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Red River Roundup

Growing Together: Your Monthly Scoop on Agriculture, 4-H Fun, and Healthy Living in Bossier & Caddo.

Vol. 4 Qtr. 4. 2025

UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 4
GardenWise – Horticulture Education Program
Locations: Bossier Parish Sheriff Substation
For more information call 318-408-0984

Oct 6
Bossier 4-H Pet Show
Locations: Bossier Central Library
For more information call 318-965-2326.

Oct 17-18
Louisiana Homesteader's Conference
Location: Red River Research Station
For more information call 318-741-7430

Oct 25
NWLAMG Fall Bulb sale
Location: Red River Research Station
For more information call 318-408-0984

Oct 25
Harvest Festival
Location: Red River Research Station
For more information call 318-741-7430

Dec 4
Bossier 4-H Cane's Night Fundraiser
Locations: Cane's on Airline Drive
Come out and support Bossier 4-H from 4-7pm

Dec 13
Christmas at the Farm
Location: Red River Research Station
For more information call 318-741-7430

LSU AgCenter
Research · Extension · Teaching

The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Welcome

Fall is in the air, and so are fresh opportunities from your Bossier and Caddo Parish Extension offices! From cool-season gardening to youth development and everything in between, the Red River Roundup is here to keep you connected and informed. This quarterly newsletter continues to reflect the LSU AgCenter's mission—to Educate, Innovate, and Improve the lives of Louisiana's citizens and beyond. Stay tuned for seasonal highlights, practical resources, and exciting opportunities to learn and grow with us this fall.

Event Updates October - December

Date	Event	Details
Sep. 29 - Oct. 28	**Meat Fundraiser**	Bossier 4-H's annual meat fundraiser. Pre-orders open from Sept. 29th to Oct. 28th. Orders will arrive the week of November 17th. Contact Bossier Parish Extension Office to place orders, 318-965-2326
Oct. 4	**GardenWise**	Dig into a morning full of expert gardening tips, fresh ideas, and local know-how. **Date:** Saturday, October 4th **Location:** Bossier Parish Sheriff Substation 2510 Viking Dr, Bossier City, LA 7111 **Time:** 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Oct. 6	**Bossier 4-H Pet Show**	Are you a Bossier 4-H'er who has a pet? If the answer is yes, come on out to the 4-H Pet Show, registration starts at 5:00pm, show will be held at the Bossier Central Library. For more questions, call the Bossier 4-H Office at 318-965-2326.
Oct. 17-18	**Louisiana Homesteader's Conference**	Held at the Red River Research Station. Come learn about homesteading practices, visit with vendors, catch the big game, and have some good family fun! Please call the Red River Research Station at 318-741-7430, for more information.
Oct. 25	**Northwest Louisiana Master Gardener Fall Bulb sale**	Basics of Canning and Preserving Food. Join to learn the knowledge and skills to preserve your harvest for year-round enjoyment. 9:00 - 1:00 @ the Red River Research Station $10/person - Lunch Provided - RSVP: Donna Haynes 318-408-0971
Oct. 25	**Harvest Festival**	Come out to the Red River Research Station with the whole family. There will be farm topics, a corn maze and MUCH MORE! Please call the Red River Research Station at 318-741-7430, for more information
Dec. 4	**Bossier 4-H Cane's Night Fundraiser**	Come have some chicken fingers and support Bossier 4-H, this is the Cane's on Airline Drive, 4-7pm.
Dec. 6	**Northwest Cattleman's Meeting**	Come join the Cattleman's, for a mini field day and learn about Beef and Forages. Meeting from 9:00am – 12:00pm RSVP: John Terrell (318) 226-6805
Dec. 13 (Rainout: Dec. 20)	**Christmas at the Farm**	Bring the family for an outdoor Christmas movie, hot chocolate, kids' activities, Santa & Mrs. Claus, and a ride on the "Red River Express"! Located at the Red River Research Station, call 318-408-0971 for more information.

Stay Connected With Us

Bossier 4 H - https://www.facebook.com/Bossier4H
Caddo 4 H - https://www.facebook.com/CaddoParish4H
Caddo & Bossier Parish Bites with the LSU AgCenter - https://www.facebook.com/BossierParishBites
LSU AgCenter Northwest Region Nutrition - https://www.facebook.com/LSUNorthwestNutrition
LSU AgCenter Health Hub - https://www.facebook.com/LSUAgCenterHealthHub
Caddo and Bossier EFNEP - https://www.facebook.com/caddoandbossierEFNEP
Northwest Region LSU AgCenter Horticulture - https://www.facebook.com/NWRHorticulture
LSU AgCenter Bossier Parish Agriculture and Natural Resources - https://www.facebook.com/share/1Fg7yVzeKg/
LSU AgCenter Northwest Region Forestry and Wildlife - https://www.facebook.com/share/1N5AHcTAaP/?mibextid=qi2Omg
LSU Forestry and Wildlife - https://www.facebook.com/share/16GJw9WW3j/

Bloom Spotlight

Supertunia Vista Bubblegum, AgCenter

Plant Name: Supertunia Vista Bubblegum (*Petunia x hybrida)*
Recommended Use: Cool-season bedding plant, containers, and hanging baskets
Exposure: Part to full sun
Size: Hight: 12" to 24", Width: 24" to 36"
Growth Habit: Vigorous, mounding and trailing
Bloom Time: Fall through late spring (Sept–May, until heat sets in)
Highlights: Bright bubblegum-pink blooms, vigorous growth, self-cleaning, heat- and drought-tolerant, and attracts butterflies and hummingbirds.

Garden Gems

Fall & Winter Elegance: Camellias and Sasanquas Bring Classic Beauty to Your Garden

When the garden begins to fade in the cooler months, Camellias and their close relatives, Sasanquas, step into the spotlight. These Southern favorites are prized for their glossy evergreen leaves and breathtaking blooms, adding elegance and color to Louisiana landscapes from fall through early spring. With timeless charm and dependable performance, Camellias and Sasanquas are must-have plants for gardeners seeking year-round interest.

Leslie Ann Camellia, Photo by AgCenter

Camellias (*Camellia japonica*) are best known for their large, showy flowers in shades of pink, red, and white, often blooming from January through March. Their blooms can be formal, semi-double, or peony-like, with many cultivars offering exquisite variations. Sasanquas (*Camellia sasanqua*), by contrast, begin flowering earlier—typically from October through December—covering themselves in masses of smaller, delicate blooms. Together, these two plants ensure months of continuous garden color.

Beyond their flowers, Camellias and Sasanquas add year-round beauty with their dark, glossy foliage and tidy growth habits. Camellias typically grow upright and can reach 6 to 12 feet tall, making them excellent as foundation plantings, specimen shrubs, or even small trees with pruning. Sasanquas are often more compact, with a graceful, airy form ideal for hedges, screens, or mass plantings. Popular cultivars like *Camellia japonica* 'Debutante' with soft pink double flowers, or *Camellia sasanqua* 'Shishi Gashira' with rosy pink blooms on a compact, spreading shrub, showcase just how versatile these plants can be.

These Southern staples prefer partial shade with protection from hot afternoon sun, thriving in acidic, well-drained soil. Mulching with pine bark or pine straw helps retain moisture and keeps roots cool while preventing weeds. Regular watering during dry spells, particularly in the first few years after planting, encourages strong root development. A balanced, slow-release fertilizer in spring supports healthy growth and abundant blooms.

Planting Camellias and Sasanquas requires a little patience but is straightforward. Dig a wide, shallow hole and set the plant so the top of the root ball sits slightly above ground level to prevent rot. Space plants according to their mature size, giving them room to spread gracefully over time. Once established, they are relatively low-maintenance, rewarding gardeners with reliable beauty year after year.

While hardy and long-lived, Camellias and Sasanquas can face occasional challenges. Tea scale, a common pest, causes yellowing leaves; treating with horticultural oil in late winter or early spring helps manage infestations. Root rot may develop in poorly drained soils, making site selection critical. Removing spent blooms also helps prevent petal blight, a fungal disease that browns and spots flowers. With attentive care, most problems can be minimized, allowing the plants to thrive.

With hundreds of cultivars and hybrids available, there's a Camellia or Sasanqua for every garden style—

whether you want a dazzling focal point, a fragrant hedge, or a container-grown treasure. Their ability to brighten landscapes during the quietest months of the year makes them one of the South's most beloved plants. Add grace and year-round interest to your landscape with Camellias and Sasanquas—classic, resilient, and endlessly rewarding plants that bring fall and winter gardens to life.

Mark A. Wilson

Tree Tips

Real Christmas Trees

People buy real Christmas trees because they appreciate the natural scent, traditional feel, and the environmental benefit of supporting tree farms which plant new trees to replace those harvested, contributing to a sustainable forest ecosystem; unlike artificial trees which are often made from non-biodegradable materials and require manufacturing processes that can be environmentally impactful.

Key reasons to choose a real Christmas tree:

- Fresh scent: The natural pine aroma of a real tree adds significantly to the festive atmosphere.
- Traditional experience: Many people associate the act of selecting and decorating a real tree with cherished holiday memories.
- Environmental benefits: When sourced from a sustainable tree farm, real trees contribute to forest health by encouraging replanting.
- Supporting local businesses: Buying from a local tree farm directly supports the community.
- Family activity: Choosing a tree together can be a fun family outing.

Grant Christmas Tree Farm (westcentralbest.com).

Local Christmas Tree Growers

- Hughes Christmas Tree Farm, 5501 Linton Cutoff Rd, Benton, LA 71006 Phone: (318) 820-1593
- Precious Memories Christmas Tree Farm, Calhoun, LA
- Pepper Tree Farm, West Monroe, LA
- Saline Creek Christmas Tree Farm, Goldonna, LA
- Shreveport Christmas at Raven's Cliff Farm, 9200 Wallace Lake Rd, Shreveport, LA 71106, Phone: (318) 865-5225
- Weaver's Christmas Tree Farms, 2995 Par Rd 145 · Shreveport, LA (318) 636-6101
- Windy Hills Ethel, LA
- Yawn Station Christmas Tree Farm, Independence, LA
- Panola Orchard, Carthage, TX

Further Away and Worth the Drive

- Curry Christmas Tree Farm, Start, LA
- Grant Christmas Tree Farm, Grant, LA

Valerie West, Ph.D.

The Back 40

Get Ahead This Fall with a Soil Test

As we move from the heat of late summer into the cooler days of fall, now is an excellent time to think about testing your soil—whether for your lawn, garden, or pasture. A fall soil test can help you avoid the spring rush, identify what your soil truly needs, and set you up for healthier growth in the coming season.

Soil Test Bags, LSU AgCenter

One of the most common recommendations from a soil test is lime, which is used to raise soil pH. Because lime takes several months to fully break down and adjust soil acidity, applying it in the fall gives your soil plenty of time to be ready for spring growth.

A late-season soil test also provides insight into how your soil performed over the past year. Ideally, results should fall within a mid-range. That means your plants had enough nutrients without too much leftover. High nutrient levels can cause problems down the road, including excessive growth or even groundwater pollution. On the other hand, low values in the fall suggest your plants may have run out of fertility too soon, leaving them stressed and less productive.

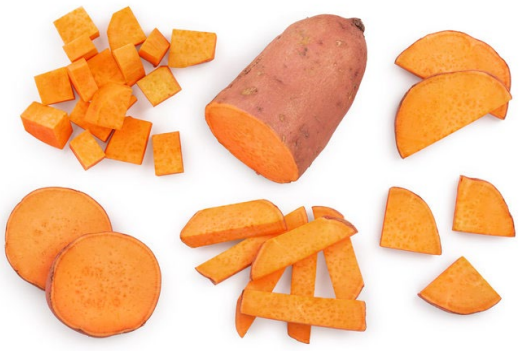
If your soil is fairly uniform across your property, one composite sample taken from the top 4–6 inches is usually enough. Be sure to list all the crops you want recommendations for, whether they are grasses, ornamentals, or vegetables. You can request fertilizer guidance for more than one crop on the same sample. Soil sample bags are available at any LSU AgCenter Extension office, or you can contact your local Parish ANR Agent for assistance. Not sure who your local agent is? Visit lsuagcenter.com to find the department directory and get connected.

John Terrell

Bayou Bites

Falling into Sweet Potato Season

It is finally sweet potato season. Sweet potatoes are typically planted in the Spring and harvested in the fall. Their peak season is September to November. This is the perfect time to indulge in the sweet nutritious harvest. Sweet potatoes are a great source of fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, and potassium. Fiber aids in maintaining cholesterol levels, helps to regulate blood sugar, helps to make us feel full for longer periods of time, and aids in bowel regularity. Vitamin A helps to maintain healthy vision, aids immune system functioning, supports reproductive health, and helps to keep your skin clear. Vitamin C aids in immune system functioning, aids in iron absorption, and promotes healthy skin by aiding in the production of collagen. Potassium supports muscle contractions, aids in the regulation of blood pressure, and helps to regulate fluid balance.


Sweet Potatoes. Adobe Stock

If you are looking for ways to add this super food into your diet this fall, try this yummy Spicy Cajun Sweet Potato Mash recipe. This is an easy, quick, and flavorful recipe that will remind you of what a true Louisiana fall is all about, delicious Cajun cuisine. Try adding fun fall spices as well like cloves and allspice to give this dish more flavor. This dish is paired well with grilled chicken, a pork dish, or a savory steak.

With some fun seasonings and a tasty sweet potato, this easy recipe is perfect for a busy fall night. Give it a try and enjoy a delicious, nutrient-rich packed side dish.

Ashlynn Taylor

A Taste of Freshness

Recipe for: Spicy Cajun Sweet Potato Mash
From the Kitchen of: LSU AgCenter
Servings: 1 **Adapted from:** Paleohacks.com

Ingredients:

1 medium to large sweet potato
1/4 teaspoon turmeric
1/4 teaspoon cumin
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
1/4 teaspoon white pepper
1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika

Directions:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Peel the sweet potato and chop into small chunks.
3. Bring sweet potato chunks to a boil. Allow chunks to boil until fork tender.
4. Drain potatoes. Add spices and drained potatoes to a bowl.
5. Mash and combine all ingredients.
6. Serve and enjoy.

Cultivating Clovers – 4-H

Bossier Parish 4-H – Bigger and Better

The smell of the freshly sharpened pencils and brand new notebooks is in the air, which can only mean one thing…….. The school year has begun! Not only that but it is enrollment time for Bossier 4-H. Make sure to catch Ms. Erika & Ms. Jess at your school and see how you can get signed up to be apart of one of the largest youth organizations in the world! Speaking of world; 4-H can take you places that you wouldn't even think is possible! From the dairies of Wisconsin, to the marshes of Avery Island, to the shooting range of Grand Isle and even to the steps of Abraham Lincoln's Memorial, 4-H can and will take you places. So, what are you waiting for? Make sure to ask who your school's 4-H club leader is to get enrolled. All schools in Bossier Parish that are 4th grade and above all have a designated 4-H club sponsor, just ask who that sponsor is and get an enrollment form. Bossier 4-H has a year full activities, events, programs and EXCITEMENT planned! In Bossier 4-H, there is something for everyone, whether you're into livestock, record keeping, fashion, riding ATV's, leadership, dogs, cooking or even shooting sports, we have it. Call the Bossier 4-H office at 318/965-2326 to see how you can get involved. Stay up to date with our new "Clover Cast" launching at the end of September.

Erika Derma

Regional and State-wide Events:

- November 10th- LSU Livestock Validation/Possession Date (Breeding, market, and Commercial animals)
- December 1st- Swine LSU Validation/Possession Date
- Sign- Up Begins December 1^{st,} Fashion and Beyond on Tour, call your local 4-H office for more information
- 7th and 8th Challenge Camp Sign-Up Begins. Call your local 4-H office for deadlines and details.
- 4-H Night with the Mudbugs, January 3rd. Call your local 4-H office for deadlines and details.

Caddo Parish 4-H - Exciting Growth and New Opportunities

Caddo Parish 4-H is buzzing with energy and excitement as we dive into a new program year full of fresh opportunities and continued success!

Our Shooting Sports program is in full swing, with strong participation across disciplines. We're especially excited to announce the addition of .22 pistol to our lineup, giving youth another safe, structured opportunity to develop marksmanship and discipline under the guidance of trained volunteers.

We've also launched several new project clubs that are already gaining traction with our members. From creative expressions in the Arts & Crafts Club, to outdoor exploration in the Field & Forest Club, to hands-on learning in Robotics and Tabletop Gaming, there's something for everyone. We're also thrilled to be working with Hummer & Sons to start a 4-H Beekeeping Club, offering members a chance to learn about pollinators, honey production, and environmental stewardship.

Our Livestock Club is also growing, with more youth getting involved in raising and showing animals. Whether it's cattle, goats, sheep, rabbits, or poultry, these members are learning responsibility, animal husbandry, and leadership skills that will benefit them for a lifetime. We're proud to see their dedication and hard work as they prepare for show season!

Looking ahead, the Caddo Parish Fair is right around the corner at the end of September! 4-H members will have the opportunity to showcase their hard work in a wide variety of contest areas, including livestock, educational displays, arts and crafts, home décor, forestry, bake-offs, pet shows, and more. It's a great way for our youth to shine and for the community to see what 4-H is all about.

We're also proud to share that we've welcomed several new 4-H school clubs this year, expanding our reach and impact across the parish. With so many new clubs, programs, and events in motion, it's safe to say—we're all staying very busy, and loving every minute of it!

Stay connected with Caddo Parish 4-H as we continue to grow, learn, and lead together.

Mary Elizabeth O'Neal

Who's Who

Meet the Staff: LSU AgCenter Bossier Parish

Administrative Staff

Joy Matthews
Administrative Coordinator 3

4-H Youth Development

Erika Derma
4-H Youth Development Agent
Bossier Parish Chair

Jessica Grubbs
4-H Youth Development Agent

Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR)

Dr. Valerie West
Area Forestry Agent

Mark Wilson
Area Horticulture Agent
Master Gardener Coordinator

John Terrell
Agriculture Crop Production Agent - Caddo/Bossier

Nutrition and Community Health (NCH)

Abigail McAlister
Flavors of Health Nutrition Agent - Caddo/Bossier
NCH Regional Coordinator

Elizabeth Martin
SNAP-Ed Agent - Caddo/Bossier

Ashlynn Taylor
EFNEP Supervising Agent - Caddo/Bossier

Lynn Rambin
EFNEP Nutrition Educator

Meet the Staff: LSU AgCenter Caddo Parish

Administrative Staff

Elizabeth Martin
SNAP-Ed Agent - Caddo/Bossier
Caddo Parish Chair

Kimberly Farquhar
Administrative Coordinator 3

4-H Youth Development

Mary O'Neal
4-H Youth Development Agent

Anthony Hubbard
4-H Youth Development Agent

Sandra Brumley
4-H Youth Development Program Assistant

Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR)

John Terrell
Agriculture Crop Production Agent - Caddo/Bossier

Mark Wilson
Area Horticulture Agent
Master Gardener Coordinator

Nutrition and Community Health (NCH)

Abigail McAlister
Flavors of Health Nutrition Agent - Caddo/Bossier
NCH Regional Coordinator

Ashlynn Taylor
EFNEP Supervising Agent - Caddo/Bossier

Leona Camel
EFNEP Nutrition Educator

Dee Blackwell
EFNEP Nutrition Educator

For more information, contact your local LSU AgCenter Office

Bossier Parish Office | 204 Burt Blvd, 4th Floor | Benton, Louisiana 71006 | Phone: 318-965-2326 |
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Caddo Parish Office | 2408 East 70th Street | Shreveport, Louisiana 71105 | Phone: 318-226-6805 |
Office Hours: Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

For the latest research-based information on just about anything, visit our website:

LSUAgCenter.com

The LSU AgCenter and LSU provide equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Falling for Agriculture
Hay Bale Contest
3rd Annual Homesteader's Conference
October 17th-18th

Hay Bale Decorating Contest

Call 318-741-7430 to get signedd up!!

All bales must be decorated by 10/15

3rd Annual Homesteader's Conference

Red River Research Station
(262 Research Station Drive Bossier City, LA 71111)

Haybale Decorating Contest

Due to a generous donation of haybales, the Red River Research Station is hosting its second Haybale Decorating Contest, to allow youth and adults an opportunity to showcase their creativity and support of the Homesteader's Conference.

The THEME of the contest is **"Falling for Agriculture"**

- All paint must be provided by the participant or participating group.
- Groups may utilize any items, as long as they are waterproof, i.e. lumber, wire, cardboard, etc.
- NO balloons!
- There are no electrical outlets. Solar only items may be utilized.
- Haybale dimensions are 4 feet x 5 feet.

The painting dates are one week prior to the Homesteader's Conference which is scheduled for October 17-18, 2025. **All Haybales must be painted/decorated by October 15th!!!**

There will be two categories to enter:

1. **Youth or youth groups**…..any person or persons under the age of 18 or those who have not passed their high school graduation date. This could be any solo youth, or youth group such as: 4-H club, FFA chapter, BETA club, Student Council, art classes, etc.
    a. There is NO charge for youth entries.
2. **Adult or adult groups**….any person or persons over the age of 18 and who have graduated from high school. This could be any adult group such as: Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, the Red Hat Society, Farm Bureau, Police Jurys, professional organizations, and/or businesses, etc.
    a. We ask that all adults and/or adult groups make a donation to the Red River Research Station to compete in the competition.

All youth and adult entries will be judged by the "Haybale Committee" and the top three haybales, will win a first, second, or third place rosette as well as be featured on the Northwest Region Facebook page. The 1st place winning haybales will also receive an additional prize. This prize is at the discretion of the "Haybale Committee".

If you or your group would like to participate, please complete the entry form and return to Mrs. Donna Haynes at dhaynes@agcenter.lsu.edu or call 318-741-7430.

3rd Annual Homesteader's Conference
Haybale Competition Entry Form

Please circle your desired category: YOUTH (under 18) ADULT (over 18)

Name of contact person: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email address: _____

Group or organization description: (used for media)

_____

_____

_____

By submitting an entry form you are agreeing to the following guidelines: NO use of any political jargon of affiliation, NO graffiti, NO use of vulgar or indecent language or images, and NO depiction of alcohol, or drug use may be used. This is a family friendly event and a representation of the LSU AgCenter. Should you have any questions, please contact the Red River Research Station at 318-741-7430.

Adult entry only: donation amount enclosed: $ _____

Please return completed entries to:
Mrs. Donna Haynes, located at 262 Research Station Drive,
ATTN: Haybales
Or scan to: dhaynes@agcenter.lsu.edu

Entries MUST be received by: October 10th, 2025.

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GardenWise

Wisdom for Homeowners & Plant Lovers

Date: Saturday, October 4th

Location: Bossier Parish Sheriff Substation

2510 Viking Dr, Bossier City, LA 71111

Time: 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM

Dig into a morning full of expert gardening tips, fresh ideas, and local know-how. This workshop is perfect for homeowners, hobbyists, and plant lovers of all experience levels!

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

- How to grow a productive fall garden with cool-season vegetables, herbs, and fruits suited for the North Louisiana climate
- Ways to add fresh color and beauty to your landscape with cool-season annuals
- Simple tips to harvest, cook, and enjoy what you grow — from fresh herbs to garden-to-table recipes
- Practical, local know-how to make your home garden more successful year-round

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Admission: FREE

Please scan the QR code to RSVP for the event.