

This presentation premiered at WaterSmart Innovations

watersmartinnovations.com



Working with Media to Expand Outreach and Education

Don't let HOA kill water-wise approach

Little-known property
code changes protect
composting, drought-

With record-breaking heat and drought
conditions, residents in North Texas are
being urged to conserve water. In the
meantime, some homeowners' associations
are trying to restrict water-saving practices.

While HOAs offer benefits of increased
property values and neighborhood attri-
tiveness, must have landscaping rules
that require a certain aesthetic standard.
These standards often restrict the type of
plant material, sometimes even to plants
not well-adapted to the Texas climate.

Seasoned gardeners accustomed to Tex-
as summers and city-imposed watering
restrictions might turn their attention to the
water-saving practices of rainwater harves-
ting or the sustainable gardening practice of
composting, but in some of the stricter as-
sociations, these practices weren't allowed.

Coping with drought

Then Texas faced a record drought in
2011. During that time, there were some
interesting changes to Texas property
code, with House Bill 3391 in 2011 and
Senate Bill 196 in 2013, both amending
laws on what homeowners associations
could restrict when it comes to water-sav-
ing and sustainable landscaping practices.

The amended law, in Section 202.007
of the property code, now states that a
property owners' association may not
restrict a homeowner from composting,

Planting the seed

The bill planted the seed for more
HOA homeowners to land-
scape with native plants. It also
look at your rain barrel or compost bin.
Poster says S.B. 196 is best viewed as a
compromise, in that it doesn't completely
ban restrictions on landscaping.

That approval usually must go through
the homeowners group's architectural or
landscape committee. However, S.B. 196
also requires that HOA guidelines and
processes do not "unreasonably deny" the
ability of a homeowner to save water.

Facing resistance?

What does "unreasonable" mean? That
might depend on your HOA. Because, ac-
cording to the Texas secretary of state, no
state agency regulates home or property
owner associations. If you are facing re-



sistance, Foster recommends always first
working within your own HOA, with of-
ficers and members of the committee that
control landscaping guidelines.

"And if that does not result in progress,
they can then reach out to other resi-
dents to build critical mass to bring about
change," he said.

That's exactly what Ellen J. Taft, presi-
dent of the Mountain Creek Neighborhood
Alliance, has done in southwest Dallas.
With homeowners and HOA management

Taft has helped the HOA management
and residents to work together to change
the HOA's landscaping guidelines. "I don't
think we're alone in this," she said.

Taft believes there is hope for a positive
solution and recommends homeowners work
with the HOA and HOA management to
get a water-friendly-looking front yard,"
Taft said.

"I personally like S.B. 196 because it
gave me a backbone when negotiating
with unreasonable management com-
panies and HOA boards who don't like
change. I could say, 'You may not want to
be water-wise in your front yard, but you
don't have the legal right to force me to
waste water in mine.'"

Room to improve

Now, five years into the new code,
horticulturist Patrick Dickinson of Texas
A&M AgriLife's Water University has seen
significant changes when working with
HOAs and homeowners to adopt more
water-efficient practices, but he still sees
room for improvement.

"The response has been 50-50," he said.
"Some HOAs are very responsive and want
to provide correct information to their resi-
dents."

But Dickinson is concerned that "others
would rather their residents not know
about the bill," he said.

Poster believes the courts should be
viewed as a final recourse, but "it may ul-
timately need to be up to the courts to en-

in the
period.
This
delays
can be
irrigation
I have
St. Augu-
system
mysteri-
can change

its own
settings
surface is
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demon as
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blowing
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DANIEL CUNNINGHAM
@TXPlantGuy

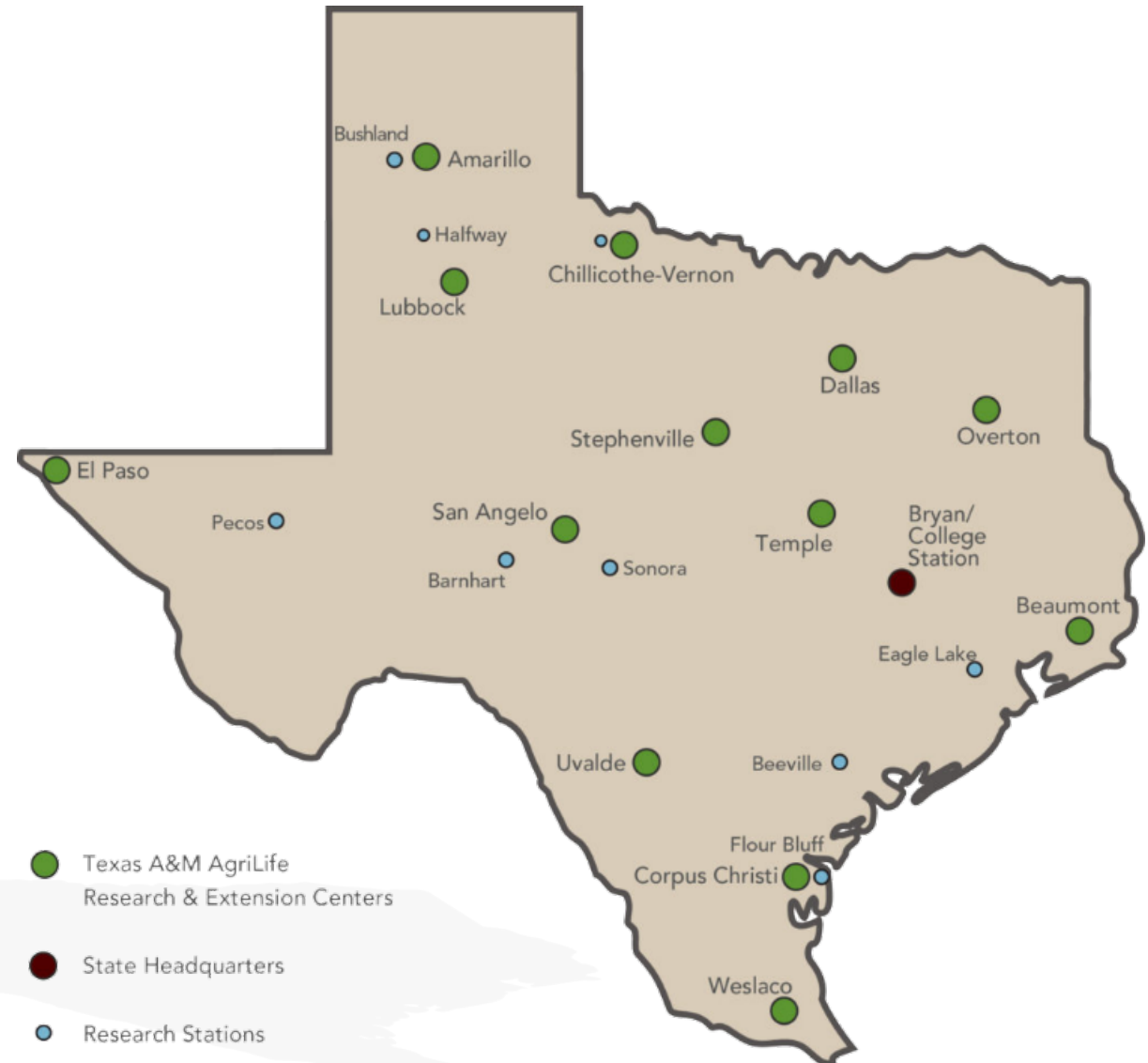


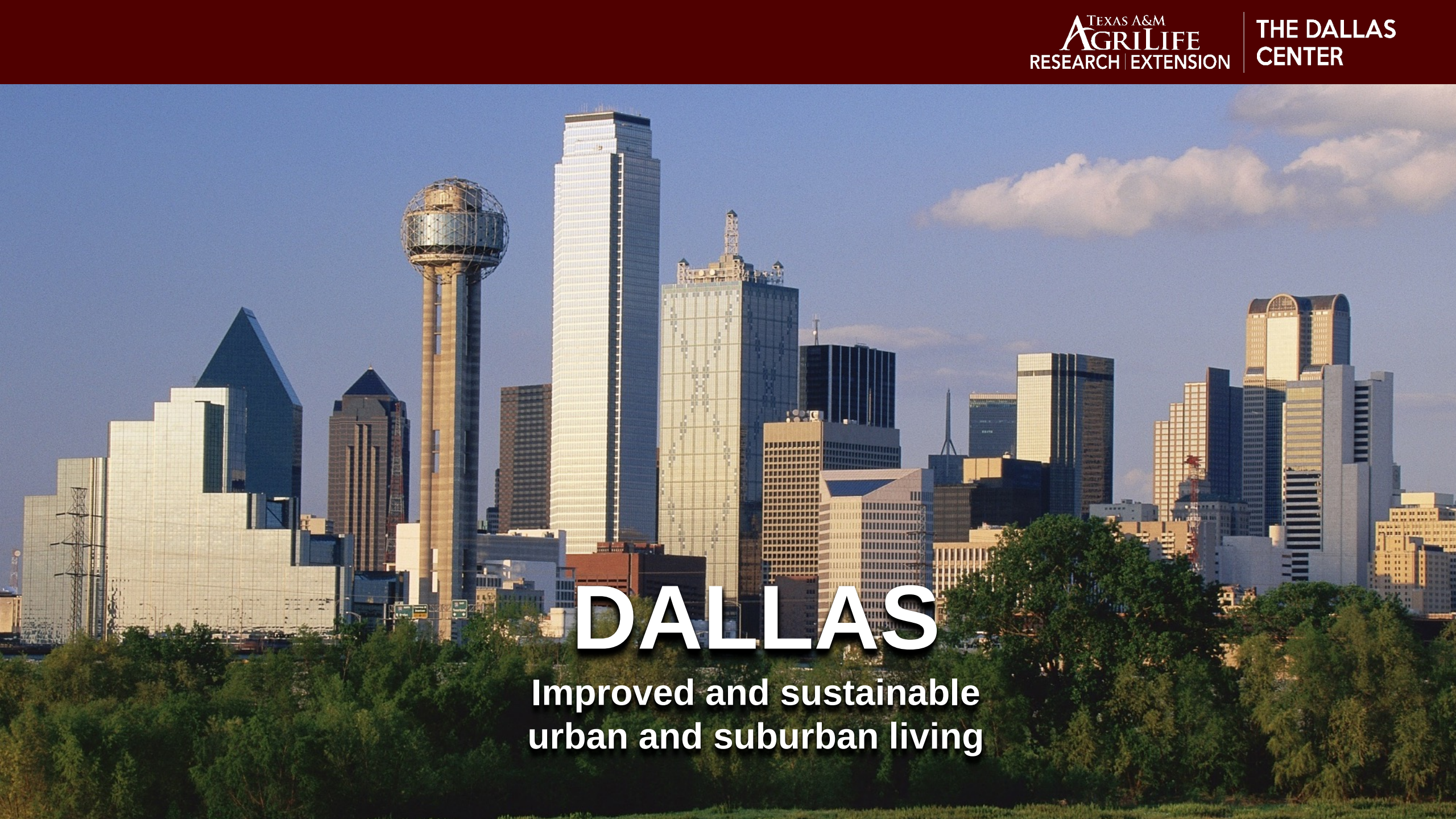
TEXAS A&M
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RESEARCH



TEXAS A&M
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EXTENSION

13 research and extension centers across Texas



A wide-angle photograph of the Dallas skyline, featuring several prominent skyscrapers. The Reunion Tower, with its distinctive spherical observation deck, is a key landmark on the left. The skyline is set against a clear blue sky with a few wispy clouds. In the foreground, a dense line of green trees and foliage partially obscures the base of the buildings.

DALLAS

Improved and sustainable
urban and suburban living

A blurred background image of the Dallas skyline, featuring the Reunion Tower and several skyscrapers under a blue sky with light clouds. In the foreground, there is a dense line of green trees.

7.5 MILLION PEOPLE

TEXAS A&M
AGRILIFE
RESEARCH

WATER
UNIVERSITY

WaterUniversity.tamu.edu

**RESEARCH, PUBLIC OUTREACH
AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

**WATER USE
EFFICIENCY
IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT**



MISSION

Shape perception
Change behavior



EDUCATIONAL CLASSES

A large, diverse group of people is seated in a large hall, facing a stage area. They are seated in rows of yellow plastic chairs. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lighting and large windows on the right side. A large screen is visible on the left side of the stage area. The text "EDUCATIONAL CLASSES" is overlaid in the center of the image.



Home

About ▾

Plants ▾

Turfgrass ▾

Soil ▾

Irrigation ▾

Rainwater Harvesting ▾

Design ▾

WaterSense Demonstrations ▾

Stream Trailer

Courses



Plant Database

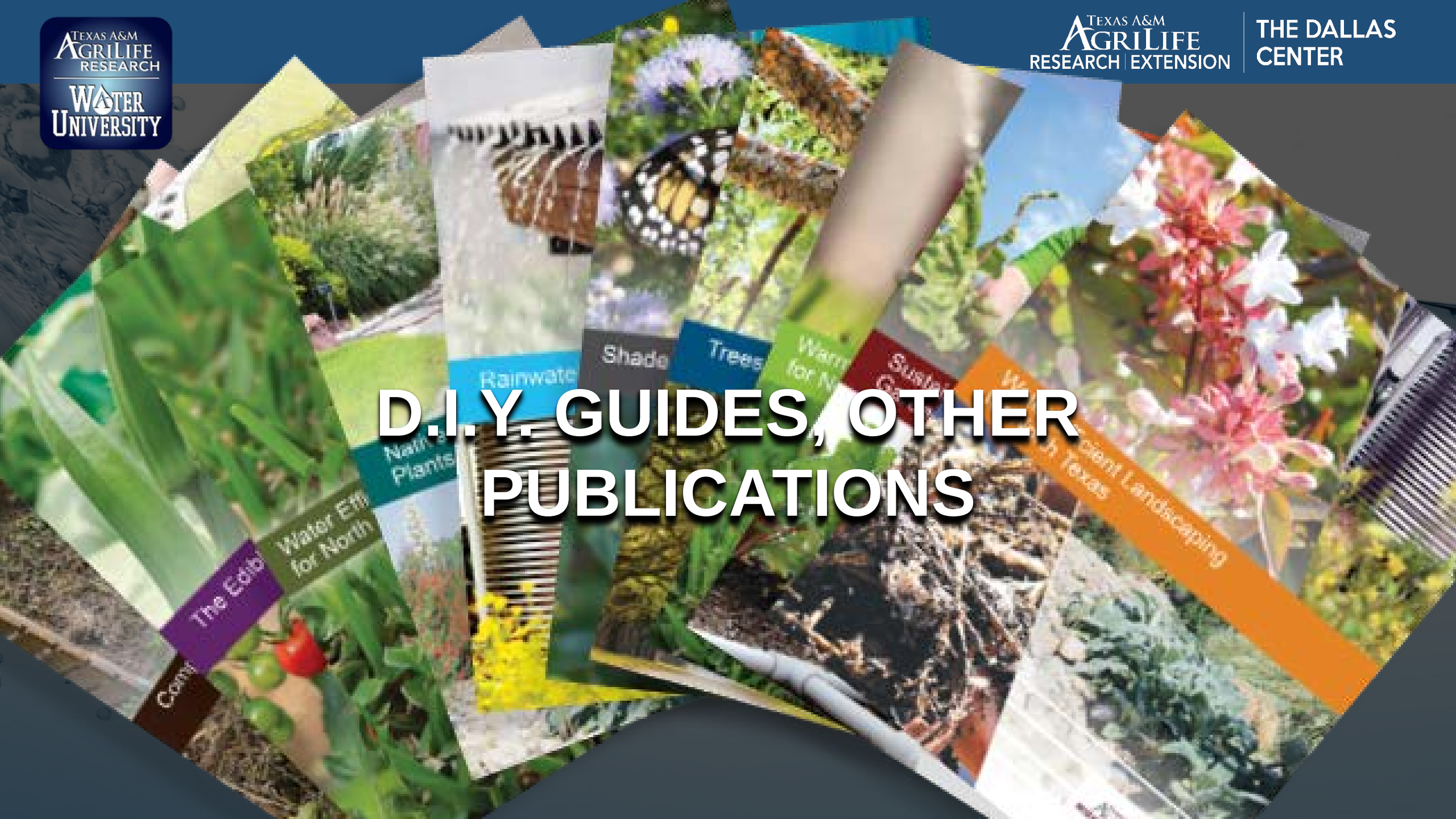


ULandscapeIt



Publications





D.I.Y. GUIDES, OTHER PUBLICATIONS

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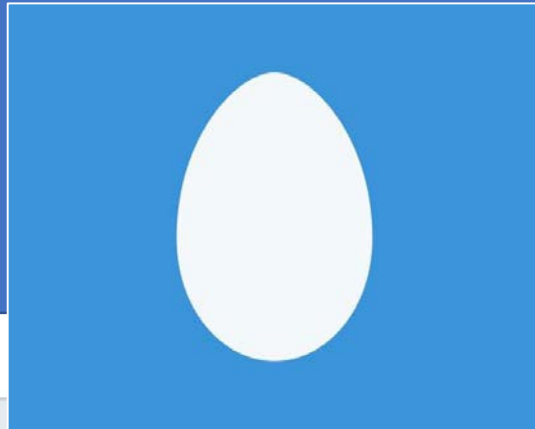


@TXPlantGuy



A blurred background image of the Dallas skyline, featuring the Reunion Tower and several skyscrapers under a blue sky with light clouds. A dense line of green trees is in the foreground.

7.5 MILLION PEOPLE



Daniel Cunningham
@TNativePlantGuy

Tweets Following Followers Likes Lists Moments

321 **1,598** **357** **83**

Edit profile

Tweets **Tweets & replies** **Media**

★ Pinned Tweet

 **Daniel Cunningham** @TXPlantGuy · Jan 18

Your Tweet activity

Your Tweets earned **5,220 impressions**
over the last **24 hours**

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6. Daniel Cunningham - @TXPlantGuy

Who he is: A horticulturist at AgriLife Water, part of the Texas A&M AgriLife research and extension center Dallas.

Why they made the list: Daniel shares the latest industry news and trends, and also makes great plant puns.

Daniel Cunningham
@TNativePlantGuy

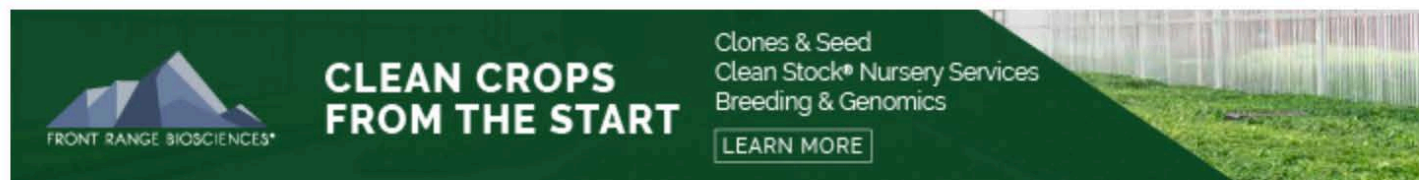
Tweets

321

Tweets

Pir

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Urban Gardening: Top Feeds To Follow on Twitter

enlightening.

[TX Plant Guy](#)

TX Plant Guy is Daniel Cunningham based in Texas. From his Twitter bio, Daniel is a horticulturist and speaker that covers topics such as water efficiency, native plants, growing food, rainwater harvesting, composting, and foraging. With tons of retweets, this account gives a broad overview of urban gardening in the area.

[Urban Farm](#)

Andrew Douglas is managing the Twitter account for Ireland's urban farming initiatives. He's also into fungi cultivation [@UrbanOyster](#) potato heritage

[@ThankPotato](#) and growing beer [@SocialHops](#) when he's not too busy to show off



Tweets **8,691** Following **13K** Followers **15.7K** Likes **13.6K** Lists **2** Moments **4**

Edit profile

Daniel Cunningham ✓

@TXPlantGuy

Horticulturist @AgriLifeWaterU &
Special Contributor @DallasNews |
#TxWater | #TXPlants | Growing Food
| Rainwater Harvesting | Foraging

📍 Texas, USA

🌐 TXPlantGuy.com

📅 Joined August 2013

🎂 Born on July 5, 1979

📷 1,301 Photos and videos



Tweets Tweets & replies Media

📌 Pinned Tweet



Daniel Cunningham ✓ @TXPlantGuy · Jan 18

#ICYMI 5 #Texas #Garden trends for 2018 | via @NBCDFW 🌻 🌿 🐝
nbcdfw.com/news/green/5-T...



AgriLife Water U and AgriLifeDallas

💬 5 ↺ 57 ❤️ 132 ||

Your Tweet activity

Your Tweets earned **5,220 impressions**
over the last **24 hours**



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Sara Laughter @GreenAw...

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Dr Russ King @RussWrites

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TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
RESEARCH EXTENSION

**THE DALLAS
CENTER**



DALLAS MORNING NEWS COLUMN



TELEVISION NEWS



11:51

81°

Why?

Traditional Media

Television, Newspaper, Magazines, Radio

- **Wide, Reliable communication to customers**
- **Root of advertising**
- **Proven Effectiveness**
- **Content for social media**

Never (almost never) **say no!**

**If you do say no,
point them to sources that will say yes!**

Be available and reliable

Email, Cell Phone, Social Media

Respond immediately

**HELPFUL
TIPS**

Pitching a Story

**Is your idea newsworthy,
timely and relevant?!**

**WHO
CARES?**

**Look for journalists that
have done similar stories**

*Producers?
Editors?
Assignment desk?*

What's the beat?

The Pitch: Be relatable

**Water
Environment
Weather
Plants
Metro
Food
Community?**

What's the story?

**Use first names
Stroke the ego**

“I liked your story about”

**Don't copy and paste
Use social media to follow up
Don't be a fan**

Pitch to 2-3 people

Different channels, stations

Different media outlets

Start big, then go small

Give yourself time

Think outside the box

Don't be annoying, ever!

Pitch every 3-4 months

Unless there's breaking news

Protect your relationships,

Don't put your neck on the line

Ask for/ have questions, outline, script prep

Practice, Practice, Practice

Throw out the script

Be ready for anything

For more info... Your/Their website

Everyone is nervous, it gets better!

Use props?

Smile, maybe just a grin

Be natural and be yourself

LIVE

Ask for questions emailed
Offer to fact-check, captions
Stay in your lane.
Are you qualified to answer?



Ask for questions outline/ emailed

Be natural.

Just Talk. But make it a conversation.

Listen for the wrap up.



ALWAYS Be Nice, Be prepared, Be Professional
Be extra nice to editors, producers, floor managers, photogs

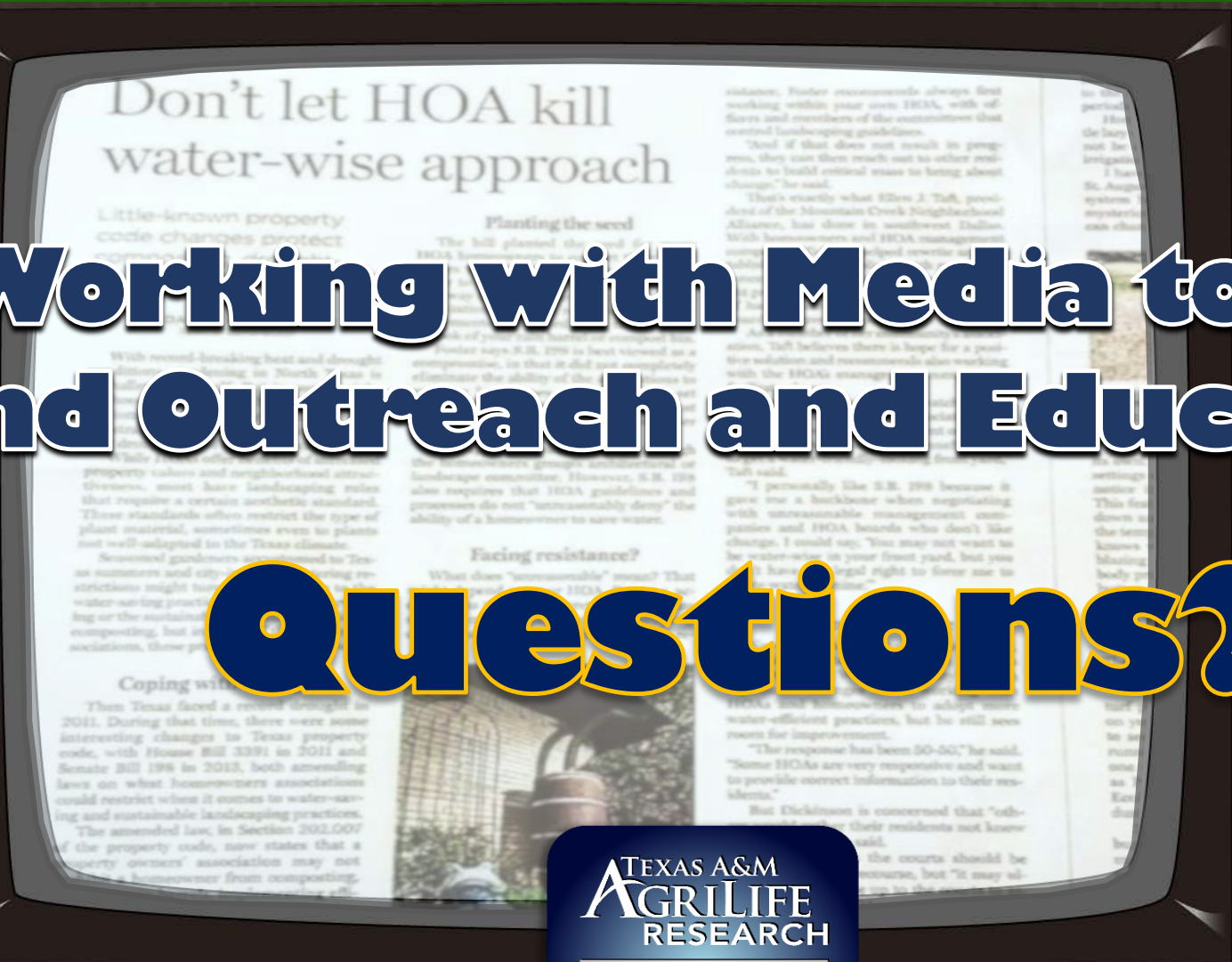
Build relationships
Value those relationships!

Use social media
Selfies
Tag photos

Send a short follow up, Thank you

Working with Media to Expand Outreach and Education

Questions?



DANIEL CUNNINGHAM
@TXPlantGuy

