



# The Village Gazette

Volume 10, Issue 1  
Village Creek Community Association

January 2013

## Landscape Corner

*Happy New Year! I hope this is a fruitful year for everyone.*

Continue with your freeze protection effort through the remainder of the winter. When the weatherman predicts a “hard freeze” (or similar), shut off and drain your backflow preventer. Water landscape plants, trees, and vegetables before the freeze. Try not to water foliage. As was previously noted, water retains heat in the soil to help prevent freezing. Cover those plants that are prone to freezing.

Continue to maintain a layer of mulch to retain moisture and keep weeds down.

**Lawns:** St. Augustine grass is brown and dormant this month. No water should be necessary as long as it rains a bit. Water at least once if there is no rain. Our clay soil becomes rock hard with no moisture, so I should add a little water to keep meandering tree roots satisfied.

**Sprinkler System:** This may be a good time to consider adding sprinkler heads to the system if you have areas which have become weedy because of insufficient water. If you do the work yourself, it is far more comfortable working in the cooler weather, and if you have the work done, sprinkler contractors will be less busy (as well as comfortable for them).

**Bare-root plant care:** Keep in mind that the roots of bare-root plants **MUST** be kept moist at all times before and after planting.

Roses may be planted anytime of the year, but may be packaged differently according to the intended planting month. Dormant (bare root) roses may be planted in January or February. According to Doug Welsh’s Texas Garden Almanac (TGA), they should be planted in a raised bed to assure good drainage. The soil should be highly organic (compost, manure, shredded bark, etc.). Don’t plant too deep...only as deep as the root system is tall. Don’t be like me: Read the directions. If the directions are in conflict with any advice herein, go with the directions on the package!

It is time to plant bulbs such as crocus, daffodil, or narcissus, Dutch iris, hyacinth, and tulip.

Plant annual flowers such as calendula, cyclamen, dianthus, ornamental kale, and cabbage, pansies, and petunias (TGA). Plant bluebonnet transplants into garden beds. Sow bugs like bluebonnets, so treat with bait if needed.

**Frozen plants:** Avoid pruning frost-damaged trees and bushes until February or March (TGA).

Plant cool-season seedlings such as asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, Chinese cabbage, collards, turnip greens, Irish potato, kohlrabi, leaf lettuces, onions, and Swiss chard (TGA).

For future references, vegetables that I had great success with during the past year were okra, radishes, kale, mustard greens, carrots, banana peppers, bell peppers, and sweet potatoes.

Sow seeds this month for beets, carrots, English peas, greens, leaf lettuces, radishes, sugar snap, snow peas, and turnips (TGA).

**Hint:** While seed packages say to plant seeds quite close together, and thin, I have found that most seeds **DO** germinate, and it is better to just plant them about the distance apart that will allow them to grow well. This is a theory in process, so take this advice with a grain of salt.

This is a good month to add some flowering trees such as crape myrtles, Texas mountain laurel, and Mexican olive.

**Hint:** While you will find all sorts of advice on planting bushes and trees, The Texas Gardener Magazine (Jan/Feb 2010), recommends, when planting woody ornamental plants that you backfill with only the soil you removed from the hole. According to this article, “Thinking that they are doing the plant a favor, novice gardeners often toss in fertilizer or fill the hole with compost.” The magazine’s rationale is that, when amendments are added, the roots tend to stay in the loose soil and not venture out into the heavy soils around the plant. The fact is that, to survive, the plant roots must grow far out into the native soil...no matter what backfill you put in the hole.

*(Continued on Page 2)*

# The Village Gazette

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CenterPoint-Gas Leak .....713-659-3552  
Constables Office .....281-376-3472, www.cd4.hctx.net  
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Northpointe Int (5-6).....281-357-3020  
Willow Wood Jr (7-8) .....281-357-3030  
Tomball High (9-12).....281-357-3220  
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FBI.....713-693-5000  
Harris County Animal Control .....281-999-3191  
Houston Chronicle .....713-220-7211  
Greater Houston Pool .....713-771-7665  
Lost Pets... <http://www.preferredmgt.com/villagecreek/home.asp>  
Municipal District Services (24 hrs) .....281-290-6500  
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### NEWSLETTER

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### Landscape Corner- (Continued from Cover)

January is the best month for planting bare-root fruit and nut trees as well as vines. Check with your gardening store for the best varieties for this area. Keep in mind that fruits, nuts, and vines need lots of sunshine to be successful. They also like to grow in well-drained soil. If drainage is a problem, plant in a raised bed one foot high with this level maintained for the entire expected spread of the branches.

I know that I should have known this, and you probably do, but this is the first year that I figured out that the edible portion of the radish actually grows above ground? In all previous years, I had assumed that the soil just receded. The radish roots are really quite tiny, and extend three or four inches below. Note that the radishes in the picture are planted a bit close together. It might have been best to plant the radish seeds about 1" apart.



Village Creek Landscape Committee Update: You will notice that Phase Two of the landscape improvement plan was started in early December. Take a walk around the lake to see the improvements to those garden beds.

### JANUARY'S WEATHER FROM INTELICAST.COM FOR TOMBALL, TEXAS

*Average Low Deg F - 40*  
*Average High Deg F - 60*  
*Record Low Deg F - 10*  
*Record High Deg F - 84*  
*Average Precipitation Inches - 4.21*  
*Average Snow Inches - 0.2*



## Village Creek Home Handyman Hints

Gordon R. Watson

A few years back, I discovered that the home we used to own had some serious wood-rot issues. It turned out that the cause was that rain water had gotten into the wood through openings which should have been sealed with caulk. I had to replace quite a bit of wood, and did the work myself. Given the time and money the repairs cost, I decided that this really is one of those issues where an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. In this case, the caulk to prevent such an occurrence would have cost about \$10 and taken maybe ten minutes. The repairs, if done by others, would have cost several thousand dollars. It cost me about \$200 and lots of sawing, hammering, and cursing.

When should you re-caulk? Re-caulk prior to repainting your home or when the original caulk joints open up...whichever happens first.

Figures 1 and 2 show caulking that has failed and water could get in...particularly if the joint is expose to rain. Figure 3 shows fair caulk (a small crack), which is probably not an issue unless it is exposed to wind or at the bottom of a window.



This cool weather month is a good time to walk around the house checking your home's caulk. Caulk is a flexible, long-lasting material (10+ years, hopefully) used to fill in spaces between two building materials in order to prevent water from entering. Caulk is flexible, to a point, to allow some contraction and expansion. It is an imperfect material used to fill the gap between two building components (such as windows and walls). Caulk is "imperfect" because caulk doesn't last forever. Commonly, you will see caulk in the following places:

(Continued on Page 4)

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### VILLAGE CREEK MARKET REPORT

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Active Listings	14	\$233,389	\$78.42	94
Pending Listings	5	\$206,980	\$80.60	96
Sold Since 9/1/12	8	\$221,036	\$79.08	163

Statistics are averages compiled from Houston Association of Realtors MLS, 12/6/12

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(Continued from Page 3)

1. The joint between window frames and adjacent brick, rock, or wood.

2. The joint between two pieces of wood where it is possible for water to enter.

3. Any other gap in building materials where water can enter.

Keep in mind that if two pieces of wood join together and gravity or wind can carry water to the joint, that joint needs caulk. Most likely, you will see, at least in some areas, that gap has widened (or the caulk has shrunk) over the years, and rainwater can now enter a wall where water shouldn't be. My son recently had rainwater leak onto the sheet rock of his porch ceiling because of such a gap. If the gap is ignored, and water DOES get in, termites and wood rot are almost certain to follow. In general, the process of fixing the problem is fairly straight-forward.

1. Watch YouTube "How-To" videos to get a feel for how to caulk. Often hardware stores have such videos as well.

2. Go to the hardware store with a sample of the color of the caulk or adjacent wood. Hardware stores offer quite a variety of colors and types. Talk to the salesperson. I have found that, even though I THINK I know quite a bit, sales people often know a lot more.

3. Pick the right color. Also, pick a caulk that is paintable. You won't need to paint caulk in general, but if you do need to, you will want paintable caulk. Some caulks have warranties as long as 30 years. Although you will probably never collect on the warranty, the 30-year caulk will probably last longer than one with a 10 year warranty. A typical home caulk repair may require about five to ten tubes of caulk. You can return the unopened caulk tubes. Keep your receipts.

4. Buy a caulking gun (about \$15 or so). Buy a good one. The non-drip type seems like a good idea.

5. You will want to remove any loose caulking before applying new. You may need a sharp knife or razor blade-knife as well as putty knife for scraping. Don't cut yourself!

6. Don't caulk too much at once. You will place the bead, and then spread it. You cannot spread it if it has dried.

7. I suggest you first caulk areas which are least noticeable because you will find that your work will improve with practice. You may want to try just one window to see if you want to continue or hire it done. Caulking is an art, so it takes some time to do it right. You don't want to finish the job and have a bad-looking caulking job that detracts from your home. Sometimes it is just best to hire a professional.

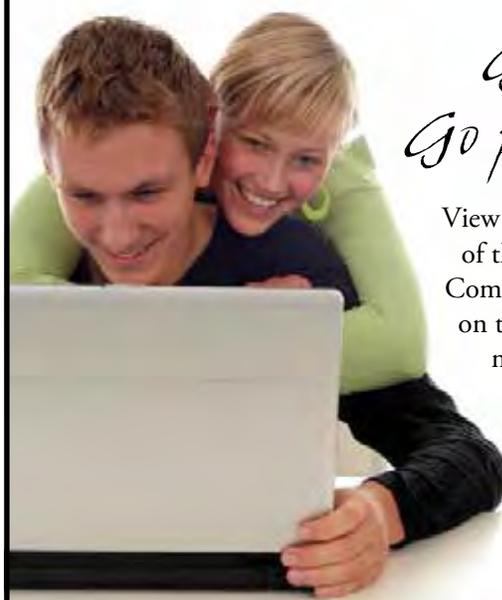
8. This is a messy job, so take your time. Clean up messes right away. Caulking dries quickly. Keep the caulking off of adjacent bricks and other finishes.

Above all, work safely. One way to look at safety is that safe equipment and safe practices cost a lot less than money you will pay if you have an accident. I occasionally have this feeling that I am working unsafely, and have learned not to ignore that feeling. I stop what I am doing, fix the safety issue, and continue with the work.

Until next time, stay safe, and keep your home sealed.

## The Village Gazette

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Gamers will experience a double elimination NCAA style basketball tournament delivered by CurbGames.com using the latest Xbox console. These 2 player teams will go head-to-head

for the top three spots. There will also be hourly golf lessons and free games as you wait for your next challenger.

Not a golfer or a gamer? You can still participate by volunteering, donating auction and raffle items, and/or participating in one of our sponsorship opportunities. For more information on how you can sponsor or participate visit our website <http://www.tomballmemorialabc.com> or email: [tmabcinfo@gmail.com](mailto:tmabcinfo@gmail.com).

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## A Focus On Resolutions

By: Concentra Urgent Care

The New Year is a great time to make healthy lifestyle changes. According to the US Department of Health and Human Services, the most common resolutions focus on losing weight, getting fit, quitting smoking, and reducing stress. These are important themes that can reduce your risk of disease. Here are ways you can achieve your goals this year.

### LOSING WEIGHT

A weight loss of five to seven percent of your body weight can improve your health and quality of life. It can also help prevent weight-related health problems, like diabetes. Changing your eating habits and increasing your physical activity are keys to successful weight loss and help to maintain optimal weight for the rest of your life. Create a plan for healthy eating and increased physical activity, while taking in fewer calories than you use. Your healthy eating plan should include:

- Taking into account foods you like and dislike
  - A focus on fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
  - Fat-free or low-fat dairy products such as yogurt, cheese, and milk
  - Protein sources such as lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts
  - Avoiding saturated and trans fats such as animal fat, butter, and hydrogenated oils
  - Staying away from foods high in sodium and added sugars
- For more information on weight management and improving

nutritional practices, visit the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases at [www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/for\\_life.htm](http://www.win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/for_life.htm).

### GETTING FIT

Regular physical activity for at least 30 minutes each day, or broken up into several shorter periods of 20, 15, or 10 minutes, can help you lose weight, keep it off, and stay fit. It can also improve your energy and mood and lower your risk for heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers. Try some of these physical activities:

- Walking (15-minute miles or 4 miles per hour)
- Biking
- Tennis
- Aerobic exercise classes (step aerobics, kickboxing, dancing)
- Yard work or house cleaning (gardening, raking, mopping, vacuuming)

Taking the first step can be the hardest part. Start slowly, at a level that is comfortable for you and add activity as you go along. Sometimes, it helps to have a friend or activity buddy when you start out. It is recommended that adults get at least two and a half hours of moderate physical activity each week. Strengthening activities, such as pushups, sit-ups, or lifting weights, at least two days per week are also encouraged. For more information on getting fit, visit the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports at <http://fitness.gov/>. Happy New Year from Concentra Urgent Care!

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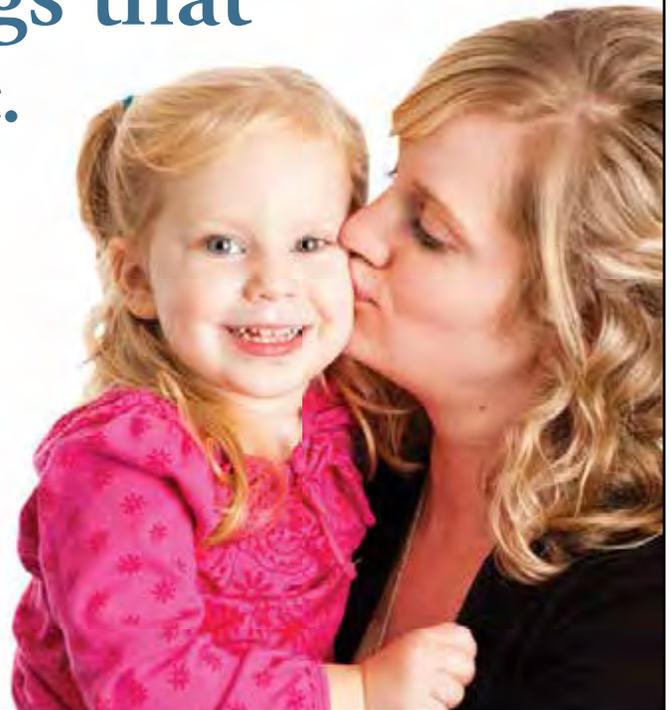
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## PERFECT TIME FOR COOL SEASON HERBICIDE

It's finally time to use the cool season herbicides I've referred to on the GardenLine radio program. If you know what I'm talking about but just need the names of the products, they are Fertilome's Weed Free Zone and Bonide's Weed Beater Ultra. These herbicides are specific for broadleaf weeds like Clover and Virginia Buttonweed. They will not control any "grassy" weeds. The perfect temperature range for usage of these two cool-season herbicides is roughly between 75 degree highs and 40 degree lows.

But there are some caveats that must be respected for these herbicides to work properly. The one constant in weed control, whether it's a cool season herbicide or a regular post-emergent herbicide, is to use a surfactant. Surfactants help herbicides do their job because most water in our area is considered hard. Hard water tends to just roll off leaf surfaces. There are two ways of adding a surfactant to most herbicides. The simple way is add about a tablespoon per gallon of dish soap to the mix. The professional grade way is to use a relatively inexpensive commercial

surfactant like Hi-Yield's Spreader Sticker or Bonide's Turbo. The other important step would have to be "HOW" it is applied. You should use either a pump-up sprayer or a hand-held trigger sprayer. Avoid the use of Dial-N-Spray hose sprayer because you cannot be as precise with the spray, and over-use of such products on the entire yard can cause a yellowing of the grass. Spot treating is paramount with these controls. There are some concentrates available in a "Ready to Spray" formula that you hook on the end of the hose. If this is the only thing available, concentrate on that spot treatment. That means you've got to be quick on the switch with the ON and OFF lever.

Excerpts from this tip sheet are reprinted by permission from Randy Lemmon at [www.randylemmon.com](http://www.randylemmon.com).

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# The Village Gazette

## SEND US YOUR *Event Pictures!!*

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## Pick up after your pet!

When you take your pet for walks in the neighborhood, please remember to carry waste bags with you so that you can pick up after your pet. No one likes to pick up after someone else's dog, so please be considerate of your neighbors and help to keep the neighborhood clean.



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The goal is to fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. Each digit may appear only once in each row, each column, and each 3x3 box.

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