



Willow Park Greens Community Newsletter

Spring 2005

COMING THIS SUMMER



Yard Of The Month Contest

For more information on how you can win great prizes for your hard work in the yard, read Glorious Gardens... on page 2.

We're on the web!

www.willowparkgreens.org

**SAVE THE
DATE**

April 16th 4 p.m.

**Come Meet Your
Neighbors at WPG's first
SPRING BLOCK PARTY!**

Details to follow soon...



CREATING A CLOSER COMMUNITY THROUGH COMMUNICATION

As the garage door closes behind us we shut out the world. We're home! We intend to get to know our neighbors better, but the days slip by, our lives get busy, the weather doesn't cooperate and we only see them when we're frantically rushing out the door to work or to the next appointment with barely time for a smile and a quick wave. In simpler times, communities kept in touch over the back fence, sitting on the front porch or chatting in each others kitchen over a cup of coffee or a bottle of beer.

Lifestyles have changed, but the need for community has not. At the Home Owners Association meeting in February, a small group of residents volunteered to address this concern by creating a community newsletter. We hope this will help narrow the gap that busy modern living creates. Tell us what you think is important and we'll help you share it. Do

you have questions about our local area? Are there issues in our neighborhood that you think need addressing? Do you want to announce a special anniversary or milestone birthday? Do you want to introduce your newest family



member to the neighborhood? Did your child score the winning goal in an important game? Did you win first place in a competition or shoot a hole in one? Do you want someone to car-pool with? Have your kids outgrown their baby stuff and you'd like to pass it on? Do you have any other useful items you'd like to sell? Is your teen-ager looking for baby-sitting, pet sit-

ting or lawn mowing prospects? Did someone do something special that you would like to recognize publicly? Do you want to get a group together for fun or perhaps you have a hobby or special interest group you'd like to share with your community? If you think it's important, others will, too. Let us know and we'll help connect you with the people who are just waiting to hear about it.

This newsletter is a completely volunteer effort and we need your input. To give us your comments, questions or ideas for future newsletters, e-mail us at newsletter@willowparkgreens.org. If you'd like to join the newsletter committee, we'd love to hear from you.

*"Alone we can do so little;
together we can do so
much."*

Helen Keller

NAME THE NEWSLETTER CONTEST

What's in a name? Well, everything. Our newsletter needs a name and we are holding a contest to select the best one. Send your suggestion for a newsletter name, along with your name and address to newslet-

ter@willowparkgreens.org or call Robin Margaret at 281.578.7208, by April 21, 2005. The winning name will be selected by the newsletter committee and will be announced in our next edition, along with the name of

the contributor. The naming contest is open to all Willow Park Greens residents, so submit your contest entry today.

NEED YOUR
PHONE TO RING?



ADVERTISE YOUR
BUSINESS HERE!!!

For advertising rates and information...contact
newsletter@
willowparkgreens.org
or call Tami at 281.646.9288



Deed Restrictions Letters

Each month, a Principal Management Group representative tours Willow Park Greens to make note of any deed restrictions violations. A friendly request to correct any problems is then mailed to residents with violations. Below is a tally and description of letters mailed to residents in March 2005:

- 5 store trash cans out of public view
- 3 store basketball goals out of public view when not in use
- 6 mow/edge the lawn
- 3 trim or shape shrubs
- 9 remove weeds in flower beds
- 1 remove algae/mildew on house or fence
- 2 relocate satellite dish to rear of house

THE TEXAS TWO-STEP METHOD
DO-IT-YOURSELF FIRE ANT CONTROL



With the weather warming up, we are looking forward to being outside, working and playing in our yards. But the warm weather brings back our old nemesis, fire ants. The good news is fire ants can be controlled with patience, persistence and the right plan. The Texas Two-step method developed by Texas A&M University, gives excellent control. When properly applied, this method causes little risk to people, pets or the environment. The following is information excerpted from an article by Paul R. Nester, Ph.D., Extension Agent - Integrated Pest Management, Texas Cooperative Extension, Harris County.

The Texas Two-step Method
Do-it-yourself Fire Ant Control
for Homes & Neighborhoods

#1 BAIT

The first step is to broadcast a fire ant bait - a product containing a food plus an insecticide - over the whole yard, usually in the spring - late April and May, and fall - September and October. When collected by the worker ants, bait particles are carried to the colony and shared with the queens, the next generation and other ants. Less pesticide is needed with baits because this kind of deliv-

ery is so efficient.

Bait works best when scattered lightly over the whole yard. Hand-held seed spreaders (e.g. The EarthWay Ev-N-Spred or Scotts HandyGreen spreaders) are ideal for applying fire ant baits. Set the spreader on the smallest opening and make one pass over the area to be treated. This should apply the recommended rate (1 to 1½ pounds per acre for most products). Push-type fertilizer spreaders put out most baits too quickly. **BE PATIENT! Baits work slowly.** Be prepared to wait from two weeks to six months, depending upon the type of insecticide you use.

Apply baits at the right time.

Baits are effective only when fire ants are actively searching for food. Ants remove baits from the soil surface within a few hours if baits are applied during peak foraging times. Fire ants forage when the soil surface temperature is between 70 and 90 degrees F - May to September. Fall applications work well to reduce fire ant numbers the following spring. During winter, fire ants forage little and rarely pick up baits.

To see if ants are active, place a small amount of bait or suit-

able food (e.g. a potato chip or bit of hot dog) next to a mound. If the ants begin removing the food within 30 minutes, it's a good time to treat.

In summer, **apply baits in the evening.** Ants forage during the cool of evening and will quickly discover and carry off baits. Baits applied during the day, in extreme heat, quickly lose their effectiveness. Ants do not forage during the day in hot weather.

Use only fresh bait, preferably from an unopened container. Once opened, baits should be used quickly. Opened containers may last only a few weeks. Unopened containers stay fresh for up to 2 years.

Apply baits when no rain is expected for at least 8 hours. This reduces the risk of the bait being washed away.

Follow label directions when disposing of extra pesticides and containers. Don't leave insecticide granules on streets or sidewalk after application, as these will wash into storm sewers.

cont. on page 4...

GLORIOUS GARDENS, LUSCIOUS LAWNS CONTEST

At the February HOA meeting, some residents of Willow Park Greens volunteered to sponsor a friendly competition giving the winner the right to claim the title of "The Most Beautiful Yard in the Neighborhood." There is no registration necessary and every front yard in the neighborhood is eligible. There are no restrictions as to who does the work. The yard can be the exclusive

work of the resident or anyone the resident hires. The judges will evaluate the overall appearance of the yard, the design of the gardens, appropriate use and type of plants, the absence of weeds and the neatness of the lawn edges. (More details will be announced as they become available.) There will be prizes awarded and the winner will have a picture of their winning yard

published in the community newsletter and posted on our community website. A sign for their front lawn will announce to the world that they have the "Most Beautiful Yard in the Neighborhood!" So dust off your trowels and fire up your lawn mowers. Let's make ours "The Most Beautiful Neighborhood in Texas!"

SPRUCE UP YOUR YARD FOR SPRING

Hooray! Spring is here. Sunny days and warmer temperatures turn our thoughts to chirping birds, blooming flowers and spending more time outdoors. Now is a good time to wake up our flower beds and lawns from their winter naps. You may have already noticed new growth on many of your bedding plants. But some of your plants may have been done in by this winter's freezing temperatures and need to be replaced. To be sure, break off a limb or branch to see if it is still green inside.

Local nurseries and plant centers are filled with beautiful blooming flowers and pretty shrubs. Why not visit one this weekend and choose some new color for your beds? Don't forget the mulch. A fresh layer of mulch will dress up your flower beds, keep weeds down and help to retain moisture. Which will be helpful in the hotter months ahead.

Once the flower beds are spruced up, you'll want to turn

your attention to your lawn. It is recommended that you water your lawn every week to 10 days, if it doesn't rain. Your lawn will be healthier if you soak it well once a week, rather than a light watering every few days.

Now is also a good time to get your lawn mower ready to return to work. Consider sharpening the blade, changing the spark plugs and draining any old gasoline.

Remember our feathered friends this season by adding a bird feeder or birdbath to your yard. Planting nectar-rich flowering plants can also attract butterflies and hummingbirds to your yard.

If your spring spruce-up plans go beyond fresh flowers and shrubs to include cutting new flower beds and planting trees, you'll need to get approval for your plans from the Willow Park Greens Architectural Control Committee.

Don't worry, the process is a simple one. You'll need to

contact Carolyn Wilson at Principal Management Group (PMG), 713-329-7155 or email

c.wilson@pmghouston.com to request the proper form to fill out for your new landscaping plan. This form can be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to you. Or, if you prefer, you may go on-line and download a copy of the form from www.willowparkgreens.org. Once completed, the form is returned to PMG, which in turn forwards it to the Willow Park Greens Architectural Control Committee for review. You'll soon be notified with the Committee's response regarding your plans. It is best to allow two weeks for the review process before any work is set to begin.

With just a little bit of effort, your yard will be ready to greet the dawn of spring with a fresh look that you and your neighbors will certainly enjoy.



ATTENTION ALL BABYSITTERS AND PET SITTERS!!!

Willow Park Greens parents are looking for some great neighborhood babysitters and pet sitters.

Earn some extra cash today...

For your FREE listing, email your name, phone number and age to

newsletter@willowparkgreens.org

Or call Tami at 281.646.9288



SCHOOL CORNER

Important Dates for Katy ISD

April 8th- Early Dismissal

April 11th- Student Holiday

May 25th- Last Day of School
(Early Dismissal)

Exley Elementary

281.237.8400

April 7th- New Kindergarten
& 1st Registration

April 27th, 28th & 29th - Field
Days

McMeans Jr. High

281.237.8000

Cinco Ranch High School

281.237.7000

For more information on local schools visit the Katy ISD website at www.katyisd.org

HOME IMPROVEMENT TIP-SPRING CLEANING

Finally, some beautiful weather...the flowers are blooming, the trees are budding, the sun is shining...it must be spring! What better time to CLEAN? Who invented spring cleaning anyway? Yes, the time

has come to pull out the ammonia, cleansers and toilet brush and say goodbye to the dust and dirt.

Here are a few ideas to save you some time and get you started.

1. Make a list of the projects you want to accomplish. You will be amazed at how quickly you can check those daunting tasks off your list. Top chores to consider: (as found at

www.homemadesimple.com)

- Wash blankets, comforters, quilts and dust ruffles.
- Remove out-of-season clothing from closet, wash, store, and replace with seasonal clothing.
- Donate clothing that will not be worn again.
- Clean light fixtures, lampshades and chandeliers.
- Clean attic and garage.
- Clean walls, ceilings, and floors.
- Vacuum books, mattresses and baseboards.
- Dust furniture.
- Move and clean under heavy appliances and furniture.
- Shampoo carpet, rugs, and upholstery.
- Dust or wash all china,

crystal, and knickknacks.

- Wash blinds, mini-blinds, and shades.
- Dry clean or wash curtains and drapes.
- 2. Organize files, photographs, videos, and CDs.
- 3. Collect all of your cleaning supplies in one carrying caddy or bucket. Make sure you include plenty of rags, paper towels and a trash bag.
- 4. Get up and get motivated. Wake up and get started early (coffee, smoothie or energy drink recommended!). Wear comfortable clothes. Turn on your favorite music and clean, clean, clean!
- 5. Open up the windows and doors and let the fresh air in.

cont. on next page...



CLASSIFIED ADS

FREE small IKEA glass coffee table, good condition. 281-578-7208

Do you have something you would like to sell or trade? Email your FREE listing to newsletter@willowparkgreens.org or call Tami at 281.646.9288



On Wed. March 23rd, someone hit our gate going the wrong way into the exit side. However, two of our residents witnessed the event and turned them into the board. The driver denied hitting the gate but after speaking with owner of the vehicle (Landscaping Depot dump-truck) the company or their insurance will take care of the damages. An insurance appraisal has been ordered. Thanks neighbors for keeping an eye out for our neighborhood!

Spring Cleaning cont. from page 3

6. Follow these helpful tips on the hardest of chores:

- Ceramic Tile- Try regular rubbing alcohol directly on tile
- Buildup on shower doors- Wipe with lemon oil
- Tubs and showers- Use a product with phosphoric acid to reduce scrubbing

Fire Ants cont. from page 2

Never pour leftovers down the drain. This can contaminate streams and endanger aquatic life. It is best to use all insecticide in a container before discarding. If using measuring cups or spoons to distribute pesticide over a mound, use those utensils **ONLY** for pesticides. **DO NOT USE THEM AGAIN WITH FOOD.**

#2 TREATING MOUNDS

The **second step** is to treat problem ant colonies - those needing immediate attention - using a mound treatment. It's not necessary to treat all fire

- Mildew- Put 3 parts bleach and 1 part water in a spray bottle. Spray on areas and it will virtually disappear.

- Rubbing alcohol will remove hard water spots from bathroom fixtures
- For those of us who still need further reading on the subject, check out these great books. *Talking Dirty With The Queen Of Clean* by Linda Cobb
Speed Cleaning by Jeff Campbell

Clean Like a Man: Housekeeping for Men (and the Women Who Love Them) by Tom McNulty

When in doubt, hire a good cleaning company and save your manicure...oops did I write that down? With a little hard work and organization you'll be back on the golf course, swimming in the pool or just lounging with a good book on the back porch in no time.

Happy Spring Cleaning!

ant colonies with mound treatments after applying a bait. Limit Step Two treatments to mounds located next to house foundations, in high-traffic areas or other trouble spots. There are many excellent products on the market. Be sure to read and follow the label directions carefully.

For product recommendations and more information about treating fire ants, contact your County Extension office, www.fbmg.com, 281-341-7068 or visit the Texas A&M fire ant web sites at

<http://fireant.tamu.edu>,
<http://insects.tamu.edu> and
<http://agcomwww.tamu.edu>.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We would be happy to publish comments or questions from residents concerning issues you think would be of interest to our community.

Email your editorial to newsletter@willowparkgreens.org or call Tami at 281.646.9288

Letters we receive are considered property of the community newsletter. Letters chosen for publication may be edited as necessary for length and clarity.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFO

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