

Trail Writer

The Official Publication of the
Winchester Trails
Maintenance Assoc. Social Committee

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July 2011



GREEN THUMB CORNER

This year's lack of rainfall has been brutal for our grass and shrubs and it shows the value of using low-maintenance perennials and native southwestern plants that are tolerant of the heat. Yaupon is an attractive small tree, and dwarf yaupon is an excellent hardy shrub for creating low hedges. Lantana, although considered a weed by some people, is a tough drought-resistant plant that is becoming more popular every year and is now available in a number of attractive colors. Check with the local nurseries for other naturalized Texas plants.

If you decide to do any lawn feeding during a dry spell, make sure that you water well to avoid the grass being "burned" by the concentrated fertilizer. And don't forget to give the trees an occasional deep watering by allowing a hose to trickle at the base of the trunk for a few hours - particularly important if we have any prolonged dry spells.

If your spring annuals are past their best, don't hesitate to pull them up and replace with fresh plants. Or plant seeds of quick-growing varieties (such as zinnia, marigold, petunia and portulaca) to provide color until late fall. Bear in mind that when your impatiens plants get too "leggy" you can cut them back and obtain a second showing for late summer and fall; just keep them well watered. And if you would like your own display of bluebonnets next spring, now is the time to sow seed (actually, anytime between now and January).

Established annuals should be fed every few weeks with a complete plant food. Liquid fertilizer works well, or you can make your own by dissolving a handful of 13-13-13 in a two-gallon watering can. Soak beds as needed and keep well mulched. Patio plants dry out very fast if they are out in the open, particularly clay pots, and hanging baskets also need frequent watering.

Tomato plants are usually past their best by the middle of July, and should be pulled up to allow reworking the bed ready for replanting in August. Although most popular tomato varieties are "indeterminate", meaning that they will continue to grow and bear fruit indefinitely until killed by frost, you'll get a much better crop of fall tomatoes by starting again with fresh plants. Peppers, on the other hand, can be left to grow through the summer into fall, and okra and eggplant are very happy in the heat.

There's not a lot of exciting gardening activity to write about at this time of year, so I usually take the opportunity to say a few words about composting. This is a great way to avoid those bags of grass clippings lining the curb on garbage day, and produce something useful in the process. Together with weeds, leaves, shrub clippings and vegetable scraps you can produce a rich and nutritious humus which can be used as a mulch or dug into the beds as a "free" organic fertilizer and soil enrichment. All you need is a little unused space in an out-of-the-way corner

or behind the garage. I like to construct a number of adjacent open-fronted bins, about 5' wide by 3' deep and 3' high, using scrap lumber or chicken wire (the latter is good because it allows aeration). Having more than one bin allows you to easily cycle the composting materials from one pile to the next, every month or so, to get good aeration and mixing, a lot easier than trying to turn over the material in situ. You can throw almost any organic material in there, including tea leaves, coffee grounds and eggshells, but no meat products because you may attract foraging animals. It helps to arrange alternating layers of different textures, also to add a few shovels of soil every now and then to provide extra bacteria, and it should be kept moist.

Phil Richards- Prich8935@aol.com

UPCOMING EVENTS



JULY 2011

4Happy 4th of July!

AUGUST 2011

3 Board Meeting
(7 PM at the clubhouse)
22First day of School
27 Pool hours return to
weekend schedule(10AM to 9PM)

Winchester Trails

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Sheriff, Non-911 Calls713-221-6000

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NEWSLETTER

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SECURITY ADVISORY

Hope you all have big plans for the summer! With that in mind, it is important to remember a few basic precautions, should your plans include extended time away from your home.

- Alert your neighbors that you will be gone with the dates and emergency numbers, should they need to get in touch with you. This is probably the single best move you can make in your absence.
- Have your newspaper and mail service put on hold during your absence so that there is no indication you are not home.
- Should you have a security system, alert your security company of your time away.
- Notify the Harris County Sheriff's Department at 713.221.6000 of your plans to be gone. The dispatcher will then alert the neighborhood contract deputy.
- Have some lights in your home on timers that go off and on in the evenings, giving signs that someone is in the home.
- Be sure all doors are secured including your garage main door and side doors, as these are easy access for anyone looking to steal.

Using these tips will help protect your property and its contents from those that want your stuff. It will also help you become familiar with your neighbors so that you can assist them, should they take time away from their homes as well.

Secondly, there has been a sharp increase in the number of break-ins and assaults of residents in surrounding neighborhoods. These crimes have included multiple "smash and grab" car thefts from contents-only to the cars themselves being taken. We have experienced a few car thefts in our neighborhood, but not as many as those closer to the Beltway and those with multiple in-and-out access to their neighborhoods. We are lucky in this area, having just one way in and one way out of the neighborhood; however, we have had some instances where some have accessed us using the bayou lanes. The Sheriff's Department is aware of this issue and is monitoring accordingly. In regards to the assaults, several methodologies have been utilized. The most consistent to date has been the crooks knocking on the door to see if anyone is home and if so, they are faking problems like car trouble. If the resident is not home, they just go around to the rear of the property to break in. If the resident is home and refuses to open the door, they use several reasons why you should open the door like car trouble or lost animals, and some have even faked an injury walking away from the front door so that you are tricked into opening the door. Do not hesitate to call the Sheriff's Department at 713.221.6000 if you see anything suspicious, or dial 911 in case of emergency.

Lastly, our older children are out of school, and some have little to nothing to do except find ways to get in trouble. Be advised this does take place and we need to keep an eye out for this activity. While most issues here are juvenile, they are annoying and cause us grief when they present themselves. These issues will most likely occur at night and again are mostly juvenile in nature but still criminal when it happens to you!

Crime is and has been on the rise over the last year in our area due to the state of the economy. Folks are unemployed, and some are reaching desperate measures. Others are doing what they have

(Continued on Page 3)

Security Advisory - (Continued from Page 2)

to do to survive like garage sales and estate sales. These measures bring sometimes unwanted people into the neighborhood, so if you do have these types of sales, please limit them, and at the very least, keep an eye on those that show up to buy. We all need to be aware of our surroundings at all times. We are our best deterrent when it comes to crime prevention. Do your part and watch what is going on around your and your neighbor's properties and report any activity that looks suspicious. In other words, "better safe than sorry".

Again, have a great and safe summer!

NOT AVAILABLE
ONLINE

**GOT A
PORTABLE STEREO
IN THE GARAGE?**

If you have a portable stereo (or radio) that is not being used, we are trying to locate one for the lifeguards, to be used when no one is at the pool. It will not interfere with pool operations. We have an electrical outlet, so battery operation is not required. Please check and see if you have any type of radio that you can donate.

We appreciate your help.

*Thank you,
Pool Committee.*



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MILESTONES

**NEW TEENAGERS
HAPPY 13TH!**

07/07 - Justin Knighten

**NEW DRIVERS
HAPPY 16TH!**

07/06 - Bowin Gutierrez

07/19 - Andrew Gafrick

07/21 - Hannah King

07/30 - Kristin Hudgins

**NEW VOTERS
HAPPY 18TH!**

07/04 - Joshua Hester

07/16 - Victoria Turner

07/18 - Sara O'Shea

07/23 - Jena Foreman

**NEW ADULTS
HAPPY 21ST!**

07/02 - John Wilkes

**HAPPY 10TH
ANNIVERSARY!**

07/14 - James &
Hollie Sailors

**HAPPY 25TH
ANNIVERSARY!**

07/05 - H.D. &
Bunnie Woodruff

07/19 - Steve &
Debbie Griesbach

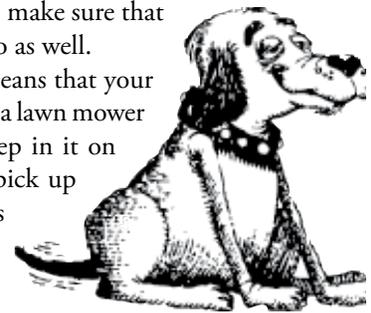
*Melissa Zmerzlikar
directory@
winchestertrails.com*

PICKING UP AFTER YOUR DOG

When you take your dog for a walk in the neighborhood, be considerate of your neighbors. If your dog relieves himself of herself in someone's yard, do the responsible thing and pick up after your dog. If you don't regularly purchase bags from the pet stores, this is a great way to reuse plastic grocery bags. Place your hand inside of the bag, using the bag as a glove to pick up the dog waste. You can then tie the bag to the dog leash if you don't want to carry it for the remainder of your walk. The bags are easily disposed of in a trash can.

Plan ahead so that you always have a bag or two with you before you leave your house for a walk. I keep a bag attached to my dogs' leash so that I always have at least one on our daily walks. If your children take your dogs out, make sure that they are equipped with a bag or two as well.

Not picking up after your dog means that your neighbor has to do it for you, or that a lawn mower spreads the waste so that others step in it on their walks. No neighbor likes to pick up after someone else's dog, and no likes a messy sidewalk! Let's keep the neighborhood friendly and clean!



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TIPS FOR A HEALTHY SUMMER - *Eat Smarter & Move More*

Submitted by Sarah S. Jordan, MS

The 4th of July holiday is almost here, and along with it comes good food, parties, and great times with family and friends. These things pretty much go hand in hand with summer.

Summer is a very common time for people to fall off the “health wagon,” but it doesn’t have to be that way. Eating right and getting enough activity can certainly be a challenge, especially when holidays and travel are involved. But the keys are: being consistent, making good choices, eating in moderation, and purposely finding ways to move more. Here are some tips to make your summer a healthier one for your family and friends.

Small Changes = Big Results

Making small changes for your summer cookouts and potlucks can equal big nutritional improvements.

Traditional Summer Food A More Healthy Alternative

Hot dogs	Turkey dogs
Hamburger	Turkey burger
Potato salad	Fruit salad
Chips and high fat dip	Assorted vegetables and hummus
Fried chicken	Grilled chicken kabobs with veggies
Pie	Fresh pineapple
Soda and sweet tea	Iced tea with lemon
Using high-fat mayonnaise in dishes	
.....	Use low-fat mayo or the kind that has olive oil in it

Healthy Recipe Swap: You can even request that guests bring a healthy dish and include the recipe along with the dish. After the event, the party host types up all of the recipes and emails them to party guests. Just like that - everyone is equipped with healthy things to try on their own!

Get Movin’! Instead of a party revolving solely around the food involved, why not create a “buffet of games” and activity to center the event around instead? Here are some ideas for fun backyard games to try this summer with your family and friends. Just be sure to let your guests know the “active” theme ahead of time so they can dress accordingly and be prepared to move.

Host a miniature version of the Olympics: This can consist of things like wheelbarrow races, three legged races, running, water balloon tosses, and team relays. Have prizes for the teams.

Create an art contest using chalk: Have three judges and give out prizes for the most creative pieces of art. And maybe even to the adult with the most “artfully challenged” piece of “art.”

Play a classic game of “Kick the Can.” Make sure you have at least 3-4 people playing this game. One person is “it” and guards the “can.” (Can needs to be in an open space.) Other players hide while

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Winchester Trails

CRIME REPORT MAY 2011

According to the reports by the Harris County Sheriff's Office, published on <http://www.CrimeReports.com>, the crimes reported in the Winchester Trails neighborhood during the month of May 2011 are as follows:

Theft from VehicleMinturn Lane
Sexual Assault (Online) Pearl Drive

Please report anything suspicious to the Harris County Sheriff's Department at 713.221.6000.

SAVE THE DATE!

The Fourth Annual Trails Treasures Luncheon will be October 2, 2011 at the Clubhouse from 11:00am until 3:00pm

RSVP Yvonne Fortner, 281-970-1894
or fortnerjoe@sbcglobal.net.

Mark your calendars and join us for food and fun.

Tips for a Healthy Summer - (Continued from Page 5)

the "it" person counts to 20 and then goes to find the other players. Captured (tagged) players go to "jail." Anyone not captured can kick the can, which sets all jailed players free. If the "it" person finds all players before the can is kicked, the "it" person wins the game.

Have a Hula-Hoop contest: Crank up the fun music, and see who can twirl the longest!

Create a canvas: Hang an old white sheet on your fence or clothesline and let the creativity flow while your guests create a beautiful work of art!

Send your guests on a scavenger hunt: There are many ways to get creative with this, including giving the hunt a theme to match your party, having guests find things in nature and draw pictures of what they find, or having your guests do something (ex: 10 jumping jacks) every time they find something on the list.

Slip and Slide! Give your party a water theme to beat the heat. Set up two identical slip and slides and see who slides the fastest and/or the farthest. Crown your champion. Test out other games like horseshoes, washers, Bocce ball, four-square, hopscotch, whiffle-ball, or kick ball.

Here's to a Healthy & Active Summer Ahead.
Cheers!



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mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat	sun
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Typically more children drown in JULY than in any other month!

For more information, check out our website at

www.colinshope.org

DROWNING CAN STILL OCCUR EVEN IF YOU KNOW HOW TO SWIM

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Most children are out of sight or missing for less than 5 minutes and usually in the presence of 1 or both parents.



Most children die who are submerged for as little as 6-10 minutes.

Children who drown may not **scream, splash, or struggle**. They can silently slip beneath the water, even with adults & lifeguards present.

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