

Timber Tellings

Applications for Prescribed Fire Grant Now Open

Texas A&M Forest Service

July 6, 2020

COLLEGE STATION, Texas – Texas A&M Forest Service is now accepting grant applications for the State Fire Assistance for Mitigation – Plains Prescribed Fire Grant through August 15. The grant will provide \$81,000 in total funding for prescribed burns.

Funding will be provided to landowners and communities that have been, or may be threatened by wildland fire to reduce hazardous fuels. Properties in the panhandle, west and northwest Texas at high risk for loss during a Southern Plains Wildfire Outbreak are eligible.

Grant recipients will be reimbursed actual per acre costs associated with conducting the prescribed burn up to \$30 per acre with a limit of 500 acres per recipient.

“Historically, fire has been a necessary tool to improve forage quality for grazing, enhance wildlife habitat and preserve soil nutrients on the rangelands of Texas,” said Jake Gosschalk, Texas A&M Forest Service Wildland Urban Interface Specialist.

Wildfires can be destructive when they occur at the wrong time or near a community that is unprepared. To plan ahead and mitigate these impacts, Texas A&M Forest Service works with landowners and local and county governments through Community Wildfire Protection Plans and the Texas Ranch Wildfire Program.

“Currently, conditions across Texas are dry, but landowners are already planning for prescribed fire treatments this upcoming fall during the cooler season,” said Gosschalk. “These prescribed fires reduce hazardous fuel loads and mitigate the threat of wildfire.”

Landowners located within two miles of a Community Wildfire Protection Plan or a Texas Ranch Wildfire Program will receive priority funding. Both programs enhance awareness of wildfire risk and empower individual landowners

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Market Report- March/April 2020

Product	Statewide Ave. Price		Previous Ave. Price		Price/ Ton Difference	
	Weight	Volume	Weight	Volume		
Pine- Sawlogs	\$20.57/Ton	\$164.53/MBF	\$28.59/Ton	\$228.72/MBF	-28%	↓
Pine-Pulpwood	\$7.30/Ton	\$19.70/Cord	\$8.95/Ton	\$24.17/Cord	-19%	↓
Pine-Chip-n-saw	\$12.00/Ton	\$32.40/Cord	\$15.17/Ton	\$40.95/Cord	-21%	↓
Mixed Hardwood- Sawlogs	\$32.22/Ton	\$290.00/MBF	\$36.70/Ton	\$330.30/MBF	-12%	↓
Hardwood- Pulpwood	\$5.87/Ton	\$16.45/Cord	\$10.21/Ton	\$28.59/Cord	-42%	↓

Texas Timber Price Trends is a bimonthly publication reporting average prices paid for standing timber in Texas. This report is intended only as a guide to general price levels. It should not be used to judge the fair market value of a specific timber sale, which may vary considerably due to many factors. It is recommended that you use the services of a professional consulting forester in managing any timber sale. Important factors affecting timber prices include the type, quality and volume of timber for sale, accessibility, distance to mills/markets, weather conditions, economy/market conditions, who is handling the sale or is buying the timber, and contract requirements by the landowner. The complete Texas Timber Price Trends can be viewed at <http://tfsweb.tamu.edu/timberpricetrends>.

Applications for Prescribed Fire Grant Cont'd

and the overall community to act to reduce the risk of wildfire in their areas. For more information on these programs visit: <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/TRWP/> and <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/ProtectYourCommunity/>.

To check eligibility and complete the online application, visit <https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/PrescribedFireGrantsApplication/>.

Learn more about prescribed fire by visiting [TFS Prescribed Burns](#) or the [TDA Prescribed Burning Board](#).

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Websites of Interest

<https://texasforestinfo.tamu.edu/>

Check out these FREE landowner tools that can assist you in making land management decisions on your property.

<https://www.learnplanacttexas.org/>

Need easy access to information to help keep your woods healthy? Find great resources all in one place!

<https://www.texasforestry.org/>

Lobbying on various forestry and environmental issues that directly affect you, publishing and sponsoring educational events are just a few of many things that Texas Forestry Association does. Find out more about what Texas Forestry Association does for you and why you should be involved!

<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/>

Find a plethora of forest management resources and many people that can assist you in your forest management goals.

<https://tpwd.texas.gov/>

Find out more information on wildlife management, hunting and fishing regulations and much more!

<https://nrcs.usda.gov/>

Find out more information on natural resource conservation and federal programs in your area.

Bear Conservation Efforts Prove Successful as Sightings Increase in Northeast Texas

Texas Parks and Wildlife

AUSTIN— Since April, there has been an uptick in black bear sightings in Bowie, Grayson and Titus counties in northeast Texas. The bears are thought to originate from the neighboring states of Oklahoma and Arkansas, or possibly Louisiana, where resident bear populations are well established and expanding. As the numbers of this iconic species grows, dispersing black bears find their way across state lines into Texas, signaling the possibility of its eventual permanent return to our landscape.



Photo Credit: Texas Black Bear Alliance

“It is inspiring as a biologist to watch these animals make their return to Northeast Texas after being absent for a century or more,” said Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologist, Penny Wilkerson.

The recovery of black bears in the three-state region has been ongoing for 30-50 years. Thanks to conservation efforts, the Louisiana black bear is no longer listed as a federally threatened species. Similarly, efforts in Oklahoma and Arkansas have increased and expanded bear populations by focusing on habitat conservation and species management.

Bears are secretive but curious and have an excellent sense of smell, with much of their behavior driven by their appetite. These natural characteristics can, however, become a problem when bears find an easy meal from a human-related source. Most sighting reports come from game camera photos around game feeders dispensing corn or pelleted feed.

“Bears do not generally pose a threat to pets or livestock. These critters are omnivores and are more interested in berries, grubs and acorns than anything else,” Wilkerson said.

Texas hunters should make sure that they know their targets as hogs and bears can look very similar from a distance. Black bears are currently a protected species in Texas.

TPWD is interested in documenting all sightings of bears and encourages reporting any sightings to a local biologist. Biologists can provide technical help on how to detour bears, and other unique animal visitors, from areas near your home. Residents can find a [local biologist](#) and more information about bears and bear safety on the [TPWD website](#). Residents are also encouraged to call the east Texas Region Office at 903-566-1626 extension 209.

It's Big, but It's Not a "Murder Hornet"

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

June 30, 2020

Since the release of information about Asian giant hornets, Texas A&M AgriLife entomologists are being inundated with cicada killers and other lookalike insects submitted for identification as a possible "murder hornet," which thus far has only been found in Washington state in the U.S.

While the agency wants to continue to encourage Texans to be vigilant in watching for the Asian giant hornet, they also want to help provide guidance that will help narrow the focus.

David Ragsdale, Ph.D., chief scientific officer and associate director of [Texas A&M AgriLife Research](#), and professor in the [Department of Entomology](#), said many photos of Texas native cicada killers, or ground hornets, are being submitted as suspected Asian giant hornets. He said [their website](#) receives five to 10 photos a day, and agency pest management agents and specialists around the state have also been handling inquiries.



Many insects are being mistaken for the Asian giant hornet.

In May, the concern about Asian giant hornet was enough to prompt Gov. Greg Abbott to request a task force be mobilized to prepare Texas against the Asian giant hornet's arrival.

But June is the normal month for the cicada killer wasp, a common large wasp in Texas, to start showing up and this prompted posts on Facebook and in news feeds mistakenly reporting cicada killer wasps as sightings of the Asian giant hornet.

"Most everyone has seen the cicada killer wasp that is very large, but has mostly been ignored in the past," Ragsdale said. "With the most recent news of the Asian giant hornet, they are now paying attention to the native Texas insect."

While some people thought they had been seeing the newly pictured murder hornets for years, AgriLife Extension experts want to clarify, "No, you haven't." Now they are providing outlets to help tell the difference between the Asian giant hornet and similar looking pests.

Holly Davis, Ph.D., [Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service](#) entomologist in Weslaco, and Pat Porter, Ph.D., AgriLife Extension entomologist in Lubbock, recently developed a short video explaining the differences between the "murder hornet" and several common lookalikes here in Texas. To view the video, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=CjVEwHcNm9c&feature=emb_title.

"To date, we have identified hundreds of insects that people in Texas suspect might be Asian giant hornets (murder hornets)," Porter said. "Eighty percent of these have been either the eastern cicada killer or western cicada killer. It is understandable how non-entomologists would have trouble deciding which was which."

HOW TO TELL THE DIFFERENCE

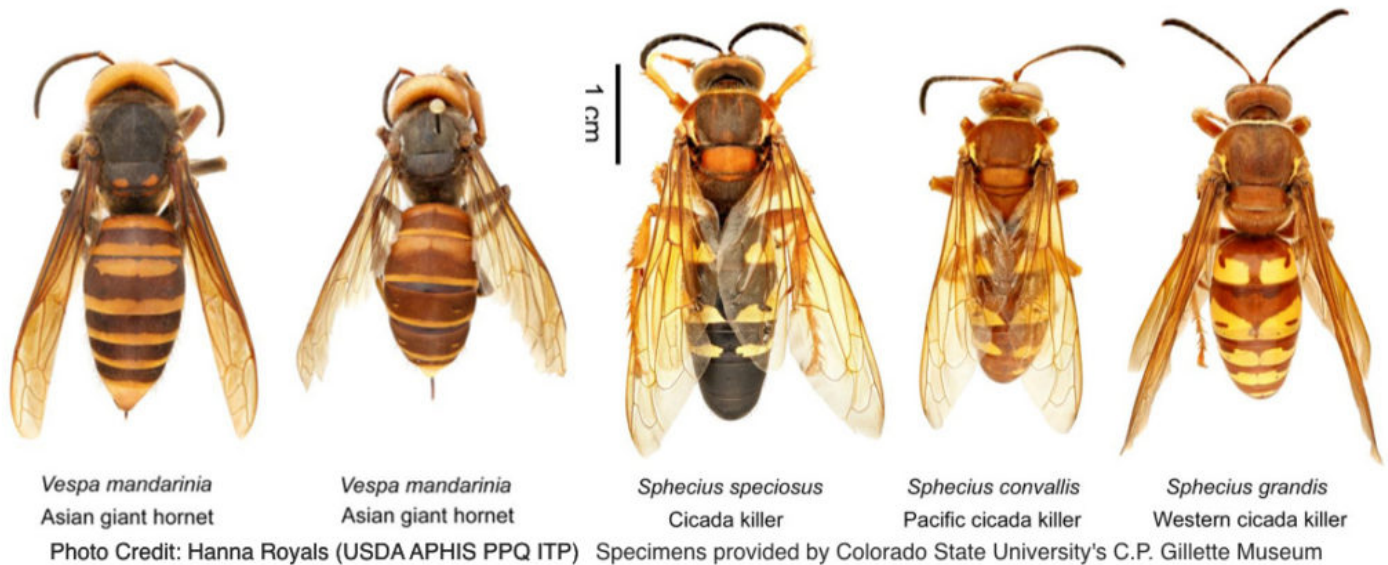
"First, the Asian giant hornet is native to Japan and South Korea, and it has only been found in parts of British Columbia, Canada and the northwestern corner of Washington state," Davis said. "There have been no confirmed reports of these hornets in other U.S. locations, including Texas."

There are a number of Texas native species of wasp, hornet, yellow jacket and bees, but what really separates Asian giant hornet and a few of our native species is their size. The ones most likely to be confused with Asian giant hornet are three species of cicada killers and the pigeon horntail.

The Asian giant hornet is the world's largest known hornet measuring 1.5-2 inches in length. It has a head as wide as its shoulders, where the wings and legs are located, or wider, and it is a bright orange or yellow. The thorax, or shoulder

portion where the wings and legs are connected, is a dark brown, as are the antenna. It has a much smaller or pinched waist and then smooth looking brown and orange stripes cover the abdomen.

The cicada killers, of which there are three different species here in Texas, are also quite large, measuring 1-1.5 inches in length. But they will all typically have a head that is narrower than the thorax. The head and the thorax are typically the same color, a darker orange or brown color. It does also have a pinched waist. But the stripes on the abdomen will be jagged and sometimes look like mountains.



The eastern cicada killer tends to be black and yellow. The western cicada killer is closer in color to the Asian giant hornet, being reddish brown and yellow. But there is no contrasting color between the head and thorax and the stripes are jagged on the western cicada killer.

The other group of insects that are most commonly confused with the Asian giant hornet are the horntail or wood wasps. They are large, have a distinct head that is as wide or wider than the thorax, and may share the same coloration as the Asian giant hornet. However, there is one trait that is easy to spot that is different, and that is the waist. Horntails lack any appearance of a waist.

The Asian giant hornet preys on bees and can decimate local honey bee populations, essential for most fruit and vegetable crop production. The Asian giant hornets also are fiercely protective of their nests and will deploy painful stings that can cause fatal allergic reactions in people already sensitive to bee stings.

The cicada killer and wood wasps, however, are solitary and thus do not aggressively protect their nesting sites by attacking in large numbers, Davis said. Cicada killers, however, may cause alarm due to the males' territorial behavior, dive-bombing or buzzing people and animals that walk into their territory.

"Although cicada killers are solitary, you can often find numerous individuals in areas with sandy soils where females dig nests in the ground," she said. "These nests appear as dime to quarter sized holes. As females come and go, provisioning their nest with cicadas they paralyze with a sting and carry back to their nests.

"The males are more interested in mating. Thus, they may try to chase off intruders they perceive as a threat to their mating opportunities. However, male wasps are not capable of stinging, thus they are not dangerous, just a nuisance for a few weeks out of the year during the nesting season. Females can sting but are not aggressive and reports of stings are rare."

Horntails and wood wasps may have what appear to be very long stingers, but they are unable to sting. They lack venom glands and instead they use this structure, called an ovipositor, to insert eggs into plant tissue, hence the name wood wasp, Davis said.

Accelerated Drying Increases Potential Wildfire Ignitions Statewide

The Texas Forest Service (TFS) has alerted us to the fact that significant wildfire activity has increased statewide, and accelerated drying has elevated the potential for new wildfire ignitions. New wildfires will become increasingly difficult to extinguish if current temperatures and drying conditions persist into August as forecasted.

“Vegetation is rapidly losing moisture due to consecutive days of extremely high temperatures”, said Brad Smith, TFS Predictive Services Department Head. “Grass that was green five days ago has wilted and turned brown under the accelerated drying produced from the extreme heat, it will be quite difficult to replenish this moisture during the dry months of July and August.”

Since July 1, TFS and local fire departments have responded to 155 wildfires that have burned 27,889 acres across the state. Many of the fires have been attributed to humans and their activities, such as equipment use and debris burning, and are preventable.

“It is up to residents to take first steps in protecting their families, homes and property, long before the fire even starts,” said Kari Hines, TFS Firewise Coordinator. “Local firefighters rely on us all to be prepared for wildfires and create a safe environment for them to operate in by creating defensible space around our homes.

Successfully preparing for a wildfire requires everyone to take personal responsibility for protecting themselves, their family, and their property by:

- Creating defensible space around your home allows for low intensity, slow burning conditions in the event of a wildfire
- Within the first five feet of your home, use non-flammable landscape material, Within the first 30 feet of your home water plants and trees and mulch regularly, and consider xeriscaping if you under water restrictions.
- A healthy, well-maintained landscape is important to survival of homes during a wildfire. Make sure your plants are carefully spaced, low growing and free of resins, oil and waxes that burn easily.
- Remove dead vegetation from under the deck of your home and within 10 feet of the house.
- Prune your trees 6 to 10 feet from the ground.

If a wildfire is spotted, immediately contact local authorities. A quick response can save lives and property. For frequent wildfire and incident updates, follow TFS incident information on Facebook and Twitter.

Upcoming Events

August 15, 2020- Applications for Prescribed Fire Grant Due- Visit

<https://tfsweb.tamu.edu/PrescribedFireGrantsApplication/> for more information

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NETFLA WEB SITE

www.netxforest.org

Membership Meetings Are Being Postponed Due to the COVID-19 Virus

The health and well-being of every member is our first priority. Meetings will be rescheduled when conditions permit. We still plan on having Texas A&M Forest Service Law Enforcement present the next Program. The primary topic addressed will be "Timber Theft". The goal of the program will be to inform landowners of new regulations for selling timber in Texas, examples of how timber is being harvested without the landowner receiving full compensation, and best practices for minimizing the risk of theft.

The date and location of the next meeting will be communicated in a future Newsletter. Please do what you can to protect your health.

2021 Programs:

The Board is exploring several topics including pine seedling genetics, a tour of the Hixon lumber mill in Gilmer, feral hogs and an update of the proposed Marvin Nichols Reservoir for these meetings. Please contact a board member if you have an issue that you would like addressed at a future meeting.

NETFLA Contact and Membership Dues Information

Thank you for your NETFLA membership in past years. We hope that Newsletters, Programs and Quarterly Meetings have provided you with useful information that has helped you manage your timber property. We encourage you to continue your membership. Membership dues are \$15.00 per calendar year. If you have not yet renewed your membership for 2020, you can renew at a meeting or mail your check to: **NETFLA, P.O. Box 343, Daingerfield, TX 75638-0343.** Thank you.

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