

Volume 11, Issue 2 Village Creek Community Association

February 2014

LANDSCAPE CORNER

The Village Creek Landscape Committee

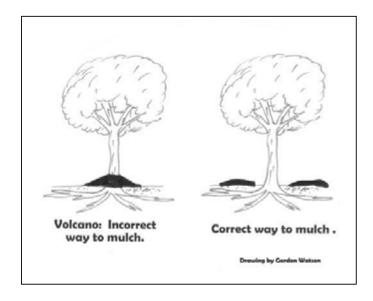
Tree volcanoes: One would believe, based on looking around most neighborhoods, that "tree volcanoes" (see drawing) are an accepted method by which to apply mulch around trees. 90% of Village Creek's trees have these volcanoes. It would surprise many of us to hear that the experts say that they are not recommended, and detrimental to the tree!

A Garden Book for Houston, by the River Oaks Garden Club, says, with regard to these volcanoes:

"Maintain a deep ring of mulch around the tree for at least three to four years to help the tree get established. You may have to replenish it several times a year, but don't pile it high around the tree because that can harm the tree. Be particularly careful to keep the mulch several inches away from the trunk itself. You may have see the sadly ubiquitous "mulch volcanoes" on trees in our area, particularly newly planted ones, but do not adopt this practice. The harmful mulch volcanoes prevent water from getting to the root ball, can keep roots too wet in poorly drained soils, often invite disease, and can rot the trunk. Also, roots can grow up into this pile of mulch...girdling the tree, further stressing the tree. You should always be able to see the root flare. In addition, refrain from piling soil, sand, or anthing else over the root area of the tree as a tree's roots can suffer over time."

It is not very clear to me, yet, how to fix the problem once we have it. I know that, if I dig down to ground-level where the tree trunk "flares," there will be roots well above ground level (as noted by the Garden Club). I suspect that these above-ground roots should be cut, but, given the importance of our trees, it is likely we will get an expert's opinion before fixing the problem. I don't want the cure to be worse than the illness.

Vegetables: Many seasonable vegetables can be



transplanted this month...including asparagus crowns, onions, broccoli, cabbage, Chinese cabbage, mustard, kohlrabi, collards, kale, cauliflower and Brussels sprouts. Protect them with blankets when freezing is predicted. Seeds can be sown for carrots, beets, turnips, radishes, lettuce, spinach, arugula, and chard.

Freezing: Very cold weather is possible in February (record low in February was 6 degrees F), so continue protection of applicable plants. As a reminder, consider draining your backflow preventer before hard freezes (28 degrees or below or continuous below-freezing nights). Don't forget to reopen the valves when irrigation is required.

(Continued on Page 3)

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EMERGENCY NUMBERS or 911
CenterPoint-Gas Leak713-659-3552
Constables Office
Klein Fire Dept
Poison Control Center800-764-7661
Willowbrook Methodist281-477-1000
EMERGENCY 24 HOUR LINE281-537-0957
(select 'emergency' option)
SCHOOLS
Tomball ISD281-357-3100, www.tomballisd.net
Willow Creek Elem (K-4)281-357-3080
Northpointe Int (5-6)
Willow Wood Jr (7-8)281-357-3030
Tomball High (9-12)281-357-3220
Tomball Memorial High School281-357-3230
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Village Creek Community Association Website:
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Sex Offenderswww.familywatchdog.us
Comcast - Cable/High Speed Internet713-341-1000
Republic Waste
Trash pickup Tues/Fri
Recycling Fri (only newspapers/#1 & 2 plastics/aluminum cans)
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Landscape Corner- (Continued from Cover)

Fertilization and Mulch: Apply light fertilization to all plants. Maintain a layer (2" to 3") of mulch throughout the year to assist in keeping moisture in and weeds down. Note that areas with nice shade, such as under roses, weeds tend not to be a problem. Weeds love open areas, so either plant these areas or apply a thick layer of mulch.

Bare Root Planting: February is the month to finish up planting bare root plants. Water them well after planting, and make sure their roots are kept moist until planted. To assure moisture doesn't run off, build a dam around each new plant to provide a reservoir for water until the plant is established. After February, you will need to plant containerized plants. Remember to backfill only with native soil...no amendments or fertilizer are needed or suggested.

Spraying: This is the month to spray fruit trees with oil sprays (before they bud).

Pruning: February is a good month to prune deciduous woody plants prior to spring growth. Look up specific plants to find out the exact time for pruning. According to "Texas Gardener (TG)," "The most notorious crimes of the season are overly-pruning crape myrtles and cutting large shade trees back so far they look like a giant hat rack…." Again, according to the TG this is NOT the best time to prune some plants such as flowering quince and "once blooming" roses. These should not be pruned until after they blossom. Again, read, read, and read about your specific tree or bush

Grass: Weeds are awaiting warm weather to take off, so if you see some, now is a good time to hand pick them. If you must use chemicals, this is a good month to apply weed killer. Bare areas, with lots of weeds, might be a sign of poor water distribution of your sprinkler system, so see if bare areas are getting enough water before you spend too much effort on other solutions.

Roses: February is a good month to plant roses. According to TG, consider EarthKind roses, which are "disease resistant and Texas tough by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service." Roses should be pruned around Valentine's Day, but can be pruned into March. This article from the Chronicle provides good information on pruning roses: http://www.chron.com/life/gardening/article/How-and-when-do-I-prune-myroses-1678101.php

FEBRUARY'S WEATHER FROM INTELLICAST.COM

AVERAGE	AVERAGE	RECORD	RECORD	AVERAGE	AVERAGE
LOW	HIGH	LOW	HIGH	PREC.	SNOW
DEG. F	DEG. F	DEG. F	DEG. F	INCHES	INCHES
43	65	6	91	2.97	0.1

2013 Village Creek Christmas **Decorating Contest Winners**

Thank you to all who participated. Here are your winners.

Best Overall: 12710 Eagle Ledge

Most Traditional: 12523 Midland Creek

Most Traditional Runner-up: 12835 Magic Falls

Most Festive: 17107 Ligustrum Trail

Most Festive Runner-up: 12743 Briar Harbor

Best Block: Eagle Ledge East

Best Block Runner-up: Mossy Ledge

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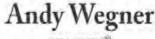
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Village Creek Resident



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Home Handyman

By Gordon R. Watson

We had to replace our attic furnace recently. Actually, only the circulating fan motor was bad, but its replacement cost was half the cost of a new furnace, so it didn't seem worthwhile to just replace the motor. My wife and I were both a bit under the weather during this process, and the weather was quite cold, so there really weren't many options. I thought about having the installer replace only the fan motor, but then got to thinking that there are a few other expensive parts in today's furnaces (such as the control circuit board) which could go next.

While new furnaces and air conditioning units are very efficient, the fancy equipment to obtain efficiency (such as variable or multi-speed fans), can be quite costly. Fortunately, most home air conditioning equipment has a ten year parts warranty. While such warranties sound excellent, they are

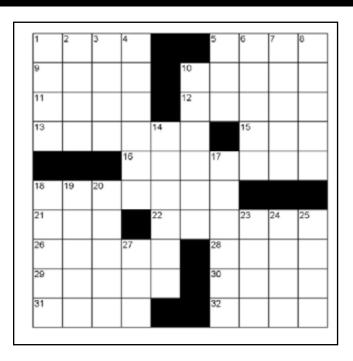
not commonly transferred when a home is sold. The ten year warranty is a pretty safe bet by the manufacturer because the major equipment (compressor, circuit boards, and motors) generally last more than ten years, and, according to the U.S. Census, not many families stay in a house ten years. Typically, we don't buy extended warranties, though have made exceptions. Some have paid off, but most didn't. I have always thought that the best thing to do for all extended warranties is to put the money (you didn't use to buy them) into an interest-bearing account or CD where you couldn't lose money, but could accumulate it for those times when you needed it for repairs...or, better yet, go on a vacation if the account happens to overflow.







CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1. Pear type
- 5. __ matter
- 9. Bridge support
- 10. Jarred
- 11. Hind
- 12. Civil authority
- 13. Make it yourself pizza brand
- 15. Hoopla
- 16. Monroe
- 18. Sieges
- 21. Bumbling insect
- 22. Crustacean
- 26. Birch-like tree
- 28. Note
- 29. Prick
- 30. Canal
- 31. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. __
- 32. Decays

DOWN

- 1. Hook part
- 2. Brand of sandwich cookie
- 3. Replace a striker
- 4. Color saturation
- 5. Expression of surprise
- 6. Faithful
- 7. Ill-natured
- 8. City in Ohio
- 10. Gives a conceited smile
- 14. Laces
- 17. Chemical compound
- 18. Embarrass
- 19. Cantankerous
- 20. Warm
- 23. Brand of coffee alternative
- 24. Except
- 25. Bucks wives
- 27. Compass point

View answers online at www.peelinc.com

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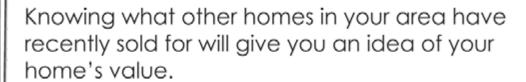
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