



## ***AgriLife Extension Horticulture Team***

By Kimberly Casillas  
Bexar County Master Gardener

At the Bexar County AgriLife Extension Service, you will find experienced staff who lead programming that focuses on many areas, including Agriculture and Natural Resources, 4-H Youth Development, Family and Community Health, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Earth-Kind Horticulture, and Insects & Integrated Pest Management.

The past months have brought changes in the Horticulture team of the Bexar County Texas AgriLife Extension office. Here are our current staff members who you may call on for assistance:

**David Rodriguez**, County Extension Agent – Horticulture, and Bexar County Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Program Coordinator. (<mailto:dhrodriguez@ag.tamu.edu>)

- Oversees the Horticulture Program, including our new Youth Gardens Coordinator -Dominick Ortiz and County Support Staff - Nick Vasquez. Great Team!
- Works with and supports the Bexar County Master Gardener Extension Volunteer Leadership Board regarding the direction of outreach, educational support efforts, and overall needs of the program.
- Farms a one-acre plot of land at the Greenies Urban Farm, off Walters Road, which will be the new home of the AgriLife Extension office.
- Holds seasonal educational gardening and landscape presentations.
- Conducts tomato and other vegetable trials and selects the Rodeo Tomato each year.
- Conducts research trials and demonstrations for the Texas Superstar Plant Program.
- Supports the number one agriculture commodity in the County, the 'Green Industry,' which encompasses 1.6 billion dollars to the local economy and employs over 15,000 people.
- Continues media outreach throughout the year.



David has worked as our Bexar County Extension Agent for 15 years; his favorite project is introducing new plants through the Texas Superstar plant program.



**Denise Perez**, AgriLife Office Supervisor (former Office Assistant – Horticulture) (<mailto:dsperez@ag.tamu.edu>)

Denise has worked for the extension office for 15 years. She wears many hats in the office, and “loves that her position is never boring and there’s always something to do.” She has enjoyed working with BCMG volunteers and though she is no longer the office assistant for Horticulture, she’s still just a phone call away if we ever need her.

**Nick Vazquez** - Office Assistant IV – Horticulture (former receptionist) (<mailto:nick.vazquez@ag.tamu.edu>)

In the office, Nick handles all the horticulture emails, departmental purchase requests, surveys, evaluations, Urban Farm work party emails, and helps at the front desk, since we still need that position filled.



Nick has worked with AgriLife Extension for 6 years. When he first started, Nick assisted at the Children’s Vegetable Garden at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens on Saturdays.



**Dominick Ortiz** - new Youth Gardens Coordinator (<mailto:dominick.ortiz@ag.tamu.edu>)

Dominick assists County Extension Agent David Rodriguez with his projects and coordinates with David at the Greenies Urban Farm. He helps deliver the harvested crops to local charities; attends the Master Gardener intern classes; and helps David and Nick with emails and responses. He is in training and learns something new each day about the many programs housed in the office.

Dominick’s favorite project right now is the Greenies Urban Farm, which continues to yield greater harvests each week. This has been a rewarding project for him, and he appreciates the amount of time and effort both the Extension office and Master Gardeners put into this to make it such a success. “The Master Gardeners I have met while on the project have brought insight to me and have helped exponentially in the success of the farm.” In September, Dominick began working with Bexar County AgriLife extension. He says, “I look forward to making this a great 1<sup>st</sup> year experience for myself!”