

Pruning Guidelines

for Prevention of Oak Wilt in Texas

Oak wilt, caused by the fungus *Ceratocystis fagacearum*, is the most destructive disease affecting live oaks and red oaks in Central Texas. Most of the tree mortality results from tree-to-tree spread of the pathogen through interconnected or grafted root systems, once an oak wilt center becomes established. New infection centers begin when beetles carry oak wilt fungal spores from infected red oaks to fresh, open wounds on healthy oaks. Wounds include any damage caused by wind, hail, vehicles, construction, squirrels, birds or pruning. Research has shown that both oak wilt fungal mats on infected red oaks and insects that carry oak wilt spores are most prevalent in the spring. Below is a brief description of how you can reduce the risk of fungal spread when pruning.

- Always paint fresh wounds on oaks, including pruning cuts and stumps, with wound dressing or latex paint immediately after pruning or live tree removal at all times of the year.
- Clean all pruning tools with 10% bleach solution or Lysol™ between sites and/or trees.
- If possible avoid pruning or wounding of oaks during the spring (currently defined as February 1 through June 30). Reasons to prune in the spring include:
 - To accommodate public safety concerns such as hazardous limbs, traffic visibility or emergency utility line clearance.
 - To repair damaged limbs (from storms or other anomalies)
 - To remove limbs rubbing on a building or rubbing on other branches, and to raise low limbs over a street.
- On sites where construction schedules take precedence, pruning any live tissue should only be done to accommodate required clearance.
- Dead branch removal where live tissue is not exposed.

Pruning for other reasons (general tree health, non-safety related clearance or thinning, etc.) should be conducted before February

1 or after June 30.

Debris from diseased red oaks should be immediately chipped, burned or buried. Regardless of the reasons or time of year, proper pruning techniques should be used. These techniques include making proper pruning cuts and avoiding injurious practices such as topping or excessive crown thinning. If you are uncertain about any of this information, you should consult with a Texas Oak Wilt Certified arborist, ISA Certified Arborist, or an oak wilt specialist from a city, county or state government agency such as the Texas Forest Service or Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

References (available at <http://www.TexasOakWilt.org>):

Appel, D.N., and R.F. Billings (eds.). 1995. Oak wilt perspectives: Proceedings of the Nation Oak Wilt Symposium, June 22-25, 1992. Austin, TX. Information Development, Houston, TX. 217 p.

Billings, R.F., and D.N. Appel (eds.). 2009. Proceedings of the National Oak Wilt Symposium. June 4-7, 2007, Austin, TX. Texas Forest Service Publication 166. 267p.
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THE MONITOR

WELCOME

A Newsletter for Meridian residents

The Monitor is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Meridian residents. Each newsletter is filled with valuable information about the community, local area activities, school information and more.

If you are involved with a school group, play group, scouts, sports activity, social group, etc. and would like to submit an article for the newsletter you can do so online at www.PEELinc.com or you can email it meridian@peelinc.com. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations, birthday announcements and military service are also welcome.

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Grey Rock Tennis Academy player signs up to attend college



Adolfo Gonzales (center) is shown here with Director of the Grey Rock Tennis Academy, Darin Pleasant, and his mom, Blanca, during his formal signing to attend Tyler Junior College with a tennis scholarship. Tyler Junior College finished #2 in the country for the 2011-12 season. Adolfo has been training with Darin for the past two years at the Tennis Academy. Darin Pleasant is a resident of Shady Hollow and is in charge of the "Advanced Tennis Players (ATP)" Academy.

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By John

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By Aaron

Barry LaRue is not only very personable, but he's always right on top of things. If you have an accident or ticket on your record, he knows when it will come off your record and makes sure you get the best rates when it does. I've yet to work with an agent that is as proactive in dealing with their customers as Barry is. Insurance is never a fun thing to deal with, but Barry LaRue makes it easy.

Great Guy, Great Agent!

By Steve

After jumping from company to company for years, we finally found an agent who offers excellent coverage for both home and auto with very competitive prices. The pricing is important but having an agent you can count on is equally important. Barry has always been there when needed and we intend to do business with him for years to come. Our days of jumping from company to company are over! Thanks Barry!



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Financial Focus - Student Loans Crushing College Grads

Submitted by Rich Keith

Today's college grads are facing the "real world" with an extra scoop of debt. Two-thirds of students graduating from college or graduate school have student loans – about \$25,000 on average. That's a 25% increase over the past 10 years. In fact, today's twentysomething holds an average debt of \$45,000, including everything from student loans to mortgages and credit cards. Unfortunately, unemployment for those aged 18-29 is 12.4%, well above the national rate of 8.2%.

Don't feel as if you have to be the savior. Six in 10 boomers report giving financial help (outside of college tuition) to a child or grandchild in the past five years. Of those, \$59,000 was the average amount of aid. If this sounds like you, ask yourself: Do I really have the resources? Am I saving enough for retirement? Try to share more financial wisdom and less cash with your adult offspring. The more you save for your own future means less possibility that you'll need their help later on.



Without going into too much detail, share the family financial picture with your children once they hit the mid-teen years. They need to know the family income is X and it takes Y amount to cover the mortgage and bills. Once they see X minus Y in action they will be surprised at how much it actually costs to run a household.

This may have a side benefit of limiting how much and how often your children ask you for money and gifts.

Children who have a basic understanding of money, especially the corrosive effects of debt, have a better chance of becoming financially independent later in life. They will be more resistant to the credit card offers sure to come to them in their freshman year at college. And they will more ready to partner with their parents as the family manages their college finances with them.

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Congratulations

to our Grey Rock "10 and under Tournament winners"

The Grey Rock Tennis Club hosted its first "10 and under" CATA Tournament on May 12. Players from the Club and neighboring Clubs got a chance to start playing tournaments with special size courts and special reduced bounce balls. This will become a yearly event for the Club. The following Grey Rock players fared well in their respective events:



Sydney Marin, Winner
Girls' 10 and Under
Green Ball



Eleanore Nelson,
Winner Girls' 10
and Under Orange
Ball



Megan Zeng,
Runner up Girls' 10
and Under Orange
Ball



Coach Danny Rodriguez
with Jaxson Hataway,
Runner up, and Brayden
Michna, Winner, Boys' 10
and under Green Ball.

Tennis Tips

In the previous issues, I answered questions about beginning to play tennis, how to select tennis equipment and clothing, and how to begin playing with friends and family. In this issue, I will offer you some advice on how to start playing competitive tennis.

Q: I have young children who are interested in playing against other players. What is the best way?

A: One way to measure a player's progress is by competing with children of their own age and ability. I suggest that once a player knows how to serve, keep score and the basic tennis rules, he/she is ready to enter special tournaments. Austin offers many opportunities to become involved and has programs for 10 and under and also for children ranging from 12 through 18 years old.

Q: My child is 10 and under and wants to play tournaments. Where can he/she play?

A: The Capital Area Tennis Association (CATA) offers many tournaments for children 10 and under. For children ages 5-8, they offer the 36' court playing with a red felt or foam reduced ball. The score is very simple, playing a 7-point tiebreaker. Players, who are 9 and 10 years old, will be playing on a 60" court with an orange felt reduced bounce. They play one 4-game set using the no-ad scoring system (first to win 4 games). These events are usually round robins, so no players get eliminated. For schedules, fees and sites, please contact CATA at 512-443-1342 or visit their website: www.austintennis.org.

Q: My child is between the ages 12-18 and wants to start competing. Who do I contact?

A: Again, CATA offers events for players 12-18 years old who are ready to compete. These events are for Non-Qualified USTA players, who are beginning their competition toward becoming State Ranked or move to Championship and Super-Championship level. There are two types of events: Open events, where players are grouped according to their age level (12 and under, 14 and under, 16 and under and 18 and under)

and gender. They also can compete in singles and doubles. Usually these events are a one day tournament and they play 8 game pro-sets with no-ad scoring system. They also offer round robin events or first match consolation rounds.

The second type is called the "Grand Slam" events in the same age and gender categories. These events play the best of three sets, with no-ad scoring and if tied one set each, they play a "Super- Tiebreaker" (first one to win 10 points by 2). Play may start on Thursday or Friday nights after 6:00 pm for the larger draws, and continue the rest of the matches on Saturday and Sunday. For schedules, fees and sites, also please contact CATA at 512-443-1342 or visit their website: www.austgintennis.org

Q: Do these players get points for playoffs?

A: One incentive to play in these events, are that for every match that is played, they accumulate points. At the end of the season in August, the top players in each division are invited to participate in the "Junior Tour Masters Invitational" with the winners of this event, qualify to participate in the Grand Prix Invitational State Tournament against players from all over the State.

Both private tennis clubs and public facilities host these tournaments all over Austin. Sign up registration can be made either by visiting the USTA website or by visiting the tennis facility. Cost for the 10 and under events is \$18.00 per person; the Grand Prix Open is \$18.00, and for Grand Prix Grand Tour is \$28 per person. Deadlines are usually around 7-10 days prior to the event.

In the next issue, I will answer questions regarding how to encourage players to play the "USTA ZAT" Tournaments and become "Qualified" players. Until then, continue practicing and enjoying the game.

You also may have noticed that we have changed our name from "Circle C Tennis Club" to "Grey Rock Tennis Club". New name, but same service and programs.

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THE MONITOR

Welcome Fabulous!

The Fabulous Working Ladies is a thriving sisterhood of women serving in business, life and community. There is a need for women to connect, to help & support one another in business. To share our life and experiences with others and we desire to make change in the lives of those in need, through local and nationwide charitable organizations. Through the Fabulous Working Ladies Nationwide organization you will have the ability to do all of those things and more. We invite you to join our nationwide community. Help us celebrate one another. Help our community pay it forward.

With that being said...you are invited to "Fabulous Working Ladies of South Austin" Luncheon at Mandela's in Arbor Trails (MoPac & William Cannon) on Thursday July 26th at 11:30. Please join us for laughter, sharing, having fun & giving back to the community we live in! For more information, please go to www.SouthAustinFAB.com but if you have any questions please feel free to contact Melinda McKenna @ Melinda@AustinReps.com



SEND US YOUR *Event Pictures!!*

Do you have a picture of an event that you would like to run in this newsletter? Send it to us and we will publish it in the next issue. Email the picture to meridian@peelinc.com. Be sure to include the text that you would like to have as the caption. Pictures will appear in color online at www.PEELinc.com.



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THE DEDICATED RUNNER

Submitted by Steve Bernhardt

The heat is officially on in Central Texas, for the foreseeable future no matter the time of day it will be hot and often humid during our runs. Does this mean it's time to slow down, not run as often, or simply head indoors to the gym to run? If you are a dedicated runner none of these options sounds appealing. Fortunately none of them are necessary either if we take our time to understand how to acclimatize to the higher temperatures and take the necessary measures to run safely and comfortably under the bright Texas sun.

First, it takes our bodies about 7-10 days to begin to make the physiological adjustments needed to adapt to strenuous activity in the heat. Research has shown we can become fully acclimatized in 14-days based on spending at least one hour a day in the heat. During this time our blood plasma volume increases, sodium levels concentrate, and our core body temperature decreases. Keep in mind fitter runners usually adapt quicker, as well as younger runners often do better in the heat than older runners.

Next, dress properly to maximize evaporative heat loss. Wear clothing designed for running that does not hold moisture in the fabric (hydrophobic) and encourages evaporation. Our bodies cool as the heat is pulled away from us in our evaporating sweat. Avoid running in cotton as it holds the moisture in the fabric and makes wide scale evaporation nearly impossible. Running in a soaking wet cotton t-shirt is not cooling, it's basting. Also, don't forget a breathable hat to keep the sun off your head

and sunglasses to fight off the negative effects of UV sunlight on your eyes.

Lastly, our sweat rate increases as our bodies adapt to the stress of running in higher temperatures, because of this we need to replenish our fluids in order to maintain our effort and vital bodily functions. Water is ok for shorter duration runs (30 minutes or less) but for longer efforts we need to add some electrolytes like sodium chloride, magnesium, and potassium. There are many well designed hydration products available that are tasty and effective, as well as several different ways to carry fluids while on your runs like a hand-held water bottle or waist belt. If you are worried about the comfort of carrying a bottle while running, trust me after a few days you'll hardly notice it and grow thankful for having it with you.

Just because it's hot and humid doesn't mean we have to stop doing what we love to do, run. Being patient and giving our bodies time to acclimatize is critical. Wearing the right clothing to protect ourselves for the sun and encourage evaporative cooling is a must. Fluid replacement in order to maintain proper hydration is necessary to avoid heat related illness due to overheating and dehydration. With care and attention to each of these areas you'll be on your way to accomplishing your running goals no matter what the Texas summer decides to throw at us.

**Did you forget the
name of that...**



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Chocolate Cab Cupcakes

Try these decadent cupcakes when you need a special dessert and pair it with your favorite Cab!
By The Four Points Foodie

Cupcake Ingredients

- 1 1/2 C all purpose flour
- 3/4 C sugar
- 1 t baking powder
- 1 t baking soda
- 1 t sea salt
- 1 C special dark cocoa
- 1/2 C canola oil
- 2 large eggs
- 1 t Ancho Chili Powder
- 1 C Cabernet Sauvignon
- 1 special dark chocolate bar



Frosting Ingredients

- 1/2 C vegetable shortening
- 6 oz unsalted butter, softened
- 1 C confectioners' sugar
- 1 C special dark cocoa
- 2 T Cab Reduction {see note below}

Directions: Preheat your oven to 350 degrees and line a cupcake pan with papers. Sift the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Add the oil, eggs, chili powder and cab and blend with a mixer. Using a 1 inch ice cream scoop, place 1 scoop in each paper. Add 1 piece of dark chocolate, and then add another scoop of batter. Place in oven and bake for 18 minutes. Remove from oven and cool.

Directions: Blend shortening and butter together until fluffy and add confectioners' sugar and cocoa. Mix to combine then add the Cab Reduction and blend well. If the frosting is too thick, add a hint of vanilla or cream to thin it out. Place in pastry bag and pipe onto cooled cupcakes and serve.



www.FourPointsFoodie.com

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A PET FOOD

Pet nutrition and pet food selection has improved significantly over the last few years, however, there is still a lot of confusion regarding what to feed our four-legged friends.

Following the horrific melamine pet food recalls of 2007, much research has been dedicated to learning more about pet nutrition and how pet food is manufactured and distributed to consumers. This has spawned a greater selection of high-quality, pet super-foods. However, it has also prompted some companies who still make cheap, low-quality pet food to simply change their packaging to dupe consumers into believing that they're buying food filled with wholesome fresh meat, fruits, and vegetables.

Don't be fooled! A pretty bag with pictures of cascading corn and carrots does not a quality pet food make. Read the ingredient label to see what's really in the bag and in your pet's food bowl.

Here are some things to look for in the ingredient label and to consider when choosing a food for your furry family members.

PROTEIN

A named protein and/or protein meal should be first on the ingredient list. For example, if you're buying a chicken formula pet food, look for, "chicken," or, "chicken meal," as the first ingredient, not chicken by-product. Remember: meal is a good thing, by-product is a bad thing. Also, if a protein source is not named - beware. For example, if the ingredient label reads, "meat meal," you have no way of knowing what the protein source is and should be wary. It could be anything from aardvark to zebra. The best pet foods have two or three protein sources in the first five ingredients listed.

Confused about the difference between chicken and chicken meal? Chicken, or any other protein source listed in the ingredient label, means that fresh meat was added to the mix before cooking. This is great! But just like our bodies, animals are about 70% water. So, when the mixture is cooked, the fresh meat in it loses volume, thereby decreasing

the amount of protein in the final product. Chicken meal, on the other hand, is chicken meat, bone and some connective tissue that has been cooked, dried and added to the mix before cooking, which ultimately increases the protein level of the food.

VEGGIES, FRUITS & WHOLEGRAINS

Like humans, pets benefit from the vitamins and enzymes in fresh vegetables and fruits. Look for quality produce and complex carbohydrates like carrots, spinach, pumpkin, etc. as well as whole grain rice, oats, and/or barley. These healthy foods have lower glycemic index ranges, which will keep your pet more satisfied and will help to avoid sudden drops in energy levels. Avoid highly processed grains such as corn, wheat and rice. As with humans, these are empty fillers and fast burning carbohydrates.

US SOURCED

Do a little extra digging to find where the ingredients of a food you're considering are sourced. Often, you can find this information on the manufacturer's website. If not, call them and ask. Look for foods made with ingredients from the US. This will help you take advantage of the strict, governmental regulations that watch pet food manufacturers and that are there to protect you and your pets from contamination. Furthermore, buying products made in the US is just plain good sense for the local economy and environment.

WHAT TO AVOID

By-products and by-product meals should be avoided for a number of reasons. First, you have no way of knowing exactly what the ingredient is, but you can be sure that it is a low-value portion of the animal. In addition to the ingredient itself being dubious, low-value products are not handled with the same care as higher-value products, so they could become rancid or exposed to harmful bacteria. Also

avoid sweeteners, which are added to poor quality foods to enhance palatability. Other ingredients to avoid are artificial preservatives such as BHA, BHT, and ethoxyquin, and artificial colors.

Once you've narrowed your choices down to a few based on quality ingredients, then consider your pet's specific health needs. Is your pet overweight, underweight, young, adult, or senior? Does he/she have allergies or itchy skin? There are high-quality foods that are formulated to address all of these issues and more.

After you've finally chosen a healthy pet food and are ready to purchase, be sure to check the, "Best By," date. In quality, natural foods, this will be about 12 months from the manufacture date. When dishing out the new grub to your pet, start by mixing it with a bit of his last diet to help his tummy transition. Do this for about a week, adding a little more of the new food everyday. By day seven, your pet should be ready for full servings and a fuller life.



Christmas In July

Nature Watch

by Jim and Lynne Weber

By mid-summer in Central Texas, most of us dream of some relief from the heat, but did you know that you can find a reminder of the winter holidays thriving in the searing hot temperatures? Two native poinsettias, the Wild Poinsettia (*Euphorbia cyathophora*) and Mexican Fireplant (*Euphorbia heterophylla*), are present in our area and are related to the popular Christmas poinsettias (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*), which has large red, pink, yellow, or white leaves just below the flowering cluster. The showy colored parts of poinsettias that most people think are the flowers are actually colored bracts or modified leaves.

Wild Poinsettia, also called Fire on the Mountain, is a 'dwarf poinsettia' 1 to 2 feet tall with green stems and alternating lobed leaves, with the uppermost leaves having red blotches near the base. The flower clusters are small and yellowish, and bloom from May to November, usually peaking in the height of summer. Its scientific name is composed of the genus *Euphorbia*, named after the corpulent Greek physician Euphorbus and meaning 'well fed', and the species name of *cyathophora* meaning 'cup bearing', which refers to the bowl-shaped structures supporting each flower. While this plant can be invasive, it is a good native filler plant and can be an interesting addition to a sunny flowerbed containing sandy, well-draining soil.

The Mexican Fireplant (*Euphorbia heterophylla*) is native to Mexico and Central America, as well as across the southern tier of the United States from California through Texas to Florida. Blooming from late July to September, this 2 to 3 foot tall plant



Wild Poinsettia (photo by Joseph A. Marcus)

also has tiny flowers lacking petals within a 5-lobed gland-rimmed cup, all in a cluster on top of a leafy stem and just above partly red, white or yellow leaves. It grows in open or wooded sandy areas, and prefers full sun to partial shade. Often, when left grown wild as a 'weed', this plant loses its striking coloration.

Both Wild Poinsettia and Mexican Fireplant are members of the Spurge family, which includes about 7500 species, each having milky sap and found growing in mostly warm or hot regions. Plants in this family have produced valuable products such as rubber, castor & tung oils, and tapioca. Most are poisonous, however, and the sap can mildly irritate the membranes of the eyes and mouth. In the wild, these species are also considered 'ruderal species', or the first to colonize either natural or human disturbed lands. They typically dominate a disturbed area for a few years, gradually losing the competition for resources to other, longer-lasting native plant species.

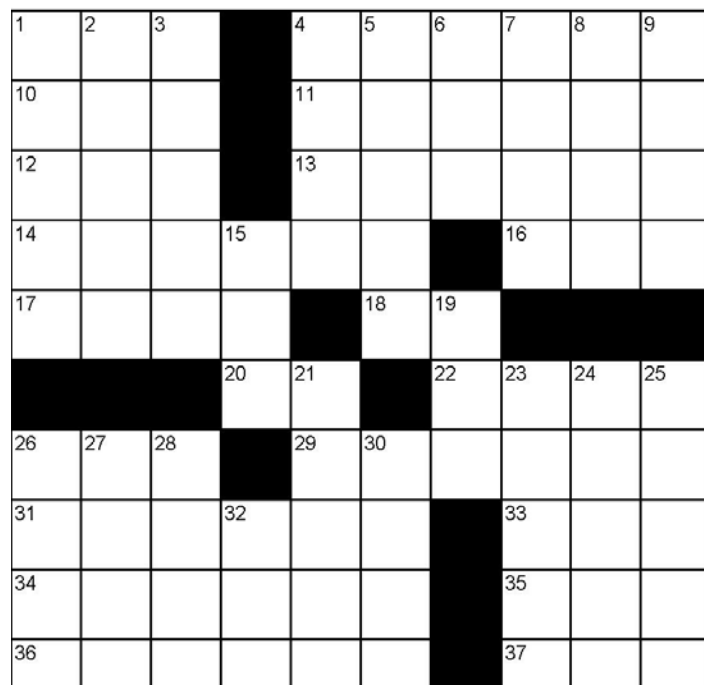
The Christmas Poinsettia is native to Mexico and Central America and is generally found in the form of a shrub or small tree. Native peoples of Chile and Peru called this plant the 'Crown of the Andes', and the Aztecs, who made a reddish purple dye from its bracts, called it 'Cuetlaxochitl', meaning 'mortal flower that perishes and withers like all that is pure.' This fall, why not plant some of our smaller festive natives in your wildscape, and next summer let them remind you of cooler times when the temperature outside hovers around 100 degrees!

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, look for our book, *Nature Watch Austin*, published by Texas A&M University Press.



Mexican Fireplant (photo by Robert L. Stone)

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

1. Pen brand
4. Oriental tower
10. Self-esteem
11. Excuses
12. Shade tree
13. Napkins
14. Filament
16. Shekel
17. Hula __
18. Iowa (abbr.)
20. Man's title
22. Type of dressing
26. Short-term memory
29. Exodus
31. Hype
33. Airport abbr.
34. Glistening
35. Cask
36. Star system
37. South southeast

DOWN

1. Wood
2. Ice house
3. Fast food meal
4. Ashen
5. Excuse
6. Cocktail drink
7. Follow
8. Eaten
9. Association (abbr.)
15. Words per minute
19. Abridged (abbr.)
21. Become less tight
23. Onion like vegetables
24. Painter Richard
25. Utilization
26. Thick carpet
27. Roman cloaks
28. Gangster's girlfriend
30. Musky
32. Pod vegetable

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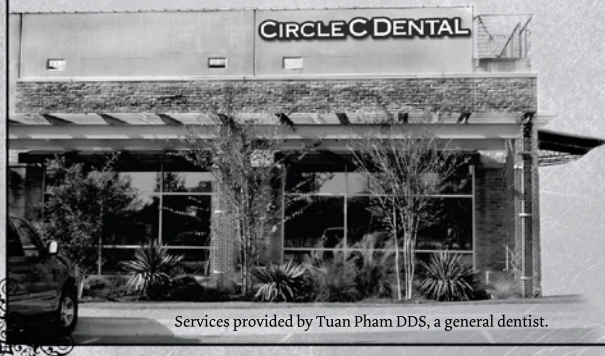
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Square Foot Range	6 Months Sold History (12/2011 - 05/2012)						Current Market	
	TOTAL	AVERAGE					TOTAL	
	Homes Sold	Square Feet	Price / Sq. Foot	Sold Price \$K	Year Built	Days On Market	Available	Pending Sale
<2500	7	2,078	\$ 139	\$ 290	2007	27	0	0
2500-2999	4	2,813	\$ 121	\$ 340	2008	47	2	0
3000-3499	7	3,129	\$ 122	\$ 381	2008	112	4	0
3500-3999	9	3,760	\$ 113	\$ 423	2009	109	2	5
4000-4500	3	4,315	\$ 125	\$ 540	2011	13	1	2
>4500	3	4,934	\$ 143	\$ 704	2010	11	1	0
Meridian Total	33	3,312	\$ 125	\$ 414	2008	67	10	7
% Change Mo/Mo	22%	2%	1%	3%	0%	9%	0%	-42%

Market Report data was obtained from the Austin-Multiple Listing Service (MLS) on 06/07/2012. In some cases new construction and

FSBO homes are not included in the MLS data and therefore are not represented. Data is deemed accurate but not guaranteed.

17 Customer Reviews
Average Rating: ★★★★★

★★★★★ **Absolute pleasure to ...**
Austin Real Estate, and specifically Tara West, have been gr... [\(Read More\)](#)
By Haydn S Austin, TX on 04/12/12

★★★★★ **Absolutely amazing**
My family and I have worked with 9 realtors over the years... [\(Read More\)](#)
By Sharon W Austin, TX on 02/16/12

★★★★★ **Fantastic service, f ...**
Tara was fantastic. She made suggestions we had neve... [\(Read More\)](#)
By Andrew A Austin, TX on 01/19/12

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