

GROW. TEXAS. CONNECTING GARDENING & HEALTH



LOVE, *Tito's*

This contest is more than a contest! Through this experience, youth will grow their own food, understand the connection between agriculture and health, and develop leadership skills!

Texas 4-H has teamed up with Love, Tito's Foundation to help youth discover the connection between growing and eating healthy foods. Through this program, the Love, Tito's Foundation mission of making fresh, nutritious foods available to individuals and families can be accomplished.

Youth participating in this experience will select a growing option best suitable for them. Options include organic or traditional growing in either containers, raised beds, or row gardens. Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about gardening and nutrition from experts in the field via online learning modules and mentorship programs.

To participate in the experience, youth must be a member of 4-H or participating in an ag science class, Junior Master Gardener program in Texas. Participants must be in grades 6-12.

The experience consists of the following components:

- Learning Series
- Mentorship Program
- Growing Contest

Youth must participate in all components to be eligible for prizes and scholarship awards.

Once enrolled in the Grow. Texas. Contest program, youth will receive additional information regarding all components. To participate, apply by September 15 at <https://tinyurl.com/nj8jdss6>

Grow. Texas. Components

Learning Series

A virtual learning series will be implemented to educate youth about conventional and organic growing techniques, best practices for growing, and nutritional benefits of healthy foods. To be eligible for awards, all learning modules must be viewed. Participants will view modules during designated dates, answer and submit questionnaires to verify modules have been viewed, and then meet virtually with Master Gardeners/Program Coordinators for review on designated dates.

Modules will include the following information.

Module 1

Plant Growth & Development
Soil Types
Water

Module 2

Plant Varieties
Plant Selection
Planting

Module 3

Weed Control

Fertilizer

Pesticides

Module 4

MyPlate & Gardening

Nutrition

Recipe Selection & Preparation

Mentorship Program

A mentorship program will be established with local gardeners and county Extension agents who will help guide and direct youth through the project. These mentors will serve as the local expert to answer questions, provide best practices related to gardening and nutrition, develop leadership and communication skills of youth, and assist youth in establishing their project plan.

Contest Component

A bi-regional will be held for youth in 6-12 grades. Categories and divisions are shown below. Winners in the senior division will advance to a state contest.

Bi-Regional Contest

- **Junior Division (Grades 6, 7, 8)**

Division I Organic Gardens

Container Gardens

Raised Bed Gardens

Row Gardens

Division II Conventional Gardens

Container Gardens

Raised Bed Gardens

Row Gardens

- **Senior Division (Grades 9-12)**

Division I Organic Gardens

Container Gardens

Raised Bed Gardens

Row Gardens

Division II Conventional Gardens

Container Gardens

Raised Bed Gardens

Row Gardens

General Rules:

Garden must include at least 4 different types of vegetables. Gardens include container gardens, raised bed gardens, and 1-3 row gardens (rows must not exceed 20 feet). Gardens will be judged based on site selection, growing practices, productivity, and weed, disease, and insect control.

Garden Evaluation which will be conducted via video submission. Garden evaluation video will be submitted, along with Project Journal, at least 2 weeks prior to regional contest. Garden Evaluation Video must include a narrative explaining the process, challenges, and benefits seen. An outline of the Garden Evaluation Video will be emailed to registered participants.

Project Journal including expenses, gardening practices, mentor relations, photos, and other determined materials will be maintained for the entirety of the project. The Project Journal must be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the bi-regional contest. Project Journals will be emailed to registered participants.

Contest Awards: Bi-Regional Contest

- **Junior Division (Grades 6,7,8)**

Division I Organic Gardens

Container Gardens (1st place - \$500 + banner, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Raised Bed Gardens (1st place - \$500 + banner, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Row Gardens (1st place - \$500 + banner, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Division II Conventional Gardens

Container Gardens (1st place - \$500 + banner, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Raised Bed Gardens (1st place - \$500 + banner, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Row Gardens (1st place - \$500 + banner, 2nd -10th place – banners)

- **Senior Division (Grades 9-12)**

Division I Organic Gardens

Container Gardens (1st place - \$500, banner & state advancement, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Raised Bed Gardens (1st place - \$500, banner & state advancement, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Row Gardens (1st place - \$500, banner & state advancement, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Division II Conventional Gardens

Container Gardens (1st place - \$500, banner & state advancement, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Raised Bed Gardens (1st place - \$500, banner & state advancement, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Row Gardens (1st place - \$500, banner & state advancement, 2nd -10th place – banners)

Grow. Texas. Timeline of Events

Below is a timeline for the event with contacts, resources and deadlines noted.

September 15, 2023

- Applications due online. Applicants should complete the online form located at <https://tinyurl.com/nj8jdss6>
- Participants should review the program guidelines and requirements at

September 19, 2023

- Grow.Texas. Online Orientation Session – 6:30 PM

- Meeting Log-in Information:
- All participants are required to attend or view the recording. For those having to view the recording, a quiz/verification form must be submitted.
- Those not attending or viewing the recording will be disqualified from the event.

September 2023

- Preparation of gardening container, bed, or site.
- Mentorship program begins

October 2023

- Online learning series
- Growing season
- Mentorship program continues

November 2023

- Online learning series
- Growing season
- Mentorship program continues

November/December

- GROW. TEXAS. Workshop at Texas A&M (Grades 9-12 only)
- Bi-Regional Contests

January

- State Contest (Grades 9-12)

GROW.TEXAS. Workshop

An in-person workshop for youth in 9 -12 grades will be held at Texas A&M University. The workshop will include sessions, presentations, and speakers on gardening, nutrition, health, and public speaking. This event will empower youth with skills necessary to successfully produce healthy foods while educating others in their communities. The workshop will be limited to 25 participants who have applied and been approved for workshop via an online application which will be distributed to eligible participants.

State Contest (9th – 12th grade) - This contest will be held at Texas A&M using the criteria below. The state contest will also feature one day of workshops, tours, and special events for the youth.

- Garden Evaluation which will be conducted via video submission. Garden must include at least 4 different types of vegetables. Gardens include container gardens, raised bed gardens, and 1-3 row gardens (rows must not exceed 20 feet). Gardens will be judged based on site selection, growing practices, productivity, and weed, disease, and insect pressure. Garden evaluation video will be submitted, along with project journal, at least 2 weeks prior to contest.
- Project Presentation will allow youth to communicate their successes, challenges, and learning experiences related to this project. The presentation will be a maximum of 15 minutes in length.

- Project Journal including expenses, gardening practices, mentor relations, photos, and other determined materials will be maintained for the entirety of the project.
- Recipe Selection which will include the selection of a recipe featuring a vegetable grown in the project garden. Recipes must be considered healthy and specific guidelines related to saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, added sugars, and beneficial nutrients.

Winners of the state contest will receive the following scholarships.

Senior Division (Grades 9-12)

Division I Organic Gardens

Container Gardens (1st place - \$1,500; 2nd place - \$1,250; 3rd place - \$1000)
 Raised Bed Gardens (1st place - \$1,500; 2nd place - \$1,250; 3rd place - \$1000)
 Row Gardens (1st place - \$1,500; 2nd place - \$1,250; 3rd place - \$1000)

Division II Conventional Gardens

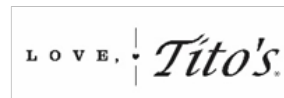
Container Gardens (1st place - \$1,500; 2nd place - \$1,250; 3rd place - \$1000)
 Raised Bed Gardens (1st place - \$1,500; 2nd place - \$1,250; 3rd place - \$1000)
 Row Gardens (1st place - \$1,500; 2nd place - \$1,250; 3rd place - \$1000)

For More Information, Contact:

Dr. Julie Gardner
 Texas 4-H Youth Development

Julie.gardner@ag.tamu.edu

979-321-5332



The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or any other classification protected by federal, state, or local law and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife.