



What's Up, Doc?

Grayson County Agriculture and Natural Resources Newsletter

Vol 3: Issue 1 (January 2024) by D. Chad Cummings

Contents:	Page
Cool season forage grass trial update.....	2
New Landowner 101: What to do in January?.....	6
In the news.....	7
How to sustainably dispose of real Christmas trees.....	7
Common winter weeds in pastures and hay.....	9
Calibration Corner.....	11
Plants, insects, and diseases active now.....	12
Events Coming Up in Ag and Nat Resources.....	14



Cool season forage grass trial on December 7, 2023 Gunter, TX. Fall Extension Intern Zachary Downe collects plant height data on forage varieties (right). Photos by D. Chad Cummings.

2023-24 Cool season forage grass variety trial (Grayson County)



D. Chad Cummings¹, David Drake¹, and Russell Sutton²

¹Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, and ²Texas A&M AgriLife Research.

Introduction

Planting a cool season forage grass is an annual concern for local producers. To better understand cool season forage grasses and their success in our environment, a variety trial was initiated in Grayson County on a tilled field, with minor populations of various warm season weeds. Cool season forage grass emergence ratings will be collected to determine the emergence of the various treatments. Clippings will be taken throughout the cool season forage grass variety trial to determine which cool season forage grass grows best, and which varieties struggle in this environment. In addition to forage production, we will look at Hessian fly impacts on the seed head emergence as well.

Materials and Methods

The study site was established in Gunter, TX, on a conventionally tilled oat field (Streitman Farm). Planting occurred on October 17, 2023. Varieties were planted with a small plot grain drill at approximately 1.2 million seeds per acre (90-100 lbs seed per acre). Each variety selection was planted in four replications in a Randomized Complete Block Design (Table 1). Field conditions at the time of planting in October were fair to good for soil moisture, and the field had scattered populations of field bindweed and johnsongrass emerged at the time of planting. Volunteer ryegrass also emerged later throughout the study area.

At 3 weeks after planting (November 8, 2023), plant emergence was estimated per plot in a 1 ft square quadrat using visual estimation of percent emergence in 2 to 3 drill rows per plot.

At 7 weeks after planting (December 7, 2023), plant heights per plot were recorded by taking 5 plant heights per plot (inches). Plot values were an average of the 5 subsamples. Heights represent ground level to tallest mature leaf. Zadoks' growth stage was also recorded from 5 subsamples per plot.

Data collection and analysis is ongoing and will not be presented until the full season of growth and production has been completed.

Table 1. Descriptions of the cool season forage varieties in Gunter, Texas. The varieties were planted on October 17, 2023.

Trt	Variety	Crop Species	Replications
A	TAM 0606	Oat	4
1	Elbon Ceral Rye	Rye	4
2	Elbon + TAMTBO	Rye + Ryegrass	4
3	Titan Triticale	Triticale	4
4	Savage + TAMTBO	Oat + Ryegrass	4
5	Savage Oat	Oat	4
6	TAMO 411 Oat	Oat	4
7	TAMO 606 Oat	Oat	4
8	Dallas Oat	Oat	4
9	TAMBAR 501 Barley	Barley	4
10	Gallagher HRWW	Hard Red Winter Wheat	4
11	Bob Dole HRWW	Hard Red Winter Wheat	4
12	# Turbo SRWW	Soft Red Winter Wheat	4
13	Dyna-Gro 9332 SRWW	Soft Red Winter Wheat	4
14	TAM 205 HRWW	Hard Red Winter Wheat	4
15	TAMTBO Annual Ryegrass	Ryegrass	4
16	Marshall Annual Ryegrass	Ryegrass	4
17	TAM 205 LUMIVIA	Hard Red Winter Wheat	2
18	TAM 205 UNTREATED	Hard Red Winter Wheat	2



Photos by D. Chad Cummings

Figure 1. Planting at the Grayson County cool season forage grass variety trail in Gunter, TX (top) and emergence at 3 weeks after planting (bottom).



Figure 2. Cool season forage variety trial at 7 weeks after planting. Photo taken December 7, 2023 (Gunter, TX).

New Landowner 101: What to Do in January?

1. Improve ponds and stock tanks: rebuild edges, add depth, and dig out sediment with low water conditions (<https://fisheries.tamu.edu/pond-management/>)
2. Stock new or renovated bass ponds with forage species such as flathead minnow and blue gill at 1,000 each per surface acre of pond.
3. Supplemental feeding of corn and milo (sorghum) are important in the fall and winter for upland game birds.
4. Plan and apply cool season postemergence weed control for pastures and lawns (if not wanted). Henbit, buttercup, chickweed, mustards, dandelion, curly dock, ryegrass, and annual bluegrass are up and growing.
5. Pick a warm day >50F to get sprayer equipment out of storage and calibrated. First, clean out any anti-freeze that has been added for winterization. Then, check nozzle bodies, nozzle tips, hoses, and pumps for repair or replacement needs. Last, calibrate the sprayer using the information below or go to **page 11** and check out the **Calibration Corner** for more information on the calibration process for boom or boomless sprayers.

Area Method for Backpack Sprayer Calibrations

Fill or partially fill the sprayer with a measured volume of water only, for example, 2 gallons. Lay out a test course in the area to be sprayed. Choose a starting point, and spray until the sprayer is empty. Be sure to maintain a constant walking speed. Measure the distance that was sprayed and the full working width of the sprayer.

Area sprayed (acres) = [*Spray distance* (ft) x *Spray width* (in)] ÷ 522,720

Calculate the application rate (Gallons per acre - gpa):

Application rate (gpa) = Volume sprayed (gal) ÷ Area sprayed (acres)

Compare the application rate measured to the rate required. If the measured application rate is not within 5 percent of the recommended rate, choose the appropriate adjustment method and reset the sprayer.

Recheck the system. Once you have the accuracy you want, calibration is complete.

In the News.....

How to sustainably dispose of real Christmas trees

Many people enjoy having a real Christmas tree for the holidays. And when the holidays are over, there are several eco-friendly ways to dispose or recycle a Christmas tree.



“As Christmas trees grow, they provide many of the same benefits our urban and natural forests do, such as clean air, soil stabilization and carbon sequestration,” said Alison Baylis, [Texas A&M Forest Service](#) regional urban ecologist. “Further, buying a Christmas tree can help support a business or your local economy.”

According to the Texas Christmas Tree Growers Association, there are 175 Christmas tree farms in Texas producing over 200,000 trees each year. However once the tree has served its purpose of bringing light and beauty into a home for the month of December many trees sadly end up in a landfill as their final resting place.

“Even though trees are a renewable resource, we should opt to recycle or dispose of them in a way that helps the environment and gives our trees a second life,” said Baylis. “By recycling Christmas trees, we can reduce our carbon footprint and support a more sustainable holiday season.”

There are many ways to sustainably dispose of Christmas trees.

Recycle

Real trees are biodegradable, and many communities have tree recycling programs. Check with your local waste management company, a nearby garden center or

conservation organization to find out if Christmas tree recycling, whether curbside pickup or a drop-off station, is available in your area. Recycling trees is recommended over burning them to help prevent wildfire danger.

Mulch

The most common recycling option is chipping Christmas trees into mulch, which can be used for a variety of needs around homes and yards. Mulch can be placed around the base of trees and gardens as an insulator to help plants withstand cold temperatures and prevent soil erosion and compaction.

Tree limbs are a great way to insulate garden plants, and some cities even have free mulch available after the holiday season.

Pond and wildlife habitat

Place Christmas trees in yards or nature landscapes or in bodies of water to create habitat for wildlife. When trees are sunken into water bodies, they increase the complexity of the aquatic habitat. Woody debris provides a place for aquatic species to flourish, which increases overall biodiversity. If you do not have a pond or lake on your property, contact local officials to see if there is a suitable body of water in which you can properly dispose of your tree.

You can also choose to set your tree in your yard, creating a wildlife habitat and providing birds with shelter. By tying bird feed, orange slices, popcorn and other bird-friendly treats to your tree you can enjoy the view as birds fill the branches.

Fun family crafts

Keep the holiday spirit alive after Christmas by using parts of Christmas trees to make fun family activities such as “tree cookies” and coasters. Cut the trunk of your tree to make coasters or other decorative accent pieces in your home. Go a step further and let kids paint the trunk “tree cookies” for one-of-a-kind artwork.

As the joy of having a Christmas tree in your home comes to an end this season, use one of the many ways to sustainably dispose of your tree to prevent it from ending up in a landfill. Make sure to remove all decorations such as ornaments, lights and ribbon. If the tree is sprayed with flocking or fake snow, it should not be recycled.

For more information on how to sustainably recycle your Christmas tree, contact your Texas A&M Forest Service district office.

Visit <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/ContactUs/> to find contact information.

Leighton Chachere

leightonchachere@tfs.tamu.edu

Common Winter Weeds in Pastures and Hay Meadows

Posted on [December 2, 2022](#) by [vanessa.corriher](#)

Buttercup (*Ranunculus* spp)

Spray buttercup in late February or early March before it flowers. This weed is easily controlled with 2,4-D amine, Metsulfuron 60 DF, Cimarron Plus, Grazon P+D, GrazonNext HL and dicamba + 2,4-D (Weedmaster). In dormant bermudagrass/bahiagrass glyphosate (Roundup) will control buttercup at normal use rates.



Groundsel (*Senecio* spp)

Metsulfuron 60DF or Cimarron Plus has proved to be the most effective herbicide for groundsel control. Apply in the rosette stage (~March). Grazon P+D provides partial control.



Red Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) and Curly Dock (*Rumex crispus*)

Grazon P+D provides excellent control of red sorrel and curly dock. Metsulfuron or Cimarron Plus is also very good. Treat anytime the red sorrel or dock are actively growing. Remedy Ultra is not effective on red sorrel.



Thistles

Although there are at several different species of thistle in Texas, most are closely related, and control recommendations will not differ. **Best time to control with an herbicide is when thistles are in the rosette stage. The rosette stage is when the thistle forms a low-growing ring of leaves.** As they mature, they are harder to control and may require higher rates of herbicide to have effective control. Grazon P+D, GrazonNext HL and dicamba + 2,4-D (Weedmaster) provide excellent control of thistles.



Dandelions (*Taraxacum spp*)

The key to effective control is spraying while dandelions are in the rosette stage of growth (before the flower stalk appears). 2,4-D or 2,4-D + dicamba (Weedmaster) can provide excellent control. Metsulfuron 60 DF or Cimarron Plus are also very good options.

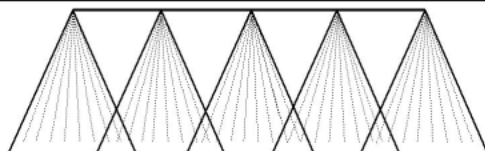


Vanessa Corriher-Olson, PhD Forage Extension Specialist, Overton, TX; Email: vacorriher@ag.tamu.edu

Calibration Corner

Boom Sprayer Calibration

Dr. Paul A. Baumann
Professor and Extension Weed Specialist



1. Determine nozzle spacing.
2. Refer to table below for length of calibration course.
3. Mark off calibration course.
4. Record time required to drive calibration course at desired field gear and rpm.
5. Park tractor, maintain rpm used to drive course, turn on sprayer.
6. Catch water from one nozzle for time equal to that required to drive calibration course.
7. Ounces of water = gallons per acre.

Chart for Nozzle Spacing and Length of Calibration Course

Nozzle Spacing (inches)	18	20	30	40
Length of Calibration Course (linear feet)	227	204	136	102

*To determine the calibration course for a nozzle spacing not listed, divide the spacing expressed in feet into 340 (340 sq. ft. = 1/128 of an acre). **Example:** Calibration distance for 19-inch nozzle spacing = $340 \div 19/12 = 215$ feet).

Boomless Sprayer Calibration

Dr. Paul A. Baumann
Professor and Extension Weed Specialist



1. Determine swath width.
2. Refer to table below for length of calibration course.
3. Mark off calibration course.
4. Record time required to drive calibration course at desired field gear and rpm.
5. Park tractor, maintain rpm used to drive course, turn on sprayer.
6. Catch water for time equal to that required to drive calibration course.
7. Pints of water caught = gallons per acre.

Chart for Swath Width and Length of Calibration Course

Effective Swath Width (feet)	25	30	35	40	45	50
Length of Calibration Course* (linear feet)	218	182	156	136	121	109

*To determine the calibration course for a swath width not listed, divide the swath width expressed in feet into 5460 (5460 sq. ft. = 1/8 of an acre). **Example:** Calibration distance for 32-foot swath width = $5460 \div 32 = 171$ feet).

Plants, insects, and diseases active now

Plants

Cool season weeds and grasses have emerged (henbit, chickweed, ryegrass, wheat, buttercup, curly dock, red sorrel). The recent freeze events in December and January have burnt many of the cool season weeds and set back some of the cool season grasses like bluegrass, ryegrass, and wheat. Purple, grey to yellow leaf appearance can be the result of freeze or frost damage.

Insects

No insect issues currently.

Diseases

No real disease issues currently in any crops.

D. Chad Cummings, PhD

chad.cummings@ag.tamu.edu

2024 North Texas Pest Management CEU Conference

Mark your calendars for Tuesday, January 23, 2024

Where: The conference will be in Sherman, TX at the Municipal Ballroom.

When: Tuesday January 23, 2024; 8:30 am to 4:00 pm

What: Bulk CEUs and expertise including:

- 6 structural CEUs and 7 Ag CEUs will be offered (TDA approval received)
- Expert speakers on the structural and ag topics, including Dr. Don Rennie, Ms. Janet Hurley, Dr. Sonja Swiger, and Mr. Brad Voss
- Laws and Regs, IPM, Weed, Termite, Lawn and Ornamental, Drift minimization, and General CEUs included
- Catered lunch and light breakfast included in the registration cost

The fee will be **\$100** per person for the conference. **Registration is open online** <https://grayson.agrilife.org/>. Mail in registration is also available.



TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

IS THIS POISON HEMLOCK?

Carrot Plant Family Identification, Look-alikes, and Management Considerations

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2024

10:00 AM TO 12:00 PM

GRAYSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE ANNEX ASSEMBLY
ROOM, A-2

Call Chad Cummings, (903) 813-4202, or email
chad.cummings@ag.tamu.edu for questions or more information.

Fee is \$10, check or cash

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Events Coming Up in NTX

Jan 12

- Broiler pick-up for TELS Broiler orders (youth) – (*Grayson AgriLife Extension Office* - time is TBD in the afternoon)

Jan 23

- North Texas Pest Management Conference (7 ag CEUs; 6 Structural CEUs) (*Sherman*)

Feb 23

- Carrot Plant Family ID and Management (Poison hemlock) (*Sherman*)

Feb 25 - Mar 1

- Texoma Exposition and Livestock Show (youth) (TELS - *Denison*)

Feb 27

- Grayson County Master Gardeners Intern Class begins (*Sherman*)

Feb 29

- Tri-County Farmers and Ranchers Symposium (5 Ag CEUs) (*Gainesville*)

May 31

- NE TX Small Acreage New Landowner Conference (*Farmersville*)

Visit our website at [Welcome to Grayson County - Grayson \(grayson.agrilife.org\)](https://grayson.agrilife.org/) (<https://grayson.agrilife.org/>) to sign up for the events.