



COURTYARD HOMEOWNERS
ASSOCIATION, INC.

COURTYARD CALLER

Official Courtyard Newsletter

September 2014

Volume 10, Number 9

BOARD MESSAGE

Football is underway and school has begun so it must be Fall – or close to it. Welcome back to all our traveling residents, and we hope everyone had a safe and happy summer. As our daylight hours grow shorter, please make an extra effort to watch out for children walking to and from their buses and for our many walkers and joggers (both two & four legged types) as well as the many bicyclists who share our streets. This is especially important in those “twilight” hours of the day -- early morning and evening when people tend to be in the biggest hurry to get somewhere.

We are happy to report slight progress in our efforts to get the turn lanes repainted at the main entrance. After almost a year of calls and emails, the City finally called to say the project was approved – although they couldn’t say exactly when it would happen. Possibly in the next “couple of months.” Don’t hold your breath, but at least we’re in line.

We’re also still working on getting a “No U Turn” sign in that area. Keep your fingers crossed.

Don’t forget that the Fire Safety Committee (FSC) will begin offering free outside home/yard assessments to residents this fall. We are hoping to eventually get all the community’s homes assessed as part of our Firewise work to increase our chances of a positive outcome should a wildfire come through this area. Again, we stress this is a free assessment and the homeowner is not required to do anything based on the results. The assessment is intended to help owners realize how easily his/her home could go up in flames if we have a fire in the neighborhood and it offers suggestions to reduce that likelihood. Contact any Board or FSC member and sign up if you are interested in getting your home checked.

Drive Safely in the Courtyard

DON'T MISS A CHANCE TO MEET THE CANDIDATES !!!

WHAT: **District 10 City
Council Candidates’
Q&A Forum**

WHEN: **Thursday, Sept. 11
at 7:00 p.m.**

WHERE: **Austin Country Club**

Our neighbors in Davenport Ranch have kindly invited us to attend a Q&A forum they have organized so that candidates for our District 10 City Council seat can present their platforms and reasons for running. This format provides you the opportunity to meet the candidates and ask questions that can help you make a more informed choice when voting for the person who will represent you in the new City Council. Hope you can make it.

RVSP: contact Joe Thrash, Davenport Ranch HOA’s VP (512) 796-0346; jthrash@austin.rr.com

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COURTYARD Book Club

**Tuesday, October 7, 2014, 1 p.m.,
5612 Scout Island North**

John Steinbeck notes that his sequel to Cannery Row, *Sweet Thursday* gets its name from is the day between "Lousy Wednesday" and "Waiting Friday". A quote from the book clarifies this characterization of time: "It is a common experience that a problem difficult at night is resolved in the morning after the committee of sleep has worked on it." The Courtyard Book Club will discuss this lesser known of Steinbeck's novels in October.

In the time between Cannery Row and *Sweet Thursday*, World War II has occurred. As the book begins, Doc returns home from the war to find that all that was familiar has changed and people he knew are dead or gone. He feels lost and without direction. Although Doc doesn't know what has triggered this change within him, he is determined to get his life back on track. As he pursues his quest for happiness and fulfillment, Steinbeck's recurring theme of the common bond of humanity; of people loving and supporting those they care about plays out to a good end.

In November, the Book Club will read the Austin Mayor's Book for 2014, Monday, Monday by Elizabeth Crook. At the core of this novel is the Charles Whitman shooting from the UT Tower in 1966. Reviews of Crook's writing and storytelling are unsparing in their praise. "Authentic. . . harrowing. . . makes us believe the characters were there. . . Crook's exploration of Whitman's massacre and its lingering effects will have relevance for years to come." —*Dallas Morning News*

Call or email Jean Heath,
c.jeanheath@gmail.com; 512-231-9412, for
more information on the club or questions about
upcoming meetings.

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SEND US YOUR EVENT PICTURES!!

Do you have a picture of an event that you would like to run in the newsletter? Send it to us and we will publish it in an upcoming issue. Email the picture to janeegib@gmail.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

TREE WATERING

Here in Texas, we love our trees and value their precious shade during our long hot summers. And although Texas trees are tough – they have to be to live through our summers, we have sadly learned that our trees have their limits in these times of extreme heat and prolonged drought. Texas lost over 500 million trees in 2011 alone. Experts note that most of the trees did not die from dehydration. Rather, these mature trees were so severely weakened that they were more susceptible to disease and infestations. In these times, then, it is important to do what we can to keep our trees as healthy as possible. You can replant dead grass or bushes in a day, but it takes years and years to grow a mature tree. To reduce their stress and keep our trees healthy during extreme heat and drought conditions, experts say that we need to water them. At the same time, however, we are asked to conserve and use the minimum amount of water necessary to do that. Below are some suggestions to help do both.

How long do I need to water ?

Water your trees on your usual schedule or, if you haven't been watering, start with an hour in each area of coverage under the tree's canopy.

Next day, dig down about five 5 inches (5") deep and feel the soil at the bottom of the hole. Soil should be moist down to 5" but not too wet or muddy. Sopping wet tells you to reduce the time on your next watering day. If the soil isn't moist 5" down, add more time onto your next watering day. Keep adjusting the watering time until soil is consistently moist down to about 5".

How often ?

Once you find the optimal length of time, you can figure out the minimum number of days you need to water using the 5" deep moisture test. As a general rule, during cooler weather (typically October - April), if there has been no significant rainfall, water deeply every two months. In the warmer months (May through September), if there has been no rain, water deeply once a month, and when temperatures are consistently very high - 100° - water deeply every two to three weeks.

Young trees

Remember that trees planted within the last two years need more frequent watering: October – April weekly if no rain that week; May – September - 2-3 times/wk if the water drains rapidly.

Placement

Each time you water, move the sprinklers or hoses around under the tree so that the correct amount of water is applied everywhere under the canopy all the way to drip line (outer edges of leaves). If water use is restricted, then cover only the area under the outer half of the trunk and drip line where most of the fine water-absorbing roots are located.

Equipment

Good tree watering doesn't require elaborate or expensive equipment. Find a small, inexpensive, round, flat sprinkler about six inches in diameter with one hole that sprays a cone-shaped fountain up in the air.

Set it to low flow so droplets are visible. Avoid turning the flow too high, the finer the spray and higher it goes up in the air, the more it will evaporate before it hits the ground. Remember that the goal is even moisture. Bubblers, hose-end soaking and soaker hoses reduce evaporation, but they don't distribute the water evenly over the root system so if you use them, you will need to keep moving them around to get water evenly distributed over the entire area under the canopy.

Mulch

Two inches of mulch is good for newly planted trees; up to three inches for more mature trees. Note that mature trees with mulch under them are more water-efficient than trees with grass. Keep in mind that during very hot dry weather, a thick layer of mulch can absorb most of the water before it can get into the ground. In addition, old mulch gets so hard and crusty that it actually repels water. Pay attention and break up the surface of the mulch if you find this happening.

You can also check with your lawn service or visit the City of Austin Water Conservation webpage http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/watercon/rainfall_data.cfm to estimate your lawn watering needs.



Capital City Village is a nonprofit dedicated to helping seniors in Austin "age in place" successfully, with volunteers, program and professional providers. Come to our event and learn more!

(512) 524-2709 • www.capitalcityvillage.org

LEARN MORE—OPEN HOUSE!

We're hosting a FREE Open House to to chat about aging in place, staying in your home longer, and how seniors across the country are achieving it! Come for the refreshments and great conversation.

Tuesday, September 16

5:30-7:00PM

Hosted at WellMed at Midtown

3708 Jefferson St #A



CICADA KILLERS

Large wasps flying low over the lawn can be a common, and sometimes frightening, sight at this time of year. Things can get alarming when those wasps become territorial and fly around your head until you leave the area. These wasps are usually accompanied by holes in the yard or flower beds that are surrounded by small piles of dirt. The wasps are cicada killers and aren't anything to panic over.

Cicada killers are about 1 ½ inches long with a reddish-brown head and thorax and an abdomen that is black with yellow markings.



(Continued on Page 6)

Fig. 1. Hole created by a cicada killer.



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The Courtyard July 4th Parade and Picnic *was a Blast*



Joany Price

*Your Courtyard Neighbor
& Tennis Club Member*

Realtor, CLHMS
Certified Previews™ Property Specialist
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Coldwell Banker United, REALTORS



I work here, I play here, I live here



Joany Price

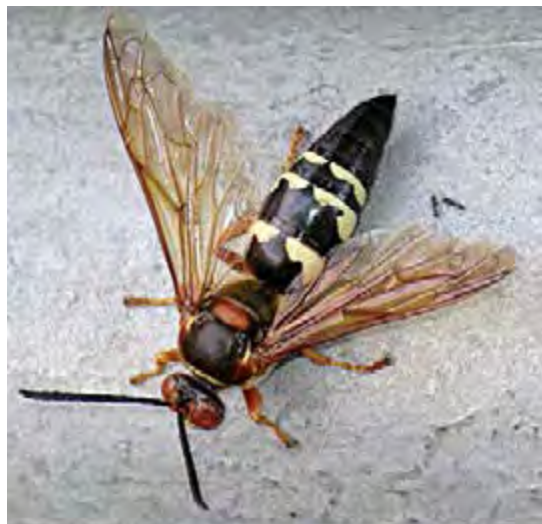


Fig. 2. Cicada killer.

Cicada Killers - (Continued from Page 4)

Wings have a rusty tinge. The males can be aggressive and buzz near people, but males are unable to sting. Females are capable of stinging but are rarely aggressive towards humans or animals.

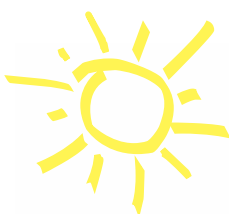
Females dig burrows in the ground and use these burrows as nesting areas. Females sting and paralyze cicadas, take them back to the burrow and then lay an egg upon it. When the egg hatches, the larvae feed upon the cicada provided.

Cicada killers usually do not warrant any control methods. They are actually beneficial insects that help to reduce populations of cicadas. If you feel that you must do something to manage them, you can sprinkle insecticidal dust around the opening of the burrow.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600.

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Firewise Tips Checklist for Homeowners

Wildfire doesn't have to burn everything in its path. In fact, cleaning your property of debris and maintaining your landscaping are important first steps to helping minimize damage and loss.

The work you do today can make a difference. Follow these simple action steps now and throughout the year to prepare and help reduce the risk of your home and property becoming fuel for a wildfire:

- Clear leaves and other debris from gutters, eaves, porches and decks. This prevents embers from igniting your home.
- Remove dead vegetation from under your deck and within 10 feet of the house.
- Remove anything stored underneath decks or porches.
- Screen or box-in areas below patios and decks with wire mesh to prevent debris and combustible materials from accumulating.
- Remove flammable materials (firewood stacks, propane tanks, dry vegetation) within 30 feet of your home's foundation and outbuildings, including garages and sheds. If it can catch fire, don't let it touch your house, deck or porch.
- Wildfire can spread to tree tops. If you have trees on your property, prune so the lowest branches are 6 to 10 feet from the ground.
- Keep your lawn hydrated and maintained. If it is brown, cut it down to reduce fire intensity. Dry grass and shrubs are fuel for wildfire.
- Don't let debris and lawn cuttings linger. Dispose of these items quickly to reduce fuel for fire.
- Inspect shingles or roof tiles. Replace or repair those that are loose or missing to prevent ember penetration.
- Cover exterior attic vents with metal wire mesh no larger than 1/8 inch to prevent sparks from entering the home.
- Enclose under-eave and soffit vents or screen with metal mesh to prevent ember entry.

Learn more about how to keep your family safe and reduce your home's risk for wildfire damage at www.firewise.org.



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Transportation - A Quality of Life Issue:

- Reduce housing & transportation costs - from current 63% to national avg of 40%
- Provide comprehensive bus system - immediate solution & cheaper than rail
- Improve traffic congestion - HOV lanes, timed on-ramps & re-timed traffic lights

Public Safety - Austin's First Line of Defense

- Reduce crime - increase police patrols
- Fund 911 call center - improve response time
- Prevent wildfires - implement fire mitigation
- Avoid loss of property - build 360 fire station

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