



# Clippings



**Save the Date!**

**Feb. 17, 2012**

**10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.**

*(Lunch will be provided)*

**Texas Nursery &  
Landscape Association's**

**2012  
Growers'  
Summit**

***An open discussion  
on specific issues  
affecting Texas  
Growers.***

*See page 7 for more details.*

## Widow Spiders

*By Wizzie Brown*

**T**here are four species of widow spiders found in Texas, with the best known being the black widow. Coloration can vary dramatically, but they are typically jet black with two reddish-orange triangles on the underside of the abdomen, forming an hourglass shape (Fig. 1). The triangles sometimes do not touch each other creating a broken hourglass shape. Males and juveniles are smaller and often show more color, with bright markings on their sides or back.

Females lay eggs in an oval sac which can hold from 25 to over 900 eggs (Fig 2). Depending on temperature and time of year, eggs usually hatch after about 20 days. Spiderlings will stay near the egg sac for several days where they can be seen consuming their brothers and sisters. The survivors throw a thread of silk to the wind and are carried off in a process called "ballooning". They eventually locate a sheltered spot where they build a loosely woven web

*(continued on page 4)*



*Fig 1. Female widow spider.*

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Web Page: [www.tnlaonline.org](http://www.tnlaonline.org)  
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## a note from your REGION VIII CHAIR

# Five Reasons I'm Ready for 2012

**A**s Skip Richter wrote in Texas Gardener Magazine, "Readers of this column that garden are feeling irrationally optimistic and itching to turn their entire property into a Garden of Eden." It's only January and spring fever is already setting in. The winter veggies are growing like crazy and we have been enjoying delicious swiss chard at home in our recipes. The local/organic/homegrown fruit and vegetable industry is exploding. Almost all gardening and home improvement magazines are promoting these endeavors. Seems like a good thing to be involved in.

Many business websites, such as bloomberg.com, are predicting a better construction economy than 2011. New housing starts are expected to increase nationwide and many Austin area contractors are busy with renovations.

The recent December rain has greened everything up a little (even though mostly weeds). Unfortunately we lost many plants and trees during the drought and fires of 2011. The Texas Forest Service estimates that between these disasters, Texas has lost 10% of its trees. For our growers and contractors, the good news is that many of these decimated landscapes and wild areas will need revegetation. This should provide some new and unique business opportunities.

I'm excited to be starting a new job as Business Developer for ValleyCrest Companies. I'm always looking forward to new challenges and this will allow me learn about the construction side of our industry.

Finally, I'm optimistic that our local governments are paying close attention to the weather predictions and current lack of water. No one knows what will happen this spring regarding rainfall, but a good lesson learned is that we all can conserve a great amount of water when we are required to do so. In my hometown of Georgetown, our residents were able to conserve as much as 50% when a pipeline failure threatened the supply in Lake Georgetown. Moving forward TNLA will be involved in promoting efficient water use and assuring availability to our members businesses and customers landscapes. Please contact Jim Reaves for the latest on the ongoing water conservation issues. ☺

-Jared Pyka, TNLA Region VIII Chairman

## MISSION STATEMENT

**The Texas Nursery & Landscape Association's mission is to enhance members' business success through legislative/regulatory advocacy, education, networking, and promotion of professionalism.**

## Widow Spiders

(continued from page 1)

and remain for the rest of their lives. As time progresses, the spiders build larger webs to capture larger prey. Males eventually leave their webs to find females for mating. Most females do not eat the male after mating.

Widow spiders do not like being in the open. They can often be found outside in protected areas such as rainspouts, shrubbery, firewood piles or unused BBQ pits. It is also possible to find them in garages, cellars, attics, furniture or electric or water meter



*Fig 2. Widow spider web and egg sac.*



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boxes. Widows are shy creatures and often people are bitten when they accidentally disturb a web.

The bite of a black widow sometimes is not noticed, but when it is, it often feels like a pin prick. The bite location will have two red marks surrounded by redness and swelling. The bite reaction is systemic and intense pain usually occurs within 1-3 hours and continues for up to 48 hours. Other symptoms include tremors, nausea, vomiting, leg cramps, abdominal pain, profuse perspiration and rise in blood pressure. It is also possible for breathing difficulties and unconsciousness to

occur. If bitten by a black widow, immediately seek medical attention.

When working in the yard, it is best to wear leather gloves to avoid being bitten by venomous arthropods. 🐛

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*Wizzie Brown is an Extension Program Specialist with Texas AgriLife Extension Service. She received her Bachelor's of Science in entomology from The Ohio State University and a Master's of Science in entomology from Texas A&M University. After leaving Texas A&M, Wizzie worked in structural pest control before taking a job with Texas AgriLife Extension Service in Austin.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

or help with identification, contact **Wizzie Brown**, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600.

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