



The VOICE

A Newsletter for the Residents of Teravista

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April 2015

TENNIS TIPS

By USPTA/PTR Master Professional
Fernando Velasco



“Tennis Tips for Children 8 years old and under”

In previous newsletters, I offered tips on how to execute the basic strokes for players who are just beginning to play tennis or who want to resume playing. In later issues, I offered suggestions on how to play the “modern” game mostly geared towards players who are happy with hitting the ball over the net and controlling the point with consistency. These players may already be playing for leagues or in tournaments and are looking for more “weapons” on the court.

Beginning with this issue, I will offer advice on how to involve children of all ages to learn to play tennis and offer tips to the parents on how to help at home. This issue will address tips for children 8 years old and under.

Caption 1: Tennis Racket and balls: The children should be using rackets ranging in length from 19” to 23” long and the red foam ball. These short, lighter rackets and lower-bouncing balls will make it easier

for the child to control the swing and the point of contact. The racket to use will depend on the height of the child and the age.

Caption 2: Tennis Court: Most clubs have added lines to allow as many as 16 players to be playing on one regular tennis court. Special smaller nets are placed at the dividing center line of the court, thus making the courts only 36’ long and 20’ wide

Caption 3: Helping the Player: I suggest tossing the ball as close to the child as possible and let him/her become adjusted to the point of contact. To teach them the eye-hand-ball coordination, I suggest trying to let them hit the ball on the fly first, and later after the ball has bounced.

Caption 4: Join a Group: Tennis, just like other sports, is learned better in a group. Children like to imitate other children and learn from their good hits and also avoid their missed shots. I believe in allowing them to “shadow” the person executing the shot, so they become used to the

(Continued on Page 2)

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Tennis Tips (Continued from Cover)

swing and timing of the point of contact.

Caption 5: Ready to Play: Future star? They are never too young to get started!!

Tips to parents:

- Have child tap the red ball or soft inflated balloon up and down on the ground in a safe area, like a garage
- Do the same with ball being hit on the fly without bouncing
- Encourage them to hit in a safe area with them dropping the ball and hitting it against a wall or a garage door. Always be there to supervise

Look in the next Newsletter for: "Tips for children 9-10 years old"



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LOVELY LUPINES

by Jim and Lynne Weber

NATUREWATCH

Bluebonnets are often thought of as the 'floral trademark of Texas', akin to the shamrocks of Ireland, the cherry blossoms of Japan, the roses of England, and the tulips of Holland. Loved for centuries, bluebonnets were described by early explorers as they roamed the vast prairies of Texas, planting them around the Spanish missions by early-day priests, and making them the subject of several Native American folk tales. Technically known as 'lupines' or 'lupins', bluebonnets received their present-day common name due to the shape of the flower petals, which resembled the bonnets worn by pioneer women to shield their faces from the sun.



Bluebonnets are part of the legume or bean family, and like other members of this family they offer nitrogen-fixation through their root system's symbiotic relationship with

Rhizobia bacteria. This gives them the useful ability to grow in poor, disturbed soils, and bring much-needed nitrogen back to these soils as they decompose. Ironically, bluebonnets are all in the genus *Lupinus*, which is Latin for 'wolf-like', from the original but erroneous belief that these plants ravenously exhausted the soil.

In our area, bluebonnets normally bloom between March and April, but the timing and extent of the blooms depends on the amount of rain received the previous fall and winter. The flower is purple to blue in color, about half an inch long, with a white spot on the upper petal or banner. This banner spot acts as a target to attract the bumblebees and honeybees that pollinate the flower. When the pollen is fresh and sticky, the banner spot is white, and is seen by the bees as reflected ultraviolet light and appears to them as a good

Continued on Page 7



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Jeffrey L. Tucker, P.E., a registered professional engineer in Texas, has been involved in structural design, inspection and repair of houses and apartments since 1965. He is uniquely qualified to perform structural analyses of wood frame structures and slab foundations; to inspect and offer assurance of structural integrity and/or repair recommendations and details.



Austin Charity Making a Difference for Local Families

Austin Families Awarded Therapy Sponsorships for Children with Autism

Imagine A Way, an Austin based charity that helps families whose children are diagnosed with autism, awards therapy sponsorships to three more Central Texas children.

Imagine A Way sponsors local families with children on the Autism Spectrum by funding proven, critical therapies during the child's early years of ages 2-6. While the cause of autism is still unknown, early intervention has shown proven success. The most significant impact occurs when children receive intense, consistent therapies during their preschool years. Everyday children are entering, and leaving, this window of time. Limited resources can mean the difference in reaching the child or losing them.

"When we established Imagine A Way, we committed to making a difference, one child and one family at a time," Joel explains. "By providing therapies during this window of time, the children are given the opportunity to reach their full potential – and parents get their child back" says Joel Price, founder of Imagine A Way.

In Austin, therapies for children with autism average between \$36,000 and \$72,000 a year, far beyond what most

families can afford. Last month, three more children were chosen to receive the charity's support.

With Imagine A Way's help, these children may receive over 6000 hours of speech and ABA therapies before turning age 7. And with autism, every hour counts.

"For every family we can help, we make a difference. This changes the trajectory of a child's life," states Mark Taylor, President of Imagine A Way's Board of Directors.

Imagine A Way is accepting applications for sponsorship and invites any Central Texas family with a child (age 2-6) diagnosed on the Autism Spectrum to please visit their website www.ImagineAWayFoundation.org or call for more information on how to apply.

About Imagine A Way:

Imagine A Way is an Austin based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization bringing support, therapies and hope for the future to Central Texas Area families affected by Autism. For more information about Imagine A Way visit their website www.ImagineAWayFoundation.org or call (512) 220-4324.



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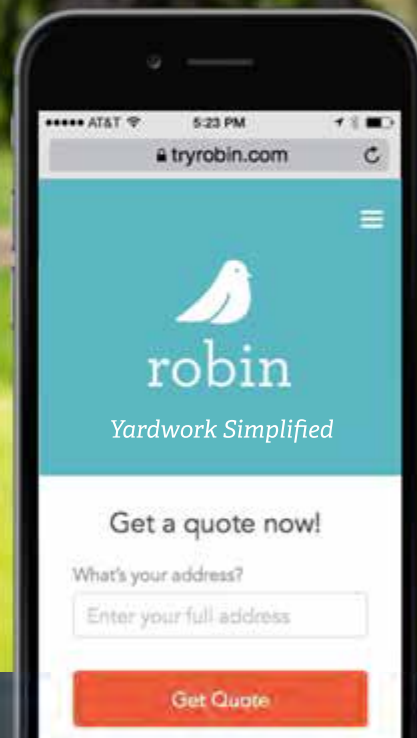
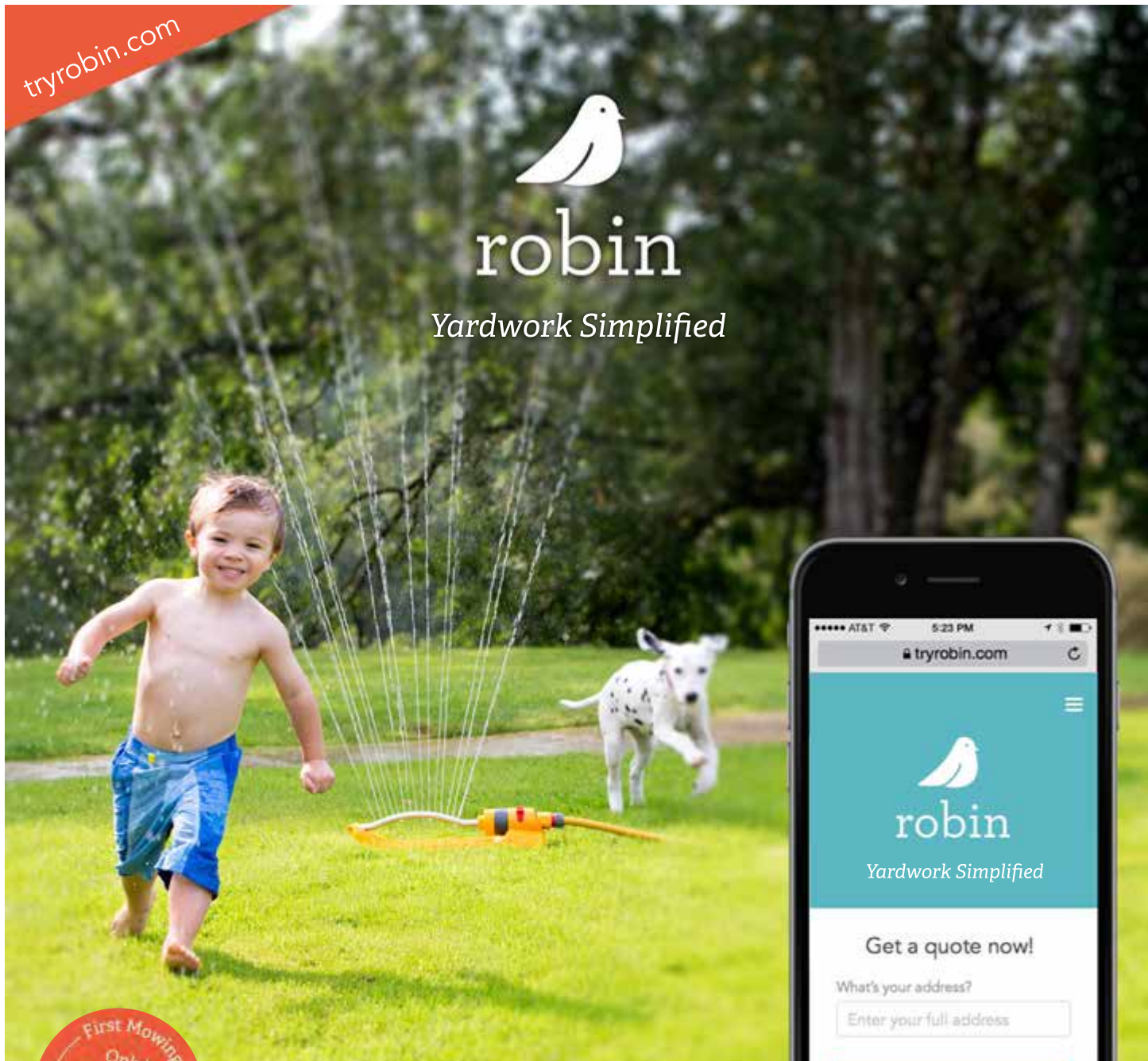
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Nature Watch...Continued from Page 3

landing spot. But as the flower and its pollen age, the banner spot turns yellow and then reddish-magenta, and is ignored by the bees, whose vision cannot see red. The decline in bee populations has a direct effect on how many seeds a bluebonnet can produce, because bluebonnets cannot self-fertilize. Each plant has the potential to produce hundreds of seeds, but often only a small number result, due to the recent decline in the number of bee pollinators.

Infrequently, both white, and more rarely, pink bluebonnets can occur naturally. In fact, there is a legend associated with how the pink bluebonnet came to be. Many years ago, in a spring wildflower field near San Antonio, children came across a pink bluebonnet on their way to Lenten devotion at the mission church. Their grandmother told them the story of Texas, when it was a remote province of Mexico. After their Constitution was overthrown by a terrible Mexican dictator, a war broke out between the brave new Texans and the Mexican troops. The troops eventually overwhelmed the Texans, and much blood was shed and lives lost. Several years later, the grandmother saw her mother place a pink bluebonnet in a vase by the statue of the Virgin Mary. She said she found it by the river, where "it had once been white, but so much blood had been shed, it had taken a tint of it." Interestingly, the only place in the state where the original native pink bluebonnets were found was along the side of a San Antonio road not far from the original mission.

Texas has 6 state flowers, more or less, and they are all bluebonnets. In the spring of 1901, the Texas Legislature selected a state floral emblem after much debate and consternation. Both the cotton boll and prickly pear cactus were hardy contenders, but the National Society of Colonial Dames of America won the day, and the Sandyland Bluebonnet (*Lupinus subcarnosus*) was selected and passed into law on March 7th. And that's when the bluebonnet war started. The Sandyland Bluebonnet is a dainty little plant growing in the sandy hills of coastal and southern Texas, and many thought it was the least attractive of all the bluebonnets. They wanted the Texas Bluebonnet (*Lupinus texensis*), which was a showier, bolder bloomer. For the next 70 years, the Legislature was encouraged to correct its oversight, not wanting to get caught in another botanical trap or offend any supporters. As politicians often do, they solved the problem with clever maneuvering by creating an umbrella clause, and in 1971 added the two species together, plus "any other variety of bluebonnet not heretofore recorded" (including potential species not yet discovered), and lumped them all into one state flower.

Long before the bluebonnet became the Texas state flower, many stories existed about its origins. Some believed it was a gift from the Great Spirit, and that it arrived with rain after a young, orphaned girl sacrificed her precious doll in the hopes of bringing a terrible drought to an end. Whatever you believe, look for these lovely lupines during our central Texas spring!

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. Check out our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com if you enjoy reading these articles!



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