



POST

The Official Newsletter of the
Plum Creek Homeowner Association

January 2014
Volume 5, Issue 1

Please Trim Those Trees! Winter is the Perfect Time

Trees are one of the many things that make Plum Creek such a wonderful place to live.

The street trees and yard trees planted throughout Plum Creek reduce home cooling costs by providing shade. They cool the ambient air temperature by providing shade to the sidewalks and streets, which absorb sunlight and continue to radiate heat during the night. Trees reduce storm water runoff, store carbon, and improve air quality by releasing oxygen and filtering the air. Additionally, the trees make walking in Plum Creek cooler and safer by creating a physical barrier between pedestrians and cars and improve our quality of life.

However, these wonderful trees with all of their benefits need our regular attention and care. Many of the trees need to be trimmed to prevent damage to persons or vehicles that traverse the sidewalks and streets. Please prune any and all of the trees in the planting strip or yard that are encroaching on these areas and please remove any dead trees immediately.

Due to safety concerns, the HOA will be evaluating street and yard trees that encroach on the sidewalks, but since these trees belong to the homeowner, the HOA wants to provide residents with the opportunity to prune their own trees. The HOA requests that you prune your trees up 7 feet and/or away from the sidewalk to prevent injury.

We have a short window to prune in winter, but this time of year is best for pruning!

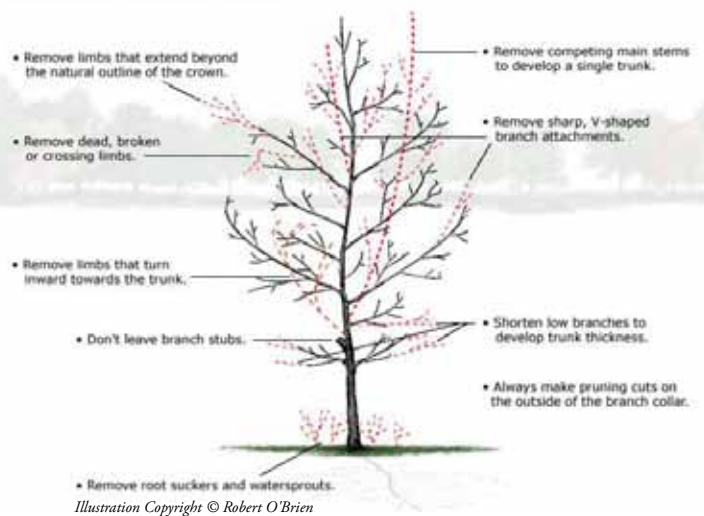
When raising your tree's canopy, follow proper pruning techniques, including cleaning tools between trees and wound spraying any cuts on all OAK trees to prevent Oak Wilt.

For information and diagrams about pruning, visit www.treesaregood.com, www.ci.austin.tx.us/growgreen/pruning.htm, or www.plumcreektxhoa.com.

For information about contacting local certified arborists or for questions or concerns about pruning, feel free to contact the Landscape Committee at landscape@plumcreektxhoa.com.

Pruning Your Tree

Remove branches shown with dotted lines:



You can also contact these two local companies for bids:

My Hired Helper
512-663-7772

Local Boy Scout Troop
Art Trevathan 614-579-7227

Committee Contacts

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Important Numbers

STREET LIGHTS, ROAD REPAIRS, STREET SIGNS

City of Kyle Public Works Dept **512.262.3024**
..... pw@cityofkyle.com

ANIMAL CONTROL

City of Kyle Animal Control **512.268.8800**

SOLID WASTE

TDS Customer Care Dept **1.800.375.8375**

POWER OUTAGES

PEC **1.888.883.3379**

SCHOOLS

Hays CISD **512.268.2141**

Negley Elementary **512-268.8501**

Barton Middle School **512.268.1472**

Hays High School **512.268.2911**

DON'T WANT TO WAIT FOR THE MAIL?

View the current issue of the Plum Creek Post
on the 1st day of each month at www.PEELinc.com



Christmas Tree Recycling at Haupt Park- 450 Haupt

**DECEMBER 30, 2013 THROUGH
JANUARY 30, 2014**

Plum Creek residents have a great option for extending the life and usefulness of their natural Christmas trees. From December 30th until January 30th, you can drop your Christmas tree at Haupt Park. The tree drop-off will be located at Haupt Park, on the Hartson side, by the group of large oak trees. A designated area will be set up after Christmas for the trees.

The City of Kyle will bring a chipper to the park and chip the trees. You can also bring tree limbs and shrubs and these will be chipped also. The sap from the trees is too strong for many garden plants so we will recycle it under the neighborhood swings and playgrounds.

Remember to remove all hooks, tinsel, and decorations from your trees before disposing of them. Do not dispose of household trash in this location since nothing will be taken to the dump. Lastly, please do not drop trees after dark or outside the posted dates or designated area.

Newsletter Info

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Article Submission .. announcements@plumcreektxhoa.com

Advertising..... advertising@PEELinc.com

Advertising Info

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Have a Dirt Circle Under Your Tree?

By: PC Landscape Committee

In some of our gardens, our trees have grown so big and full that our grass has thinned or just disappeared completely. If that's the case in your garden, here are a few ideas:

1. Just mulch it. Mulch introduces organic material into the soil, providing valuable nutrients to your tree's roots. It helps stabilize soil temperature during summer and winter, too. Spread it about two to four inches deep and don't let it touch the actual trunk. Add a border to limit the wash out.

2. Let there be light! Thin the canopy of your tree and let the sun shine! Grass and many plants need plenty of sun to survive and thrive, so some selective pruning of your tree limbs may be a simple solution to thicken your grass.

3. Get planting. One can always create a flowerbed or plant groundcover. Several groundcovers can be planted in shade, such as pigeonberry, purple heart, or monkey grass. Cedar Sage, heartleaf skullcap, or columbine (reseeds when happy) are some great shady perennials, and American beautyberry is a lovely, shade tolerant shrub. When planting anything under a tree, be very careful with the roots, as not to stress the tree or expose it to disease. If possible, consider using seeds.

4. Rocks rock. River rocks and other natural stones can create a lovely, non-traditional garden.

5. When all else fails, Google it! There are many creative solutions on the web, including xeriscaping options, about how to deal with bare spots under trees. So, hit that keyboard.



AT THE FENCE

New Chair Person for the Welcome Committee!

Tamberly Hankins volunteered to chair the Welcome Committee. Give her a warm welcome. Thank you for your service.

Santa Visited Plum Creek

HO HO HO! Santa visited Plum Creek early in December, and lots of pictures were taken of Plum Creekers with the Man in Red! Canned and packaged food was donated by residents during the event, which was taken to the Hays County Food Bank. Can't wait to see Santa again next December!

Sip and Sew

SIT BACK.....TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND ENJOY AN EVENING WITH THE INDIVIDUALS OF SIP AND SEW. BRING A PROJECT TO COMPLETE. ALWAYS THE SECOND TUESDAY OF THE MONTH IN THE FERGUS COMMUNITY CENTER. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CALL: IRIS SANDLE - 405-0054 OR SANDRA SIGLER - 405-0187



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465 Buda Sportsplex Dr
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12 Ways to Save from the Department of Energy

Day 1: Get a Home Energy Audit

This holiday, give the gift of energy savings by purchasing a professional home energy audit for someone. A home energy audit helps you pinpoint where your home is losing energy -- and what you can do to save money -- by checking for air leaks, inspecting insulation, surveying heating and cooling equipment and more. By making upgrades to your home following a home energy audit, you could save 5-30 percent on your energy bills. For more information, check out Energy Saver's home energy audit resources.

Day 2: Install a Programmable Thermostat

Don't pay for warm air that you aren't using. By installing and setting a programmable thermostat, you can save money on your energy bills -- lowering your thermostat 10-15 degrees for 8 hours can save 5-15 percent a year on heating bills. If you are traveling this holiday, be sure to program your thermostat for energy savings.

Day 3: Maintain Your Fireplace

It isn't the holidays without a crackling fire, but don't let your energy bills go up with the smoke. Proper chimney maintenance -- like sealing your fireplace flue damper, caulking around your hearth, and installing tempered glass doors and a heat-air exchange system to blow warmed air back into the room -- will help keep warm air in your house and cold air out.

Day 4: Prepare Your Windows for Winter

Before you curl up on the couch in front of the window this holiday season, be sure to take steps to reduce heat loss. Weatherizing your windows can reduce drafts, and installing storm windows can cut heat loss through your windows by 25-50 percent. Explore more tips for saving energy on your windows.

Day 5: Take Advantage of Sunlight

Use sunlight to your advantage this winter. Open curtains during the day to allow sunlight to naturally warm your home, and close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.

Day 6: Buy ENERGY STAR Electronics

Are computers, TVs or other electronics on your wish list this holiday season? Be sure to ask for ENERGY STAR home electronics for instant energy savings. Depending on usage, an ENERGY STAR computer can save 30-65 percent more energy compared a computer without this designation

Day 7: Purchase Rechargeable Batteries & an ENERGY STAR Battery Charger

If you are buying gifts that require batteries, consider purchasing rechargeable batteries -- which are more cost effective than disposable batteries -- and an ENERGY STAR charger for them. In the U.S. alone, more energy-efficient battery chargers could save families more than \$170 million annually.

Day 8: Save Energy in the Kitchen

Between holiday baking and meal preparation, your oven is probably working overtime. Cooking alone accounts for 4.5 percent of your home's energy use, and when factoring in other kitchen appliances, your kitchen's energy use can be as high as 15 percent. By taking simple actions in the kitchen -- like using the right-sized pots on stove burners to save about \$36 annually for an electric range or \$18 for gas, and using the oven light to check on a dish's progress to prevent heat loss instead of opening the door -- you can entertain in style without raising your energy bill.

Day 9: Use LED Lights

This holiday, light up your home with LED lights. In addition to being sturdier and more resistant to breakage, LED holiday lights also last longer and consume 70 percent less energy than conventional incandescent light strands. It only costs \$0.27 to light a 6-foot tree for 12 hours a day for 40 days with LEDs compared to \$10 for incandescent lights.

Day 10: Install a Light Timer

When decking your house in holiday lights, use timer controls to lower energy consumption and save money. Timer controls allow you turn lights on and off at specific times, while staying in the holiday spirit.

Day 11: Plug Holiday Decorations into Power Strips

From holiday lights to listening to Christmas carols on repeat, the holidays can take a toll on your home's energy consumption. Even when you aren't using lights and electronics, they still draw small amounts of energy -- at an average cost of \$100 a year for American households. Plug your electronics into a power strip and turn it off to reduce your energy bills.

Day 12: Drive Your Way to Fuel Savings

Whether you are driving across town to do errands or across the country to visit family, fuel costs can add up over the holidays. One way to reduce fuel consumption is to empty your car after all your driving trips -- an extra 100 pounds in your vehicle could increase gas costs by up to \$.08 a gallon.

Plum Creek HOA Dues

QUARTERLY PAYMENTS WILL BE DUE ON:

January 1st • April 1st • July 1st • October 1st

The quarterly assessment payment (dues) is \$130.75. You have 30 day grace period to send in the payment before a \$36.00 late fee is applied. You can pay the entire year's assessment by January 10th, \$503.00, and receive a \$20.00 discount.

The payment address is:

Plum Creek HOA
c/o Goodwin Processing Center
PO Box 93447
Las Vegas, NV 89193-3447

***include your account number (This address just processes payments)*

Payment options:

1. Bill Payment Services: mail to the address above and include your account number
2. Traditional check: mail to the address above and include your account number
3. Automatic recurring draft (ACH): (Free service to Plum Creek residents) You can log onto www.goodwintx.com to set up an automatic draft (ACH). The draft occurs once a quarter around the 5th day of the quarter. This needs to be set up 6 days prior to the draft for the bank to be able to process the payment information for the ACH draft.
4. Forget to make a payment? You can log onto www.goodwintx.com and set up a one-time payment to draft from your credit card or checking account. There is an additional fee that is paid to a third party processing center that you will have to approve. This fee is less than the late fee. This payment can take 3- 5 business days to process.

You can contact the Plum Creek HOA office at 512-262-1140 to request your account number.

Please note: Payments are not processed at the Plum Creek on site office.



Have You Registered for the Plum Creek Weekly eNews Yet?

The Plum Creek eNews is a weekly email for Plum Creekers containing neighborhood watch information, lost and found pets, weekly and upcoming event information, and just about anything else one might need to know! Typically, the email is sent once per week on Thursday or Friday.

The eNews has been designed as an 'Opt-In' email, as to not bother anyone just wishing to visit the HOA website on occasion. If you're interested, please add your email to the list by following these instructions:

1. Visit www.plumcreektxhoa.com.
2. Enter your username and password at Login: Residents Login or request one via Login: Login Requests on the menu bar.
3. Once you sign onto the site, click on My Profile in the menu at the top left of the page. You should arrive at your address book profile.
4. Click on the Subscriptions tab.
5. Check the box next to "Plum Creek eNews: Neighborhood Opt-In Email List"
6. Click Save Changes.
7. Start receiving the Weekly email as early as next week! :)

If you add your email and do not receive the e-News the following Thursday or Friday, please email announcements@plumcreektxhoa.com to get added.

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PLUM CREEK POST

BURGLARY PREVENTION TIPS

Each year in the U.S. there are more than five million home burglaries. Nine out of ten of these crimes are preventable. The risk of being burglarized can be greatly reduced by taking simple steps to make your home more difficult to enter and less enticing to would-be burglars. Remember the greatest weapons in the fight to prevent burglaries are light, time and noise.

Light

Make sure that exterior lights are mounted out of reach, so that burglars can't easily unscrew bulbs.

Consider buying motion-sensitive lights, which are now available at relatively low prices.

Use a variable light timer to activate lights inside your home.

Trim trees and shrubs near doors and windows so burglars can't hide in the shadows

Time

Make it time-consuming for a burglar to break into your home by : installing deadbolt locks on all exterior doors. Installing double key locks in doors which contain glass. This will keep a burglar from being able to open the door simply by breaking the glass and reaching through. (Note: so that everyone in the house can get out in the event of a fire, be sure to keep the key in designated place). Placing additional locks on all windows and patio doors.

Noise

Get a dog. You don't need a large attack dog; even a small dog creates a disturbance that burglars would prefer to avoid. Remember to License and Vaccinate it. Consider having someone care for your dogs in your home while you're away, instead of boarding them.

If you can afford it, install an alarm system that will alert neighbors of a burglar's presence. Most systems can even summon local police directly. Don't forget to check the Alarm Code.

Other tips to prevent break-ins:

Think like a burglar. "Case" your home the way a burglar would and look for easy ways to enter your home.

Be sure valuables such as guns, electronic devices and artwork are not visible from the street.

Be sure to lock up ladders and tools which could be used to break into your home.

Work together with your neighbors. Organize a Neighborhood Watch and let your neighbors know when you will be away for an extended period.

While on vacation, have someone pick up your newspapers and mail, so that they do not accumulate and alert burglars of your absence. Display your house number conspicuously and have it well

(Continued on Page 7)

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(Continued on Page 7)

illuminated. This will help police and emergency personnel find your home quickly.

Just in Case...

Sometimes, all your efforts won't stop a determined burglar. It's wise to take some precautions that will help you get your property back should a criminal successfully break into your home:

Make a list of your belongings (be sure to keep receipts, especially for expensive items like stereos and computers). Be sure to update this list periodically.

Keep copies of your inventory list and receipts in a safe deposit box or with a friend. (This is also important in the event of a house fire.)

Photographing and/or videotaping your possessions is a convenient way to keep a record of what you own.

Engrave your valuables with an identification or mark to deter burglary and to prove ownership should the article be stolen and recovered by the police.

Be sure you have the right coverage. You may need to purchase additional coverage to protect special items like expensive jewelry or rare antiques.

If you don't own your home, seriously consider buying a renter's policy. Your landlord will generally not be responsible for your possessions. Rental coverage is available at competitive rates and these policies also offer important protection against liability and losses due to fire or storm damage.

SUDOKU

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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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