

THE BULLETIN

Belterra Community News

December 2014 Volume 8, Issue 12

News for the Residents of Belterra

Take Care of Texas by Managing Your Leaves

As autumn brings cooler temperatures, it also signals the arrival of another seasonal display – falling leaves!

While Take Care of Texas encourages you to plant shade trees to help lower your utility bills in the summer, these deciduous trees lose their leaves in the fall. Instead of raking and bagging them, where they will head to a landfill, put them back into your lawns and gardens as a valuable source of mulch and fertilizer.

Leaves contain 50 to 80 percent of the nutrients a plant extracts from the soil and air during the season. Grass clippings, leaves, and other yard debris make up 20 percent of the trash sent to landfills each year. It costs Texans over \$250 million a year to collect and dispose of this waste.

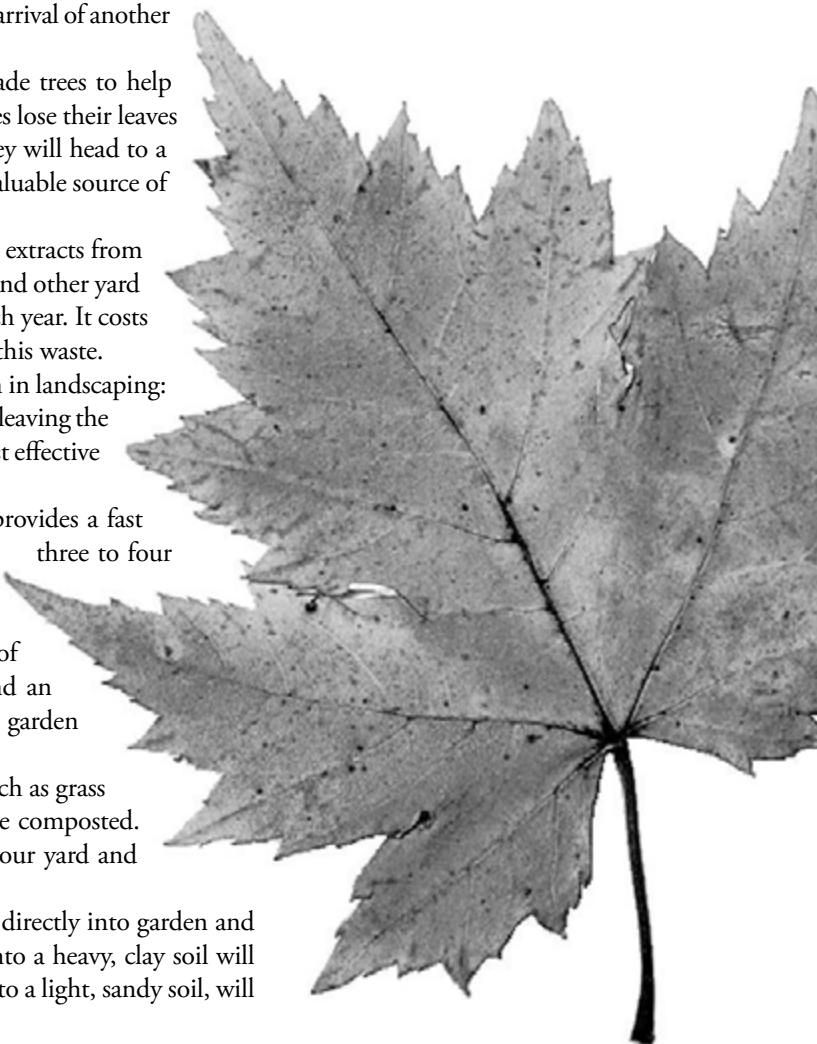
There are four basic ways to manage leaves and use them in landscaping:

Mowing: a light covering of leaves can be mowed, simply leaving the shredded leaves in place on the lawn. This technique is most effective when a mulching mower is used.

Mulching: a lawn mower with a bagging attachment provides a fast and easy way to shred and collect the leaves. Apply a three to four inch layer of shredded leaves around the base of trees and shrubs. A two to three inch mulch of shredded leaves is ideal for flowerbeds. For vegetable gardens, a thick layer of leaves placed between the rows functions as a mulch and an all-weather walkway that will allow you to work in your garden during wet periods.

Composting: in addition to leaves, other yard wastes such as grass clippings, pine needles, weeds, and small prunings can be composted. Compost can serve as a soil conditioner that nourishes your yard and reduces the need for outdoor watering up to 60 percent.

Soil improvement: leaves may be collected and worked directly into garden and flowerbed soils. A six to eight inch layer of leaves tilled into a heavy, clay soil will improve aeration and drainage. The same amount tilled into a light, sandy soil, will improve water and nutrient holding capacity.



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

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Ambulance / Fire..... 911

SCHOOLS

Dripping Springs ISD 512-858-3000
Dripping Springs Elementary 512-858-3700
Walnut Springs Elementary 512-858-3800
Rooster Springs Elementary..... 512-465-6200
Dripping Springs Middle School..... 512-858-3400
Dripping Springs High School 512-858-3100

UTILITIES

Water – WCID # 1 & 2 512-246-0498
Trash – Texas Disposal..... 512-246-0498
Gas – Texas Community Propane..... 512-272-5503
Electricity – Pedernales Electric 512-858-5611

OTHER

Oak Hill Post Office 512-892-2794
Animal Control..... 512-393-7896

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc. 512-263-9181
Article Submissions belterra@peelinc.com
Advertising..... advertising@peelinc.com

Mark Your Calendars!

DECEMBER BELTERRA AREA EVENTS:

Wednesdays – Dripping Springs Farmers Market

3:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
At the Triangle, HWY 290 & RR 12
www.CityofDrippingSprings.com

Saturday, December 6th – Christmas on Mercer Street

FREE • Family activities, shopping, and tree lighting
Mercer Street Dripping Springs, TX
www.CityofDrippingSprings.com

Thursday, December 11th – Hill Country Galleria's December Wine Walk

5:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. • Explore the retailers at the Galleria while sampling wine
Start at Twin Liquors in the Hill Country Galleria, 3925 Market St. Bee Cave, TX 78738
www.HillCountryGalleria.com

Sunday, December 14th & Saturday, December 20th – Snow Day!

at the Hill Country Galleria
12pm-4pm • FREE event • Come play in the real snow, make a snow man, take fun photos!
Hill Country Galleria Outdoor Amphitheater, 12700 Hill Country Blvd. Bee Cave, TX 78738
www.HillCountryGalleria.com

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www.locutions.org

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A FEW HOLIDAY THOUGHTS...

It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty founder was a child Himself.
Charles Dickens

There are two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.
Albert Einstein

The way you spend Christmas is far more important than how much.
Henry David Thoreau



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NATUREWATCH

by Jim and Lynne Weber

THE SEVEN-FACED BIRD

Most often, the traditional star of holiday meals in the United States is the domestic turkey. Interestingly, this bird is only one of two wild bird species native to North America (the other is Muscovy Duck) that have been bred specifically for human consumption. Wild turkeys (*Meleagris gallopavo*) were first domesticated in Mexico, and then exported to Europe. European settlers brought domesticated turkeys back to the New World, but would also hunt the wild birds they found. Currently, there are more than 7 million wild turkeys in North America, a pretty astounding fact when they were almost extinct by the 1930s due to overhunting and deforestation of their preferred habitat.

Adult wild turkeys are large birds with long reddish-yellow to grayish-green legs, with each foot having three toes in front and a shorter, rear-facing toe in back. Their body feathers are generally blackish to dark brown, with a coppery sheen that becomes more pronounced in mature males. The toms or gobblers, as the males are called, have a large, featherless, reddish head, red throat, and red wattles on both the throat and neck. The long, fleshy object hanging over the male's beak is called a 'snood', and the tail feathers are all one length. Juvenile males are called jakes, and they have shorter wattles and a tail fan with longer feathers in the middle. Males also have a spur behind each of their lower legs, which they use when fighting. Wild turkeys show a strong sexual dimorphism, with the males being significantly larger than the females or hens. The hens have duller feathers overall, mainly in shades of brown and gray. Young females are called jennies, and the very young of both sexes are called poults.

In Japanese and Korean, the turkey is called 'shichimencho' and 'chilmyeonjo' respectively, both of which translate to 'seven-faced bird.' This reflects the ability of the male wild turkey to change the color of its facial skin and wattles in a matter of seconds due to excitement or emotion. While the birds' head color can range from red to pink to white to blue, certain changes represent certain moods. When the male is excited his head turns blue, and when he is ready to fight it turns red.

Unlike their domestic counterparts and despite their weight, wild turkeys are agile fliers. While their powerful legs can get them running up to 25 mph, their top speed in flight is 55 mph. In their ideal habitat of open woodland or wooded grasslands, they fly beneath the canopy top and sleep up in trees. They can live an average of 3-5 years in the wild, eating a varied diet that includes grains, insects, berries, and even small reptiles. Their daytime vision is three times better than a human's and they see in color, but they have poor vision at night.

There are 6 different subspecies of wild turkey in North America, showing differences in coloration, habitat, and behavior. In our region, the Rio Grande Wild Turkey (*M. g. intermedia*) is dominant, naturally ranging through Texas to Oklahoma, Kansas, New Mexico, Colorado, and Oregon. Having slightly longer legs than other subspecies, it is better adapted to a prairie habitat, with a more greenish-coppery sheen and buff-colored feathers on the tail tips and lower back. This subspecies prefers brushy areas near streams or rivers, and forests of scrub oak, pine, and mesquite.



Male Wild Turkey



Female Wild Turkey

Either way you slice it, as you celebrate the holidays this year, reflect on the wonders of the 'seven-faced bird,' appreciate their history with humans, and keep an eye out for wild wattle and snood!

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 blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com for additional topics.

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#2 TOP PRODUCING AGENT IN AUSTIN (AUSTIN BUSINESS JOURNAL, 2014)

#28 IN THE STATE OF TEXAS (REAL TRENDS, 2013)

Traveling with your pet over the holidays? Here are some tips that will help make your drive smooth sailing.

Submitted by Kristen West, Owner of Gusto Dogs LLC.

1. Take your pet on short trips prior to the big day to let him get used to traveling by car.

2. Keep your pet safe in a secured, well-ventilated crate or carrier. It should be large enough for your pet to stand, sit, lie down and turn around. Letting him have free range in the car not only puts him at risk, but it also poses a risk to your family if you were to stop suddenly.

3. Never let your dog travel in the bed of a truck. Even if he is secured on a short line to prevent him falling or jumping out, your pet can experience discomfort from the weather and wind or sustain injury from debris.

4. Feed your pet three or four hours prior to departure and avoid giving him any food or treats in the car.

5. Never leave your pet in a parked vehicle, which can quickly become a furnace and cause heatstroke, even with open windows. In cold weather, the car holds the temperature like a refrigerator.

6. Your pet's microchip should be up-to-date and he should be wearing a flat collar and ID at all times.

7. Bring a bowl and extra water in case you get stuck in the inevitable holiday traffic jam!

8. Take lots of breaks to let your pet stretch his legs and relieve himself. It's a great excuse to do some sight-seeing or pick up a fun treat for yourself!



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Belterra Community News

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- EVEN number addresses: Wednesday
- ODD number addresses: Monday
- COMMERCIAL properties: Friday

Watering is allowed between the hours of midnight – 10:00 a.m. OR 7:00 p.m. – midnight on your assigned day.

Watering stages can change at any time. To find out the current condition and watering tips please contact the Hays Water Control and Improvement District 1 & 2 or go to <http://www.hayswcid.org/>

The Belterra HOA also posts signs around the neighborhood regarding watering restrictions.

STAY CONNECTED!

Do you Facebook? If so be sure to stay in the know about what is going on with your neighbors by requesting to join the following Facebook groups:

- Belterra Neighbors
- Belterra Propane Coalition
- Belterra Women & Wine Group
- Belterra PlayGroup
- Dripping Springs Neighbors
- Dripping Springs Women2Women Connection
- Dripping Springs Babble

To find the Facebook group you want to join, just type the name in the search bar and request to join the page. Your request should be accepted shortly. You can leave the group page at any time.

You can also “like” the “Belterra Texas” Facebook page.

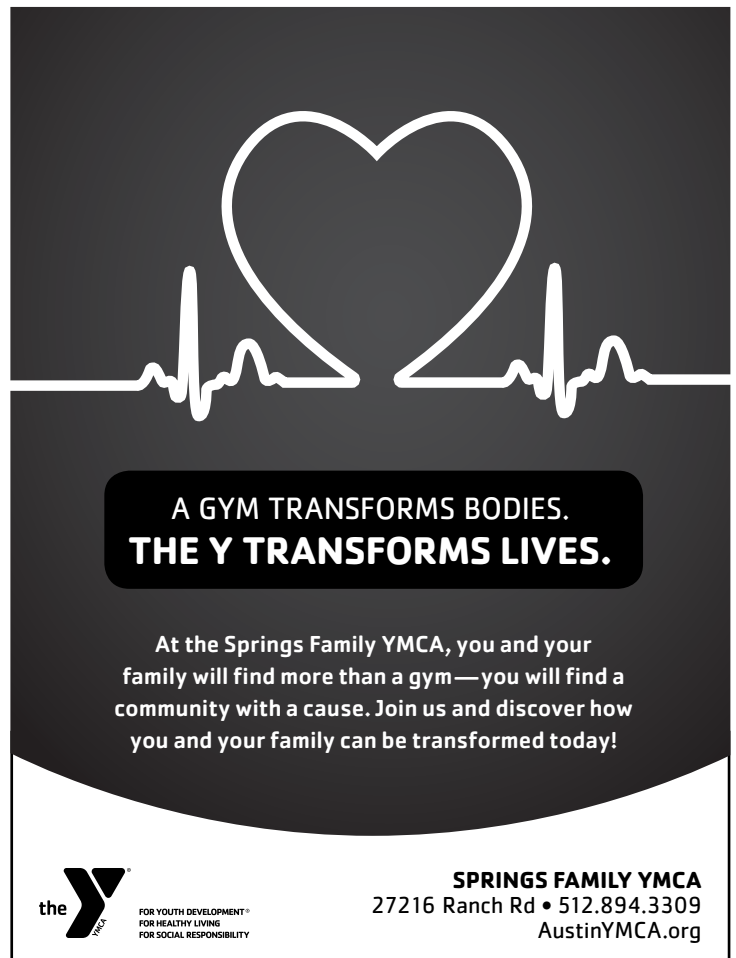
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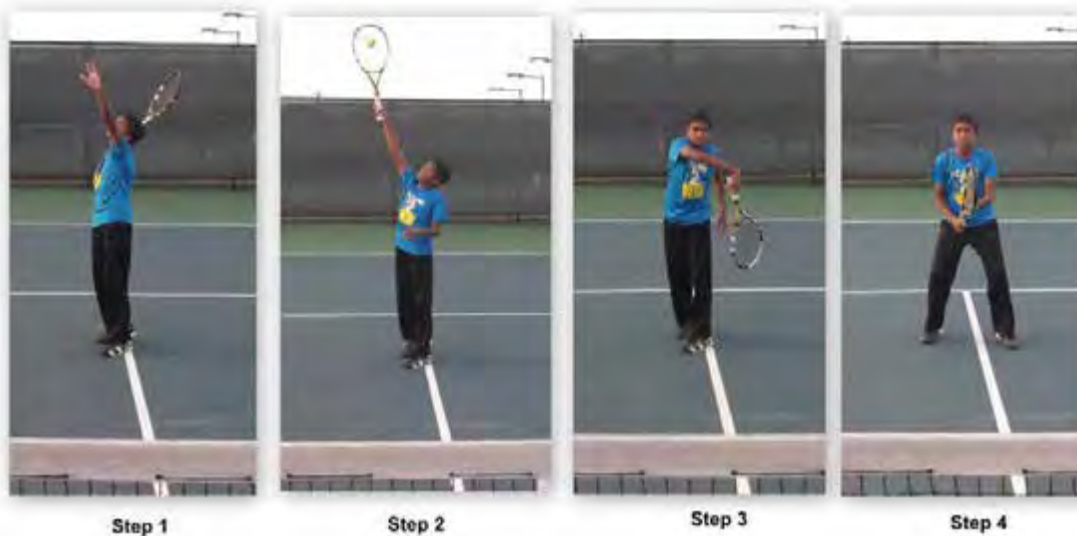
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TENNIS TIPS

By USPTA/PTR Master Professional
Fernando Velasco



THE MODERN GAME: THE SLICE OVERHEAD

In previous newsletters, I offered tips on how to execute the basic strokes for players who are just beginning to play tennis or who want to resume playing.

I am now offering suggestions on how to play the “modern” game mostly geared towards players who are content with hitting the ball over the net and controlling the point with consistency. These players may already be playing for leagues or tournaments and are looking for more “weapons” on the court.

In this issue, I will offer instructions on how to execute “The Slice Overhead.” This shot is utilized when an opponent hits a lob that is both high and deep. The player will take the overhead and hit it slightly on the side of the ball forcing the opponent off the court.

In the illustrations, Chaitanya Aduru, one of the top players at the Grey Rock Tennis Academy, shows the proper technique to execute this stroke. Chaitanya is coached by the Director of the Tennis Academy, Darin Pleasant.

Step 1: The Back Swing: When Chaitanya sees the opportunity, he makes a quick turn of his upper body and takes the racket high

and back. The head of the racket is now at shoulder height, his shoulders are turned, and his eyes are focused on the ball. His right wrist is “laid back” to allow maximum for point of contact.

Step 2: The Point of Contact: The success of a slice overhead shot is in keeping the ball on the strings of the racket as long as possible outside of the ball. Chaitanya started the swing high and is allowing the head of the racket to be fully extended. His left shoulder is almost opening and his weight is moving through the shot.

Step 3: The Follow Through: In order to attain maximum control and power, Chaitanya is wrapping the racket around his body. He has “snapped” his right wrist and has the head of the racket facing down. His weight is going forward.

Step 4: The Ready Position: If Chaitanya’s overhead is successful but was not a winner, he now gets ready for the next shot, which probably would be a volley.

Look in the next Newsletter for: “The Modern Game: The Forehand Baseline Drop Shot”



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