

Trail Writer

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

Volume 7, Issue 12
www.winchestertrails.com

December 2011

Holidays in The Trails!

Saturday, December 10, 2011

Winchester Trails Clubhouse
6pm -8pm

- We will have cookies and milk with Santa.
- Kids, bring your Christmas "wish list" to share with Santa.
- Dress appropriately to enjoy the festive hayride through our neighborhood.

Santa's Helper



UPCOMING EVENTS

DECEMBER 2011

10

"Holiday in the Trails" At dusk.
Pictures and cookies with Santa 6PM - 8PM
.... bring your Christmas wish list for Santa
and dress appropriately for the hay ride

20

Happy Hanukkah!

21

12/21/11 - 01/03/12
CFISD Student Holiday

22

Winter begins

25

Merry Christmas!

26

Happy Kwanzaa!

31

New Year's Eve

Winchester Trails

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Clubhouse Rentals

Lisa Stephens (*voicemail-calls returned w/in 24 hrs*)..832-592-3297

Website and Directory Editor

Melissa Zmerzlikardirectory@winchestertrails.com

Tennis Committee

Johnny Hooker281-890-9123

Yard of the Month

Ann Warnkeyom@winchestertrails.com

Stork Committee

Dana Hong.....stork@winchestertrails.com

Neighborhood Information

Ron Matthews info@winchestertrails.com

Welcome Committee

Debbie Griesbachwelcome@winchestertrails.com

Newsletter Editor

Melanie Scales newsletter@winchestertrails.com

Mary Gwynne

Social Committee

Lisa Wooldridge.....social@winchester.com

Marquee and Signs

Julie FletcherMarquee@winchestertrails.com

Tykes Children's Committee

Kerry Thomas.....tykes@winchestertrails.com

eBlast - Susie Mallory eblast@winchestertrails.com

Trails Treasures

Paulette Walker..... paulette_walker@sbcglobal.net

MAINTENANCE ASSOCIATION DIRECTORS

Greg Johnson832-237-8178

Jim Malone281-890-3803

Ian McCrory713-818-0138

Walter Sonne.....281-894-7117

Paulette Walker281-894-5708

Jim Malone is the security representative for WT.

His email can be found on the Security page of the Trails website.

MUD #9 OFFICERS

David Gurghigian, President281-894-4140

Jeff Ottmann, Vice President.....281-469-1465

Wayne Wilcox, Secretary281-894-6233

Jim Giese, Assistant Secretary281-890-5207

Sandor Karpathy281-955-1138

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6 - 8 pm

Green Thumb Corner

Cooler weather means that nothing is growing very quickly, and that's probably a good thing because we have plenty of other activities to keep us busy during the holiday season. But there is still a lot that can be done in the yard and garden if you have some spare time on your hands, such as pulling up those usual winter weeds that always show up when the grass is in poor health, as it is this year after the punishing heat and drought of summer. This is the season for soil cultivation, planting of new trees and shrubs, fertilization of established ones, pruning, mulching, clean-up and bed preparation. A little effort expended now, while it's pleasantly cool, will get things in good shape and reduce the workload when spring warmth returns.

This month and the next two are generally considered the best for planting trees and shrubs. Before planting, check drainage by digging a hole and filling with water - if it takes more than 24 hours to drain, you will need to improve the situation by digging an 'X'-shaped trench pattern filled with good soil to provide drainage away from the center (or find a better location!). Another plan is to create an elevated mound for planting, and this also adds a nice accent to the landscape. Another tip for a poor drainage area - avoid the temptation to plant a tree in a hole filled with a good porous medium, because you may just be creating a "sponge" that causes waterlogged roots; always backfill the hole with the same soil that you dug out. Unfortunately, one of the most common causes of failure is a waterlogged root system due to our poor-draining clay soil, so avoid low areas at all costs. Trees should not be fed during their first season, except for the application of a weak fertilizer solution as a root stimulator. Established trees can be most conveniently fed when the ground is soft after a rainy spell. Feed trees by using a stake or a length of pipe to drive a series of holes a foot deep and a foot or so apart around the drip line, and apply a small handful of general-purpose fertilizer (such as 12-24-12) in each hole. A good rule of thumb is to apply a total of about one and a half pounds for each inch of trunk diameter. If your pine trees have very pale green or yellowish needles, that's a sign that the soil is too alkaline, and the cure is to include a soil acidifier with the fertilizer (an iron supplement such as Ironite serves the purpose well). Magnolias also need acid soil conditions, so use special azalea/camellia fertilizer or add a soil acidifier.

November was the best time for planting pansies, but they may still be transplanted this month. They can really brighten up an otherwise dull yard, whether in beds or containers. Pansies don't need much attention, but they will benefit from a monthly feeding of manure, super-phosphate or a liquid high-phosphate product. More blooms will be promoted by removing spent or faded flowers.

One more reminder about spring-flowering bulbs - December is the last chance for planting. But remember that tulips should be kept in the refrigerator until the end of the month and then planted between Christmas and New Year's Day (a convenient chance to get a little exercise between the two holidays!).

(Continued on Page 4)

YARD OF THE MONTH



Angela and Chris Paschall
10515 Pearl

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Winchester Trails

Green Thumb Corner - (Continued from Page 3)

Azaleas and camellias may be moved at this time and should be kept moist to reduce the risk of cold weather damage. Acidify the soil if necessary. It's a good idea to check the pH value with one of the chemical kits available from the nurseries, or with a meter.

Clean up the beds where fall flowers have finished, and prepare next year's beds now to allow time for settling and weathering, adding lots of humus and also gypsum to break up the clay. In established shrubbery beds a good layer of mulch is just as important in winter as in the heat of summer. Water well and watch out for winter drought. Be prepared to protect tender plants; cloth makes a better cover than plastic, but you can use the latter by rigging a "tent" arrangement to prevent the plastic from touching any foliage. You never know when we might get a surprise early frost, so be prepared for quick action. Potted plants can be moved into the garage (put nails in the overhead beams for

hanging baskets) and if it's really cold you can leave the lights on to provide some warmth.

There's not a lot happening in the vegetable garden although I did manage to plant cabbage, Brussels sprouts and lettuce this fall. Some neighbors may be harvesting fall tomatoes until the first frost and there are also a few pepper plants that have continued producing since summer. There are a few things that can be planted this month asparagus, chives, parsley and onion plants but the main priority right now is preparation of beds for next spring.

HOLIDAY TIP: Winter pruning of evergreens such as holly, yew and juniper provides useful trimmings for Christmas decorations, and you can also use the clusters of red berries from nandina shrubs.

Phil Richards

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Crime report *December 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 December 2011 are as follows:

**Property Crime - Theft - Grand and
Larceny - Bent Spur Lane**

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



ATTENTION!

**HOUSTON NORTHWEST AREA
DELTA GAMMA ALUMNAE**

*Our annual Holiday Open House is set for December 17,
11:00 - 1:00 at the home of Janet Sanov
7111 Mohave Hills*

Houston, TX 77069, Champion Park North.

This is a beautiful Holiday gathering for members and their legacies. Please contact Cindy Formas at ckformas@sbcglobal.net for more information on the Open House and the chapter's future events.

*Do You Have Reason
to Celebrate?*

We want to hear from you! Email newsletter@winchester-trails.com to let the community know!



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NEW TEENAGERS - HAPPY 13TH!

12/15 - Jake McNeil

NEW DRIVERS - HAPPY 16TH!

12/12 - Alexis Atchison

12/22 - Hannah Schatz

12/22 - Brooke Wallace

NEW VOTERS - HAPPY 18TH!

12/02 - Rebecca Ward

12/07 - Dylan Stephens

12/13 - Colby McCord

12/13 - Hannah McCord

12/25 - Christopher Bulas

NEW ADULTS - HAPPY 21ST!

12/02 - Sabrina Read

12/20 - Elizabeth Kelley

12/23 - Kim Griffin

HAPPY 15TH ANNIVERSARY!

12/21 - Mark & Susan Janik

HAPPY 20TH ANNIVERSARY!

12/27 - Mark & Tammy Sue Thayer, IV

HAPPY 40TH ANNIVERSARY!

12/18 - Stanley & Nancy Clark

Melissa Zmerzlikar
directory@winchestertrails.com

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