents' bicycles. "Trail-a-bike" attachments are welcome.

Water, snacks and rider support will be provided along the route.

A PDF registration form is available at <http://www.bikereg.com/events/register.asp?eventid=11769>

For more information, contact Dozier at (225) 578-7219, or hdozier@agcenter.lsu.edu

LSU AgCenter provides feral hog trapping information

It is possible to manage feral hogs on a large scale by being consistent and persistent, landowners and hunters learned at an LSU AgCenter seminar Sept. 28.

Farmers and hunters across the Southeast are reporting feral hogs as nuisances that cause considerable damage to their land and other wildlife populations, said Dr. Don Reed, LSU AgCenter forestry and wildlife specialist.

"Even people who don't hunt are having fits with them such as sugarcane and rice farmers," Reed said. "They are adaptable to a wide range of habitats."

Reed said that in a 2008 statewide survey, 80 percent of the respondents reported feral hogs on their land and 95 percent indicated problems with food plots and timber resources. One hundred percent said the number of hogs on their property has increased.

"There are two types of landowners," said Walter Cotton, wildlife damage biologist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. "Those that have hogs now and those that will."

Hogs are an ecological and monetary disaster, Cotton said.

Reed said feral hogs are the most prolific wild game animal in North America and can weigh up to 400 pounds. "Their population can double in four months," Reed said.

Tending to travel in groups, their home range is influenced by the abundance of food. "They are opportunistic omnivores," Reed said, explaining that hogs eat most anything in their path, plant or animal, even dead matter. They also put away a lot of acorns and earthworms, he said.

"Very seldom are you going to see hogs and deer feed together," Reed said. "Hogs rule the roost."

Cotton said every tool and technology that is available needs to be used to manage hogs. "If you don't, it's like throwing a pail of water on your neighbor's fire," he said.

He said safety should be the first concern in hunting and trapping hogs. “Brucellosis is the reason why you wear gloves,” he said.

“Do not eat, drink or smoke while handling animals, either alive or dead,” Cotton said. “Don’t get blood or bodily fluids into open sores or your mouth.”

There are several ways to trap hogs, with pros and cons to each, he said. Cages are easy to maintain once set up, but bulky and hard to handle when they need to be moved, he said. They can catch multitudes of hogs, but hogs learn to avoid them.

“Don’t get caught up in your doors,” Cotton said. “We use them all and don’t see a huge difference.

“I don’t like a trap with a floor in it,” he added. “I think when they feel that, they back out.”

He also said he does not use a top on any trap he uses.

Corn is the most popular bait in Louisiana. “Most folks like to sour it a little bit,” Cotton said. He said beer or strawberry-flavored Kool-Aid can be added to corn. Strawberry scent has been found to be the most appealing.

Cotton said some trappers add diesel fuel to corn bait. “I don’t advocate it,” he said. “It is not very environmentally friendly.”

Snares are versatile traps, but Cotton cautioned that the higher the snare, the more likely a deer will be caught. “In bear country, we do not use snares,” he said.

Dogs are not as effective in population management and some diseases of hogs are transmissible to dogs, Cotton said.

He said electric fences work fairly well. “The more pressure you put on those hogs, the more they’re going to move off your property,” Cotton said.

He said there is no tool like a helicopter, but they are expensive.

“Use enough gun,” Cotton stressed. “A wounded hog becomes smart. Shooting two of a group of 30 makes 28 nervous hogs.”

Cotton suggested checking with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries concerning legalities.

A hog trapping information handout contained information on the Hawg Stopper, a guillotine-type trap from Randy Kelley in Camden, Ark., and a trap with a drop-down door from a Montgomery High School agriculture teacher.

Ag Magic returns to State Fair of Louisiana

Enter the world of agriculture and follow a path that leads to knowledge in wildlife, forestry, crops, horticulture, nutrition, clothing, animals, entomology and 4-H.

These will be some of the experiences at Ag Magic, an interactive, visually stimulating educational experience for children and their families at the State Fair of Louisiana Agriculture Building this year, said Karen Martin, 4-H regional coordinator for the LSU AgCenter.

“Ag Magic was a huge success last year and there will be even more fun opportunities for kids to learn about agriculture this year,” Martin said.

It will be open from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. during the duration of the fair except for when guided tours are conducted for pre-registered third-through sixth-graders Nov. 3-5 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Schools can sign up for tours online at www.lsuagcenter.com/agmagicstatefair.

The Ag Magic 4-H Welcome Station will provide fun games for students to learn about 4-H—4-H hopscotch, 4-H trivia and green rover. Students will also get to make their mark on the 4-H wall and play Where Does Your Crop Grow? on the interactive map of Louisiana’s agricultural commodities.

Martin continues the description of Ag Magic. “As you move from the 4-H Station to the forest, you’ll enter the gardens and see vegetables and flowers growing.”

Crops and their products include cotton, sweet potatoes and sugarcane.

You’ll also see the cases of prize-winning quilts and clothing, and enter the Louisiana Country Market where you can view a variety of Louisiana products and the canned goods with their brightly colored ribbons on them.

A Cut the Fat, Rate Your Plate lesson will give children up-to-date information on the amounts of fat, sugar and salt that they consume in one year if they eat a hamburger, French fries and a soft drink each day for a year. That translates to 74.7 pounds of fat, 63.4 pounds of sugar and 1.2 pounds of salt, according to Joan Almond, LSU AgCenter agent.

Agents will have wheel barrows full of these products to show the kids how much they are consuming.

They will be encouraged to eat healthier choices and will be able to “rate a plate” of food given the option of choosing between two plates of fast food and to make the choice of which will be healthier for them, Almond said.

They will each receive a sticker to wear that depicts “Cut the Fat.”



Poultry displays will consist of breeds of chickens, broiler production, an incubator with eggs hatching and live baby chicks. Beef displays will consist of beef cuts of meat, nutrition, beef breeds, products from cows other than meat and a beef carcass.

Bugs will come alive in the entomology area as you view insect exhibits and learn about bees.

As you exit the Ag Magic experience, all of your senses will come alive in the 4-H mini farm where you'll hear pigs squealing and cows mooing.

“Louisiana 4-H and the livestock show have always been an integral part of the State Fair of Louisiana,” said Chris Giordano, president and general manager of the State Fair of Louisiana. “The fair’s board of directors and I are happy to welcome back the LSU AgCenter and the youth for this exciting event that teaches them about agriculture.”

The fair runs Oct. 21-Nov. 7 in Shreveport.

Schools interested in finding out more about Ag Magic may also call Katherine Pace at (318) 226-6805.

Johnny L. May Day held in DeSoto

The DeSoto Parish Police Jury and the DeSoto Parish Extension Service honored Johnny L. May on Sept. 27 for his impact upon the DeSoto Parish 4-H Youth Development Program.

Proclamations were made by Rep. Richard Burford and Jerry Moncrief, police juror, declaring Johnny May Day for his service to the youth of DeSoto Parish through his work in the 4-H program.

May has 71 years of involvement in the 4-H program as a member, parent and volunteer. He was also honored Aug. 14 in Mansura when he was inducted into the Louisiana 4-H Hall of Fame.

More than 70 residents of DeSoto Parish came to listen to remarks made by Chuck Griffin, LSU AgCenter county agent, and Molly Usrey and Mindy Kile, youth development agents, on how May has contributed to the LSU AgCenter program.

Deborah Dees, a 4-H leader and director of the DeSoto 4-H Foundation, reminisced about May’s Grocery Store, which was a community gathering place. She talked about how the

money that her children received for their livestock projects assisted them in obtaining a college education.

Sen. Sherri Cheek, School Board member Dudley Glen and many other dignitaries shared their stories on how May had influenced their lives.

Participants learn Living Well at LSU AgCenter expo

Not only does planning your weekly food menu save money, but it also gives you control over such ingredients as salt, sugar and fat.



Cathryn Robinson, LSU AgCenter assistant agent, said planning ahead helps in preparing quick and easy dishes at the last minute. She was one of the presenters at the Living Well Expo on Sept. 14 at the Bossier Civic Center.

Exhibits, talks and demonstrations centered around food, family and finance for the 150 people who attended.

“Make your menus for at least three days,” Robinson said, adding that shoppers need to survey their cabinets, make a list and cook more than they need for one day. “You can freeze rice,” Robinson explained.

She said canned goods come in many varieties (flavored tomatoes, healthy soups). Robinson encouraged attendees to wash all canned goods before putting them in the cabinet.

Freezer helpers for quick dishes include festive medleys and French fries. “You think hot grease. Splash,” she said. “Bake them some time.”

Robinson said prepared produce costs more, but is an item to take advantage of if you don’t have much time. These include salad mixes, cut celery and sliced apples.

Robinson said an added benefit to eating at home is family pride, that “you took the time to fix it for them.”

Connie Aclin, LSU AgCenter assistant agent, discussed healthy snacks for children. She said sometimes parents have to work with their children, “coax them and coddle them to eat.”

She suggested making the dish attractive. “All children love cute, little animal plates,” Aclin said.

Aclin gave recipes for salad sticks made with layered lettuce, radishes, cucumbers and carrots placed on a cupcake liner on a skewer, pretzel paddles with peanut butter on a pretzel rod with the end rolled in cereal, fruit sundae cones and grilled cheese shaped with a holiday cookie cutter.

She said popcorn is a great snack for children, but advised checking the label for low sodium and fat amounts.

“Make sure juice boxes say 100 percent juice,” Aclin added. “Nothing is better than whole fruit though.”

Gwen Fontenot, LSU AgCenter agent in Natchitoches Parish, said stress is a factor in eating habits. She suggested avoiding sweets and sugary foods, choosing food that includes protein as well as carbohydrates, avoiding overdoing caffeine, drinking water, resisting the temptation to eat in front of the TV or while reading, eating breakfast and knowing yourself and your eating habits.

In “Growing Green Instead of Spending Green,” Grace Peterson, LSU AgCenter assistant extension agent, said vegetables can be grown in containers. “Just be sure there is a hole in the bottom for water to get out.”

One of the nicest things about container gardening is that you can move the container to a sunnier place or bring it in overnight if it gets too cold, she said.

Keep a garden journal to keep track of the varieties you planted so you know what you liked, Peterson said.

Other topics were getting your child ready for kindergarten, Internet safety, new credit card rules, positive parenting and Who Gets Grandma’s Pie Plate?, a program for transferring untitled property.

Tailgating with the Saints topic of LSU AgCenter luncheon

The Lunch and Ag Discovery Sept. 23 featured Connie Aclin and Joan Almond, presenting “Tailgating with the Saints.”

They covered grill safety, food safety and nutrition tips for tailgating.

On the menu were Champion Potatoes, Easy “Breez” E Chicken, “Super” Sausage Medley, Crunchy “Saint” Salad, “French” Bread and Field “Gold” Bars.

4-H agent annual meeting held in Bossier City

The Louisiana Association of Extension 4-H Agents held its annual meeting in Bossier City Aug. 17-20.

Employees

Liz Lynn and her husband, Donnie, have welcomed Andrew Charles Lynn into the family. He was born Aug. 9, weighing 10 pounds, five ounces. He was 21.5 inches long.

Dates of Note

Oct. 27--Junior Livestock Show and Auction

