

...Farm from School

(Continued from previous page) Sign up closes August 14 for the fall semester. Additional details about the program, including dates and commodities featured, will be added on the Agriculture in the Classroom webpage as they

become available. For questions, contact the Educational Outreach team at edoutreach@txfb.org or call 254-751-2569. More information about Ag in the Classroom resources is available at texasfarmbureau.org/aitc.

Texas State Parks offer summer heat safety tips

Rising temperatures and the month of June signal the arrival of the dog days of summer. With heat-related illnesses on the rise, Texas State Parks is sharing seven tips to help Texans beat the heat and enjoy their time in the outdoors safely. Last year, 48 state parks reported 156 heat-related illnesses in humans and pets, but this year could well eclipse that. State parks have already fielded 51 heat-related incidents since January 1, compared to 32 reported by this time last year.

Here are the top seven heat hacks recommended for park visitors: Hydrate- It's important to drink at least 16 ounces of water every hour to prevent dehydration. Don't forget to bring enough for your four-legged family members too.

Block the Rays- Apply a generous amount of sunscreen or sunblock before heading outdoors. Be sure to reapply every couple of hours, and after swimming or sweating.

Dress Smart- Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing; a hat, correct shoes, sunscreen and wet bandanas to keep you cool while in the sun. For pets, protect paws against blistering by hitting the trails during cooler times of the day when the ground isn't hot or by putting booties on pets to help shield paws from the hot ground. Touch the pavement or ground with the back of your hand. If you cannot hold it there for five seconds, the surface is too hot for your dog's paws.

Stay Salty- Food helps keep up energy and replace salt lost

from sweating. Eating snacks such as jerky, granola, trail mix, tuna and dried fruit is a fantastic way to nourish your body while on the trails.

Buddy System- Two brains are better than one. It's beneficial to have someone with you in hot conditions so you can look after each other on the trail. With high temperatures hitting Texas, heat-related illnesses are common and having a friend around to help recognize the early symptoms can save you from getting sick.

Plan Ahead- Study the map and have it with you. Avoid relying on your phone for maps since service may be unavailable in back-country areas. Average hikers move at two miles per hour, so allow yourself plenty of time to avoid hiking in the heat of the day. Make sure to rest in a cool or shaded area to recover from the heat if necessary. It is also a good idea to let someone know your plan before you hit the trails and what time you should be back. That way, if you become lost, people know where to look.

Pup-Safety- Dogs are as susceptible to heat as their humans are, so it is good practice to ensure that you bring enough water and snacks for four-legged hiking buddies to last the entirety of the trip.

Additionally, visitors should heed notices posted at trailheads about site-specific conditions before setting out for the day. The park websites and staff are also a valuable resource for folks wanting to know about trail and forecasted conditions before starting their walk. Park alerts on the website are updated

regularly and are a valuable resource for visitors prior to arrival at the park.

For more information about heat safety, visit the TPWD website.

Texas State Park reservations can be made by calling the Texas State Park Reservation Center at (512) 389-8900 on weekdays during normal business hours. You can also reserve a campsite or day pass anytime online. Overnight reservations can be made up to five months in advance, and day passes can be reserved up to 30 days in advance. If your plans change, please modify or cancel your reservation as soon as possible to allow someone else to enjoy the park as we do expect parks to reach capacity limits.

Find a park in your area at http://texasstateparks.org/

Rains help Texas pecan growers recover from drought

By Emmy Powell

Texas pecan production should show improvements this year, thanks to rainfall across much of the state.

"Agriculture is so deeply tied into the weather, but this year all the rain has been beneficial to a lot of areas of Texas. It's recharged aquifers and reservoirs and all the irrigation water that's needed," said Blair Krebs, executive director of the Texas Pecan Growers Association.

Several consecutive years of drought and lack of available irrigation water led to significant loss of pecan trees.

"We have seen tree loss, significant tree loss, particularly in the northern Central Texas area. We're thinking maybe even about 10% of some of the trees there," Krebs told the Texas Farm Bureau Radio Network. "We still see some of the state that's in that kind of drought condition. If you go to the Winter Garden area out near San Antonio, we're still seeing that kind of tree loss. But for the most part, the rain has been

really beneficial for producers. Now, we will need it to continue through the summer, but at the very least, we're getting irrigation supplies back."

Although the majority of pecans are grown in the El Paso region, Krebs noted there is a great diversity with the crop.

"Almost every county has some kind of commercial pecan production. The El Paso Valley looks good right now. It's still very early to know what's going to happen," Krebs said. "But the great thing about the diversity of pecan production across the state of Texas is that even if there are weather issues or natural disasters, you will have Texas pecans for our consumers."

And Krebs is hopeful for an increase in yield for this year's pecan crop.

"The last two years have been tough, and we're hoping with all this rain, this will continue and produce a good crop that is needed for these producers," she said. "And we hope the market gets a bit stronger."

Texas pecan facts

Texas currently ranks third in the nation for pecan production behind Georgia and New Mexico, Krebs said.

Pecans are also tied to many state symbols and recognitions, including the state tree, the state health nut and the state pie.

Texas Book Man

By Carlton Stowers

Felton Cochran gave up his rat-race career as a wholesale liquor salesman when, as he recalls, he came to the realization that the rats were winning. Compounding the problem was his concern that he was becoming one of his own best customers.

In the wake of that epiphany, he decided it was time to take leave of such workplaces as Fort Worth, Dallas and Lubbock and return home.

All he took with him on his return to San Angelo was what money he'd saved, his treasured collection of rare books on

Texas history and a genuine concern for how to earn a living.

It was 1995, and Cochran's résumé was thin. He'd spent three years as a journalism major at the University of North Texas in the early 1960s before dropping out to sell whiskey. Then there was his self-taught knowledge of Texana and Southwestern literature.

He made the crapshoot decision to see if the latter might somehow pay the bills.

Thus, the little Cactus Book Shop, in the heart of San Angelo, was born of financial necessity and a lifetime fondness for the gentle pace of the community and its people. Here, Cochran likes to say, a traffic jam is a half-dozen pickups waiting for the light to turn green.

Today his store is the go-to destination of researchers, writers, collectors, genealogists and those simply fascinated by Texas history. Need a hard-to-find, long-out-of-print biography of one of the state's early pioneers, ranchers, oilmen, politicians or infamous scallywags? Want the history of any of the 254 counties in Texas? Autographed first editions of many of the state's legendary novelists? Go see Felton Cochran.

You'll pardon him if it sounds like grade A Texas boasting, but he insists he now oversees the finest collection of Southwestern literature to be found under one roof. Some academics might argue that collections at major universities like the University of Texas, Texas Tech University and the famed Wittliff Collections of 30,000 titles at Texas State University merit strong consideration. But those books aren't for sale.

Steve Davis, curator of the Wittliff's Southwestern Writers Collection, is quick to give Cochran his due, calling the Cactus "a legend among book collectors and a must-stop for any book lover or anyone interested in Texana."

Cochran's East Concho

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