



By James R. Jackson

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Now that cold weather has arrived and the mesquite leaves have fallen, the mesquite spraying season is over. This opens the windows for the landowners and range managers to move their improvement focus to prickly pear cactus that can be sprayed during the cold winter months. When cactus invades a landscape, it limits forage production, limits the handling and movement of livestock and can make hunting more difficult on the wildlife side.

The winter months offer an ideal time to spray cactus due to the other vegetation being dormant, thus making it easier to spot the smaller pads due to fewer green plants at this time of year and the typical increase in soil moisture. These factors increase the kill rate on the cactus, however, if we wait for the ideal soil moisture in Coke County I realize that we may never go spray; therefore I would choose for a lesser kill rate than none at all. For most landowners they will choose to spray cactus by hand using either a backpack or an ATV tank, however for the larger landowners that choose to aerial spray cactus the winter is still an ideal time due to the mesquite not having any leaves allowing it to reach the cactus without getting caught on the mesquite leaves.

Once cactus control is done I want to remind all that it is not a onetime solution and that there will be many prickly pear seeds still able to germinate, livestock and wildlife can spread the seeds and cactus plants have the ability to germinate from the pads. This makes it necessary to continue to go over your pasture looking for the new growth.

The recommend spray for individual plant treatment for cactus is 1% surmount, % surfactant and % high-light blue dye the mixture mixed in water. This mixture gives best results when it is applied to both sides of the pads and the pads are wet but not sprayed to the point of running off. For more information on brush spraying come by the Extension office or go to <http://texnat.tamu.edu/about/brush-busters/> for the extension specialist recommendations on how to control the invasive species in the area. As a closing thought I want to leave you with is that you can grow grass under a mesquite even through it is not ideal; however, I never have seen any grass growing under prickly pear cactus.



by Jan Yanez

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### The Best Way To Stick With Your New Year's Resolution Is To Plan Ahead

Chances are, at some time in your life, you've made a New Year's Resolution -- and then broken it. This year, stop the cycle of resolving to make change, but then not following through. If your resolution is to take better care of yourself? Here are 10 tips to help get you started.

#### Be Realistic

The surest way to fall short of your goal is to make your goal unattainable.

#### Plan Ahead

Don't make your resolution on New Year's Eve. If you wait until the last minute, your decisions will be based on your mindset on that particular day. Instead, your New Year's resolution should be planned well before December 31 arrives. If it's already too late for planning to start January 1st, pick another date -- February 1st, your birthday, the anniversary of your diagnosis -- whatever date is meaningful for you.

#### Outline Your Plan

Decide how you will deal with the temptation to skip that exercise class or have one more cigarette. This could include calling on a friend for help, practicing positive thinking and self-talk, or reminding yourself how your bad habit affects your IBD.

#### Make a "Pro" and "Con" List

It may help to see a list of items on paper to keep your motivation strong. Develop this list over time, and ask others to contribute to it. Keep your list with you and refer to it when you need help keeping your resolve.

#### Talk About It

Don't keep your resolution a secret. Tell friends and family members who will be there to support your resolve to change yourself for the better or improve your health. The best case scenario is to find yourself a buddy who shares your New Year's resolution and motivate each other.

#### Reward Yourself

This doesn't mean that you can eat an entire box of chocolates if your resolution is to diet. Instead, celebrate your success by treating yourself to something that you enjoy that does not contradict your resolution. If you've been sticking to your promise to eat better, for example, perhaps your reward could be going to a movie with a friend.



**Dear Santa!** Bronte Postmaster Ray Barnett visits with the Kindergarten class from Bronte Elementary after they mail their letters to Santa Claus.



**Small Town Christmas!** The streets in Robert Lee were lined with spectators at the Small Town Christmas parade held Saturday, December 8, 2012.

#### Track Your Progress

Keep track of each small success you make toward reaching your larger goal. Short-term goals are easier to keep, and small accomplishments will help keep you motivated. Instead of focusing on losing 30 pounds, say, focus on losing that first 5. Keeping a food diary or a symptom journal may help you stay on track.

#### Don't Beat Yourself Up

Obsessing over the occasional slip won't help you achieve your goal. Do the best you can each day, and take each day one at a time.

#### Stick To It

Experts say it takes about 21 days for a new activity, such as exercising, to become a habit, and 6 months for it to become part of your personality. Your new healthful habits will become second-nature in no time.

#### Keep Trying

If your resolution has totally run out of steam by mid-February, don't despair. Start over again! There's no reason you can't make a "New Year's resolution" any time of year.

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