



LAKES

ON ELDRIDGE
NORTH

Volume 3, Issue 9

September 2004

Neighborhood Volunteers Needed

We are looking for someone to keep up with local class and athletic offering for the neighborhood newsletter. We need someone to keep in touch with the YMCA, local youth sports organizations, and any other locations for continuing education. This person would type up the information on a monthly basis to be included in the newsletter.

We also need someone to write up short articles each month on what is taking place at Truit Middle School and Cy-Ridge High School. If you have a child or are a student at one of these schools please consider helping us! Thank you!

Attention Homeowners

Now that property fences have been in place throughout the community for several years, it is time to re-stain them so the stain appears fresh. Having the fences stained adds to the overall appearance of the community. If you need to know what the fence stain is please contact VanMor Properties, Inc. at 281-493-0668 and ask for Dorinda.

RV PARK UPDATE

On July 14, a joint town hall meeting of the Lakes on Eldridge and Lakes on Eldridge North homeowners was held at Kirk Elementary School to discuss the proposed Silver Spur RV Park to be located on the site of the existing Neighborhood Storage Facility on Tanner Road. About 120 homeowners from both communities attended as did representatives of Ryko Development (developers of both LOE and LOEN) and MUD #341.

At issue is the impact on the value of our homes if the owner of the Neighborhood Storage Facility (hereafter referred to as the developer) were to build, as he proposed 57 spots for transient RV's with a club house, a retail strip center and expanded storage facilities on this land. The developer approached MUD #341 several months ago requesting it to consider annexation of the property so that he could receive water, sewer and drainage services for the property. The MUD in turn asked LOE, its principal constituent, to indicate support or non-support for annexation. The LOE Board agreed in principal to annexation provided there were adequate restrictions imposed on the operation of the RV Park and subject to homeowner input at the town hall meeting. The rationale for this decision was that by agreeing to annexation we could legally exercise some control over what happened

on the property but could not without annexation. During the entire process, the LOE Board worked closely with Ryko which has taken a strong leadership position in trying to make the best of this situation.

There was a free-wheeling discussion at the town hall meeting. At the end, it was apparent that the homeowners felt that the proposed development would be detrimental and that they wished to form a committee made up of members of both communities to explore options, including buying the property financed by a special assessment. The LOE and LOEN Boards subsequently agreed to that sentiment and also agreed that the chair of the committee should be an LOE resident while the vice-chair would be an LOEN resident.

At a date following all of this, the developer indicated to the MUD that he was no longer interested in annexation because the related costs were considered prohibitive. Instead, he would expand the storage facilities without the further development of the RV park concept at this time. Despite this, the boards of both communities feel that it would be beneficial to form a committee whose function, at a minimum, would be to monitor development plans for the Neighborhood Storage Facility and be ready with options to deal with them, if necessary.



See next month's newsletter
for details on the
LOEN Halloween Parade.

Lakes on Eldridge North

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

VanMor Properties, Inc. 281-493-0668
 Fax 281-493-5654
 Kate Loeffler, Manager
 Dorinda Obsta (Dori), Administrative Assistant
 Gate Attendant 713-856-6127
 Harris Co. Sheriff - (non-emergency) 713-221-6000
 Cy-Fair Fire Department - (emergency) 281-466-6161
 (non-emergency) 281-550-6663
 Poison Control 1-800-764-7661
 Texas DPS 713-681-1761
 Waste Management 713-695-4055
 (trash collection Mondays & Thursdays)
 Aqua Source 713-983-3602
 (Service or emergencies 24 hrs) 713-983-3604
 Harris County Tax Office 713-224-1919
 Reliant Energy 713-207-7777
 (give pole # of street which is out)
 Entex (gas) 713-659-2111
 Time Warner Cable 713-462-9000
 Houston Chronicle 713-220-7211
 Metro Transit Info 713-635-4000
 Kirk Elementary 713-849-8250
 Truitt Middle School 281-856-1100
 Cy-Falls High School 281-856-1000
 Newsletter Publisher
 Peel, Inc. 806-385-6444
 Adver./Donna Sommer dsommerPEELinc.com, 832-237-4684

Fluoride Level Change

The fluoride level in our drinking water has changed to from 0.2 ppm to 0.4 ppm. The ideal amount is 0.7ppm for older children and 0.3 ppm for infants. Contact your pediatrician or dentist to see if fluoride supplementation is necessary.

Foundry Church's Craft Show and Tea Room



A Shopper's Heaven on Earth!
The Foundry United Methodist Church will host over 100 vendors at its annual Judy Dierker Craft Classic on **Saturday, October 16, 2004, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.** The Craft Show offers customers terrific value and selection in a fun and friendly marketplace.

Enjoy an array of salads, desserts, and coffees at Café La Mission, a Texas tea room with a French flair, open 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Admission to the craft show is FREE; tea room tickets are \$10 each, benefiting local and foreign missions. Come rain or shine! Foundry is located at 8350 Jones Road, 1-½ blocks north of Hwy 290. For more information, call 713-937-9388 or see <http://www.foundrychurch.org/jdcs/>.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Jillian Barkley 713-856-5912 (LOEN)

GOT NEWS??? *Deadline for submitting articles for the Lakes On Eldridge North Newsletter is the 15th of each month.. Submissions are subject to space limitations and editorial approval. E-mail your information to Jillian Barkley, jbarkley@houston.rr.com, not AML.*

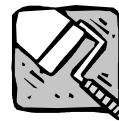
PERSONAL CLASSIFIED ADS: *Deadline for submitting personal classified ads is the 10th of each month for publication in the following month's newsletter. Please contact Jillian Barkley, 713-856-5912, jbarkley@houston.rr.com.*

ADS: *Deadline for submitting ads is the 10th of each month for publication in the following month's newsletter. Please contact Donna Sommer, 832-237-4684, dsommer@PEELinc.com for information on advertising.*

Business Classified Ads

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ON ELDRIDGE NORTH

Back to School time at...

Kirk Elementary

2004 Fall Semester • School/PTO Calendar*

Sept. 1 PTO Meeting 9 am
Sept. 6 Labor Day Holiday
Sept. 8 VIPS Orientation 9:15am & 7pm
Sept. 16 Beich Fundraiser Kickoff
Sept. 17 End of 1st 6 weeks
Sept. 24 Fall Portraits
Sept. 28 Skate Night 6-8 pm
Sept. 30 Beich Fundraiser \$ Due

Oct. 2 Fall Festival 12-4 pm
Oct. 4 PTO Meeting 7-8 pm
Oct. 8 Professional Day/Conferences
Oct. 11 Professional Day
Oct. 18 22 Book Fair
Oct. 26 Skate Night 6-8 pm
Oct. 29 End of 2nd 6 weeks

Nov. 3 PTO Meeting 9 am
Nov. 5 Picture Retakes
Nov. 10 Fundraiser Pick-Up
Nov. 18 Feast Days/ Skate Night 6-8 pm
Nov. 19 Jump Rope for Heart
Nov. 22-26 Thanksgiving Holiday

Dec. 1 PTO Meeting 9 am
Dec. 3 Class Spelling Bee
Dec. 10 PTO Ornament Exchg & Lunch
Dec. 13 VIPS Appreciation Lunch
Dec. 14 PTO provides Staff Luncheon
Dec. 16 Winter Parties/End of 1st semester

January 4, 2005 - 2nd Semester Begins

** Dates/Times subject to change*



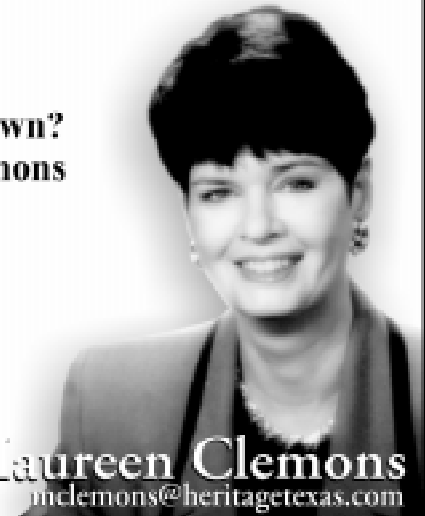
Ann Knoche
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Lakes on Eldridge North

Quest To Be Our Best.....Kirk Elementary 2004-2005

As unbelievable as it seems, by the time you receive this update, our Kirk Tigers almost will have completed their first six-weeks period. And it's clear that we have the makings of another excellent school year.

Our festivities in August were enormously fun, and the turn-out for "Back To School Night" was sensational. Everyone enjoyed Baskin-Robbins ice-cream and had the opportunity to meet our amazing staff. The first day of school went smoothly, as did the first couple of weeks, and we concluded August with our annual Fun Run. You should already have seen our Kirk students sporting their spiffy new, red-white-and-blue school t-shirts. We definitely are on a "Quest To Be Our Best," and we are fortunate to have the strong support of an amazing group of parents and a bonded community to help our Tigers every step of the way.

September is chock-full of activities, from pizza nights at Domino's (2nd) and Cici's (8th) to the kickoff of another fundraiser to a special 50's themed Skate Night at Bear Creek Roller Rink (28th). Our Tigers also will be smiling big for their fall portraits, and we'll extend a special welcome to author Amy McDonald on the 20th. That same day, we are hosting a special evening for our Carverdale parents, followed one week later (27th) by an evening for our bilingual parents.

We are anticipating an exciting October, as well, marked by our first Fall Festival on the 2nd. Please come spend the afternoon enjoying




games, activities, food, and music in the company of our Kirk families and neighbors. Tickets are \$5 per person and are available in advance through the school. Corresponding order sheets already have been sent home with our Kirk Tigers. Mark your calendars!

And in case you don't know or may not understand the real value of fundraisers like Fall Festival, please consider that there are many items/services available to our children that we sometimes assume are provided by the district. But that's just not true. It is through the combined efforts of our Kirk Tigers and the Kirk PTO that Kirk Elementary has such fabulous resources. In the 2003-2004 school year, they raised enough money to contribute to technology and workroom supplies; library books; dictionaries; phonics programs; equipment and supplies for Art, Music, and PE; supplies for our Nurse and Counselor; Science and Math programs; Staff Development and Teacher Appreciation; field trips; class celebrations; and a shade/canopy for the playground. The PTO also is pleased to have been able to provide Kirk Elementary with one of the first Visitor Tracking Systems to be used by the district.

So please don't ever think that your participation in a fundraiser isn't appreciated or well worth the effort. All of our Kirk Tigers are tremendously grateful for the support we receive from our families, neighbors, and business partners. GO KIRK TIGERS!

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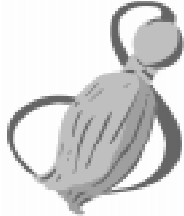
Attention Mommies!

Wanted: Boys between the ages of 3 mos. to 1 yr.

We're forming a play group for boys, since there seem to be SO many girls...not that girls aren't allowed, of course...but we figure that it's time to meet more kids (and Mommies)! Please contact Whitney Wright-Steif, mother of Jack Steif (8 mos.) at 713-937-1454 for more information. email: wright_steif@hotmail.com

Custom Sewing for the Home

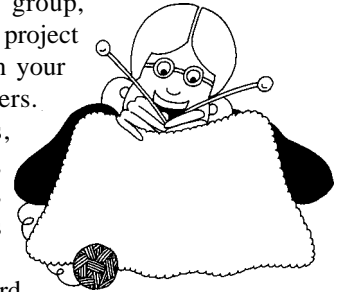
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Meetings will be held the third Wednesday of each month from 9-12. For location of meeting or any questions, please contact either Cindy (832-467-0950) cecklund@Houston.rr.com; Lisa (832-467-2781) lmrjkk@earthlink.net; or Belinda Walker (832-467-9391) jamewalk@prodigy.net.

Meetings

Sept 15 - Nancy Threadgold - RSVP 713-466-8605
Oct 15 - Cindy Ecklund - RSVP 832-467-0950



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Lakes on Eldridge North

ATTENTION

Jersey Village H.S. Graduates

Did you graduate from Jersey Village High School between 1975 and 1982? If so, we are looking for you! The Class of 1979 is hosting an all-class reunion on Saturday, October 2, 2004 at Tin Hall in Cypress, Texas. You can get all the details at one of the following websites: Classmates.com; TinHall.com or by contacting *Elaine Wernecke-Chandler* directly at ElaineChandler@promessage.com. Spread the word so that we can see all of our old classmates!

For up-to-date announcements and information check our neighborhood website:
WWW.LOENHOA.COM

Cy-Fair College Hosts Fall Film Series

Join Cy-Fair College professors and student organizations as they host more than 20 films this fall featuring a variety of Hollywood, independent and foreign releases followed with discussions and held at the Barker Cypress campus and Fairbanks Center at no charge to students or the community. The film series, which is part of an effort to promote cultural activities on campus, is also offered as a free continuing education class. Those interested may register at the film event.

September film schedule:

Sept. 1 (noon) - "Salvador"

Sept. 2 (7 p.m.) - "House of Sand and Fog"

Sept. 7 (7 p.m.) - "Pelle the Conqueror"

Sept. 9 (7 p.m. at Fairbanks) - "11'09'01-September 11"

Sept. 15 (2:30 p.m.) - "Like Water for Chocolate"

Sept. 16 (7 p.m.) - "The Invisible Children"

Sept. 21 (7 p.m.) - "Pi"

Sept. 22 (2:30 p.m. at Fairbanks) - "It Happened One Night"

Sept. 30 (2:30 p.m.) - "The Contender"

Contact Robert O'Brien by phone at 281-290-3257, or e-mail him at robert.obrien@nhmccd.edu for information.

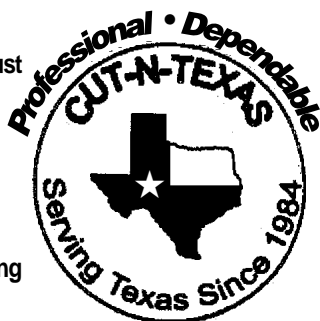
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Community L.I.F.E. Programs Have Something for Everyone

Cy-Fair College announces the Learning, Inspiration, Fellowship, and Enrichment program topics for September. This month's programs will help adults clear clutter Sept. 1, find the right words for important moments Sept 8, decorate a cake Sept. 15, "punch up" Power Point presentations Sept. 22 and research genealogy Sept. 29. **These Wednesday, 10 a.m. programs held in the Cy-Fair College Branch Library, are free to adults in the community. Call 281-290-3213 for L.I.F.E. program information.**

Neighborhood News

Neighbor had a baby? Child with a great athletic or academic achievement? Group activities with information to share? We want your news!!!!!! Please submit to Jillian at jbarkley@houston.rr.com.

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Young at Heart, But Still at Risk

Baylor College of Medicine

Houston – Active baby boomers who dread “getting old” can follow some simple lifestyle steps.

“As we age, our health risks increase,” says Dr. Lawrence Chan, professor of medicine and molecular and cellular biology and chief of the division of diabetes, endocrinology and metabolism at BCM. “Today’s baby boomers can lower their risks of illness associated with aging by adopting a healthier lifestyle.”

The American Cancer Society, American Diabetes Association and American Heart Association recently announced four guidelines that can reduce the risks of developing cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke:

- * Eat a healthy diet
- * Be active
- * Don’t smoke
- * See a physician

“I recommend a balanced diet that is low in simple sugars and high in fiber. Thirty minutes of moderate exercise, five days a week has also proven to lower the risk of developing diabetes,” says Chan, the Houston spokesman for the American Diabetes Association.

Chan encourages baby boomers to attain their ideal body weight, but warns that a trim exterior doesn’t always signify first-rate health. Regular visits to a physician are necessary to evaluate individual health risks.

The risk factors of cancer, diabetes, heart disease and stroke overlap, so decreasing the risk of one disease will essentially decrease the risks of others, says Chan.

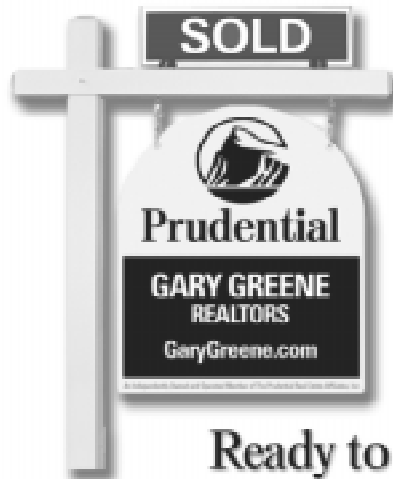


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Thyme Out for Gardening: Landscape Installation

Have you decided on the plants for your new flowerbeds? Do you have HOA approval? Are your materials lined up? You still have a couple of weeks to work out the final details of your landscape project before it's time to really "dig in." This month, we're talking about landscape installation and even if you plan to use a professional landscaper for your project, knowing more about the process will help you make sure your project is completed correctly.

Depending on the scope of your project, installing your landscape will involve coordinating many details. Get organized ahead of time! Arrange for things like soil and stone delivery, and have your tools available when you need them. You really don't want to stop in the middle of a task and head to the garden or rental center for something you've forgotten.

"Because I need to order my soil ahead of time," you might ask, "what kind of soil and mulch should I use and how much will I need?" Because of the grading process that builders must use to insure our houses have good foundations, the soil around our homes usually consists of compacted clay and sand - almost none of the native topsoil remains. To improve the existing soil and provide a good foundation for plant growth, you need compost. Compost is decayed organic matter that contains beneficial microbes and slow-release nutrients. Good landscape mixes for improving and creating average 4-6 inch raised planting beds will combine compost and aged mulch or other vegetative matter, and sandy loam topsoil. The percentage of components you want in your soil mix is determined by use; avoid heavier mixes with over 50% topsoil unless you are trying to build a berm or a very tall raised bed. To choose your soil, visit the local soil yards and examine their samples. Give the samples the squeeze test: when you squeeze a handful of a slightly moist good quality soil mix, the clump should form a ball and hold its shape until the ball is disturbed and then it should easily crumble. Ask about the mix's components, recommended use, price for bagged soil vs. bulk, and delivery fees.

Many soil experts recommend that you run a soil test on your existing soil before you amend your beds so that you can determine exactly what nutrients you'll need. Soil test bags and instructions can be obtained from the Harris County office of the Texas Cooperative Extension Service in Bear Creek Park, 281-855-5600. For a small fee, the soil tests are analyzed at Texas A & M and

a soil report is mailed to you with recommendations. I admit that I haven't run a soil test on our landscape, although I know it would provide good information. I tend to take a more casual approach to gardening and simply improve the soil over time with compost mixes, organic fertilizers and mulch.

When you've selected your soil mix, estimate the number of cubic yards you'll need to complete your project. Here's a handy formula from *Habitat Gardening for Houston* by Mark Bowen: to find the # of cubic yards of material needed, multiply the length of the area in feet x the width of the area in feet x depth of the area (how thick you want the material to be) in inches and divide the multiplication total by 324.

Another task you'll want to complete ahead of time is to have your underground utilities located. If you call any one of the following three free services at least 48 hours before you plan to do any digging, representatives from the utility companies will come to your house and mark your gas, electric, cable, and phone lines. The numbers are: Texas One Call, 800-245-4545; Lone Star Notification Center, 800-669-8344; and Dig Toss, 800-344-8377. With your utility lines marked, you can adjust your landscape layout if necessary and avoid (I can't resist) a shocking surprise.

As you're taking care of those last few details and getting your project organized, think about the logical order in which each stage of your landscape installation should occur. These stages could take days or weeks, depending on the size of your project. More complex projects, such as those involving swimming pools and patios, will require careful scheduling, especially if you've hired professionals for various parts of the job. Following is a general order of events for a basic landscape project. First, you need to translate your scaled, paper plan onto real-life solid ground. Lay out your hardscape areas (walkways, patios, etc.) and your planting beds using a measuring tape and a garden hose for shaping. If you want or need to make adjustments to the design, now is the time to do so. Outline the areas with contractor's spray paint, or use flour if you don't need longer lasting marks. If you have existing irrigation equipment, turn off the water supply and cap off or dig up any sprinkler sections that aren't where they will need to be in the new landscape.

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Thyme Out for Gardening (continued from page 11)

Next, prepare your flowerbeds and install your hardscapes. As there are too many different methods of hardscape construction to discuss here, consult one of the "how-to" books on the market to determine the best installation approach. Keep your construction needs in mind as you prepare your flower beds; in situations where you want a flowerbed around a new patio, for example, complete the patio before preparing the flowerbed as the patio construction process will probably destroy the work you've done on the bed area. Also, remember to protect any plants that will remain in your landscape. Smaller plants may have to be removed temporarily (see below) while larger trees and shrubs should be cordoned off at the drip lines to prevent damage from equipment. Don't place loads of soil or stone around the tree or its drip line. Most of a tree's feeder root system is located in the first twelve inches of soil and roots often extend beyond the tree's drip line. Heavy weight will compact soil, damage roots, and interfere with the tree's ability to obtain water, oxygen and nutrients.

After preparing the beds, install or rework your irrigation system. This is also a good time to place downspout drainage pipes in the bed if necessary. If desired, place edging material (stone, brick, or steel) around the beds. Then install your plants and mulch. If you plan to install low voltage landscape lighting, some of the wiring can be completed before you put in your plants. Accent lighting for special trees or shrubs should be placed after those trees or shrubs are planted.

Proper bed preparation is the key to giving your plants a healthy start, and every gardener has a favorite technique. When preparing a brand new bed or expanding an old one, I like to edge around the painted outline and then remove grass and any existing plants that I don't plan to keep. The grass can be removed with a shovel, hoe, or a rented sod cutter. The goal is to remove the grass stems and roots while leaving as much soil as possible. Some gardeners use herbicide to kill the grass, a process that can take days and kill other plants if you're not careful.

If I want to relocate a plant and know it will be at least a day before I can put it in the ground again, I carefully dig it up before I continue with the bed preparation. Then I place the plant in a container with soil and keep it watered and in a shady

spot until I'm ready to replant it. Be very careful while removing grass around trees and other plants that will remain in place - you don't want to disturb their root systems.

After the grass and plants are removed, till the existing soil to a depth of several inches. Your goal is to fluff up the soil and break up large clods. Some gardeners use a tiller or cultivator (they can be rented), while others use shovels, hoes, and garden forks. To avoid damaging the structure of the soil, the soil should be slightly moist when you till, not dry or soaking wet. This initial tilling stage is also the time to clear as much construction trash out of your soil as you can. When we re-landscaped our front yard, we removed 14 bricks from just one small area! Next, till in four to six inches of your compost mix and then smooth the surface with a rake. Some gardeners mix slow release fertilizer into the beds at this time, but I prefer to wait until spring to fertilize because the compost alone will give the plants a good start. Remember that you should not till near existing tree or shrub roots, or around irrigation pipes and underground utilities. Lightly mix the soil by hand near pipes and simply layer the soil around plant roots.

Another cautionary note about trees - while some tree experts debate whether you should plant or even mulch around a tree, most agree that you cannot put more than 2 inches of topsoil per year on top of existing tree roots or you risk damaging the tree. Even with a soil mix that has a low percentage of topsoil, experts recommend that if you feel that you must have a flower bed surrounding an existing tree, avoid raising the bed more than two inches a year. Placing new trees in a new or existing flower bed is probably the better way to create the look you want, as long as the planting area is large enough for the tree roots to spread out and you don't add topsoil to the area every year.

Some gardeners prefer the following slower, less labor intensive method of bed preparation. Spread a thick layer of compost over the grass in your new bed and cover the area with newspaper sections, using 6 to 8 sheets with a 3-inch overlap. Wet down the newspaper and cover with several inches of mulch. Wait several weeks until the grass has been smothered and install your plants by

Thyme Out for Gardening (continued on page 13)

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scraping back the mulch in the area you wish to plant, cutting a hole in the newspaper and digging your planting hole. Put the soil around the plant roots, replace the mulch, and move on to the next plant. This method might not work very well for deep rooted shrubs if the original soil underneath the grass was compacted, nor would it work well for plants that really need a tall raised bed for drainage.

Whatever your chosen method for creating your beds, remember to contour your beds to maintain the natural drainage of your property. Also remember to keep the height of your flowerbed, including mulch, at least 2 inches below the weep holes in your brick and the area where the foundation joins the brick. Making sure this area is clear will help keep moisture and insects out of the house.

Now you're ready to arrange and install your plant material. Keeping the principle of "the right plant in the right location" (size, sun and drainage requirements) in mind, place your plants where you think you want them to go. A plant's form, color, and texture will also influence where you place it. It's important to put your plants together in an arrangement that's pleasing and comfortable to you. If you're having trouble facing a blank canvas, here are a few suggestions to get you started. Place trees and foundation shrubs first and build from this framework, or arrange your plants like a choir (an old standby) and place short plants in front, medium in the middle, and tall in the back. Group plants together using a minimum of 3 of the same plant; use more of the same plants for wider sweeps of color. Or follow the approach of garden writer Felder Rushing - he says that an arrangement can't go wrong if you place "spikey, roundy, and frilly" plants together. Work with a family member or a friend and bounce ideas off one another. Walk across the street and view your yard from another perspective. If you try something and aren't pleased with the results, just change it. Remember that this isn't life or death and have fun with the process because it's your garden!

When your plants are arranged to your satisfaction, it's time to put them in

the ground. Outline the container's location with a shovel, move the plant out of the way, and start digging. Your planting hole should be the same depth as the plant in its container, and a little wider. Holes for trees should be a little shallower and roughly twice as wide as the container. I recently heard a speaker advising gardeners to make an "ugly" planting hole for plants, especially trees. An ugly hole is one with rough rather than smooth sides so that a plant's roots can get a better foothold and are encouraged to grow out into the surrounding area rather than circling around in the planting hole. Circling roots don't really help anchor the plant and can cause the plant to essentially strangle itself.

When you remove the plant from its pot, gently rough up the roots and spread them out a little as you put the plant in the ground to again encourage the roots to grow outward. Fill the hole around the plant about half way with the soil you previously removed from the hole and gently water the soil. Finish filling the hole and water again. The watering eliminates air pockets and settling in the soil that could cause root disease. Most plants should be sitting at about the same level in the soil as they did in the pot. For trees and large shrubs, however, the top of the root ball should be slightly above the ground level after planting. If you're planting the tree in the middle of the yard, do not amend the soil in your planting hole. Use the existing soil and maybe a handful of compost to backfill around the tree.

As you complete your planting areas, spread a three-inch layer of coarse native mulch or pine needles over the soil and around the plants. Try not to mix the mulch into the soil as this could lead to nitrogen loss in the soil. Keep the mulch an inch or two away from tree trunks and plant stems to minimize insect and excess moisture damage.

Depending on the temperature and rainfall, water your new plantings daily or several times a week at first. For most plants, the root ball and the soil should be moist, but not soggy. If you've planted some bog plants in your low-lying areas, make sure they have a plentiful water supply. For the first few months until the plant roots start to spread, water near the base of the plant at the root

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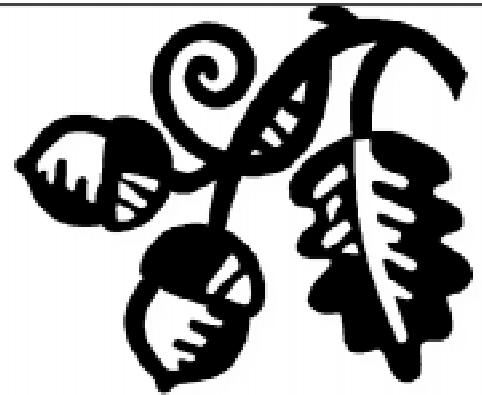
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Thyme Out for Gardening (continued from page 13)

ball. For most plants, slowly cut back on your watering until you're watering only when the soil is dry two inches below ground level.

New trees should be watered every day for the first week, every other day for the second week, and so on until you are watering once a week for the remainder of the first year. Avoid fertilizing your trees until their second spring because excessive top growth can inhibit root development. Also try to avoid staking your trees unless they are top heavy or in a high wind area as staking can interfere with the tree trunk's strength and flexibility development. If you must stake a tree, use a two-stake method with a soft covering on the area of rope or wire that touches the tree trunk. Do not girdle the trunk, and remove the supports at the end of the tree's first year in the ground.

Here are two more points to remember. First, maintain your new flowerbeds. Weed seeds sprout readily in new flowerbeds because they've been disturbed and exposed to better conditions. New weeds can also be introduced through the soil mixes and mulches. If you weed regularly as your plants grow in, and apply additional mulch whenever the mulch layer in your beds gets down to less than an inch in thickness, you will eventually control most new weed growth. Second, even if you've done everything right, you will probably lose a few plants in the first few months. Stress, disease, and insects can take their toll and it's hard to predict the effects of seasonal sun and temperature changes until you've lived with a landscape for a few years. Don't worry too much about plant loss; learn what you can from the experience, get some more plants and try again. Above all, enjoy your new landscape and remember that your garden is always evolving. Don't hesitate to move plants, change your beds and plant something new if you want to.

Fall seminars and plant sales hosted by area gardening groups are great places to get more local gardening information and buy interesting plants that are well suited to our area. If you want to learn about the basics of plant propagation, attend a seminar on September 18th sponsored by the Texas Cooperative Extension Service and the Harris County Master Gardeners. The seminar will be held at 3033 Bear Creek Drive and attendees will learn about starting plants from seeds and cuttings. Call Scott Hume at 281-855-5600 for fee and registration information.

Don't miss the Harris County Master Gardener plant sale on September 25, from 8:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at the Texas Cooperative Extension building in Bear Creek Park, 3033 Bear Creek Drive. Local author Karen Breneman will give a talk at 9:30 a.m. on "Water Gardening with Nature". There's always a great selection of native and well-adapted plants, including antique roses and herbs and you can also buy gardening books and compost. Again, call 281-855-5600 for more information. A Houston tradition continues October 7-9 with the Garden Club of Houston's annual Bulb and Plant Mart. The sale is held at Westminster United Methodist Church, 5801 San Felipe at Bering, and features a large selection of hard to find bulbs and plants for the Houston area, including natives, tropicals, and fruit trees. Take a wagon and go early for the best selection; see www.gchouston.org for more information. Watch the gardening articles in The Houston Chronicle for calendar listings of more seminars and sales. Until next month, happy gardening!

By Lisa M. Rawl, Harris County Master Gardener
lmrjkk@earthlink.net

Library Offers Free Computer Workshops

Free Saturday Computer Workshops will be held at the Harris County Public Library Cy-Fair College Branch Sept. 11 with an "Introduction to Computers," Sept. 18 with an "Introduction to PowerPoint" and Sept. 25 with an "Introduction to Word." All sessions, designed for community members high-school age and older, will be held from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. in LNRC 212. Classes are limited to 20 people, but walk-ins are welcome on a space-available basis. To register, call the Reference Desk at 281-290-3213 or e-mail cyfairlibrary@nhmccd.edu.

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Teenage Jobseekers

The following young people are interested in making a little extra money. If you would like to be included, removed, or updated in the next issue, please contact Jillian Barkley, 832-243-0000 or e-mail jbarkley@houston.rr.com (LOEN) *All information must be received by the 10th of the month.*

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