

West Lake Hills ECHO

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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

EMERGENCY	911
Fire.....	911
Ambulance.....	911
Police Department	512-327-1195
Sheriff – Non-Emergency.....	512-974-0845
Fire Department Administration	512-539-3400
Travis County Animal Control.....	512-972-6060

SCHOOLS

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Westlake High School.....	512-732-9280
Ninth Grade Center	512-732-9260
West Ridge Middle School	512-732-9240
Hill Country Middle School	512-732-9220
Valley View Elementary.....	512-732-9140
Forest Trail Elementary.....	512-732-9160
Eanes Elementary.....	512-732-9100
Cedar Creek Elementary	512-732-9120
Bridge Point Elementary	512-732-9200
Barton Creek Elementary	512-732-9100

UTILITIES

Water District 10	512-327-2230
Wastewater	
Crossroads Utility Service 24 Hour Number....	512-246-1400
New Accounts	512-402-1990
Austin Energy	512-322-9100
Texas Gas Service	
Custom Service.....	1-800-700-2443
Emergencies.....	512-370-8609
Call Before You Dig.....	512-472-2822
AT&T	
New Service.....	1-800-464-7928
Repair.....	1-800-246-8464
Billing.....	1-800-858-7928
Time Warner Cable	
Customer Service.....	512-485-5555
Repairs.....	512-485-5080
Austin/Travis County Hazardous Waste	512-974-4343

OTHER NUMBERS

City Administration	512-327-3628
Municipal Court	512-327-1863
Property Tax.....	512-854-9473
Appraisal District	512-834-9317
Chamber of Commerce.....	512-306-0023
City of West Lake Hills	www.westlakehills.org

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Peel, Inc.	512-263-9181
Editor.....	westlakehills@peelinc.com
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ARTICLE INFO

The West Lake Hills Echo is mailed monthly to all West Lake Hills residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to include information about their organizations in the newsletter. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, recipes, special celebrations, and birthday announcements are also welcome.

To submit an article for the West Lake Hills Echo please email it to westlakehills@peelinc.com. The deadline is the 15th of the month prior to the issue.

TEDx
Youth@Austin
x = independently organized TED event



High School and Middle School Youth are invited to TEDxYouthAustin

TEDxYouth is an annual forum created to bring youths into the **TEDx** movement. A group of youth speakers, adult speakers and performers will come together to share their "ideas worth spreading."

Explore this year's theme: (in)visible
"engaging stories, inspiring performances, and intriguing presentations"

When: February 14, 2015
Where: Westlake High school
Registration: FREE. Register Now!
Find Out More: www.tedxouthaustin.com

Facebook: [TEDxYouthAustin](https://www.facebook.com/TEDxYouthAustin) | Twitter: [@TEDxYouthAustin](https://twitter.com/TEDxYouthAustin) | Youtube: <http://goo.gl/kwzQPI>

(in)visible

Hidden meaning discovered. Risk and faith intertwined. The power of fresh light. The courage of a declaration. The safety of anonymity when breaking new ground.

Welcome to (in)visible.

Our 2015 experience will celebrate what it means to make the invisible visible (... or not) as we strive to design a unique environment where brave ideas transform from timid whispers in the back of one mind to inspiring roars in the minds of many. Where important issues are exposed and preconceived notions thrown to the wayside. And exciting new connections become inevitable as we delve into the unknown of ourselves and the potential lying in wait all around us.

This is what (in)visible means to us in this moment, but what will it mean when our hard work has illuminated so much more? What will you discover? We can't wait to dive in together on Feb 14th. Nika Torabi, CPHS Ambassador

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.

naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com

GERMAN COCKROACHES

by Wizzie Brown

German cockroaches are most commonly found within homes and commercial food establishments, usually in the kitchen. The adults are about ½ inch long, tan and have two dark stripes above the head. The females will carry the egg case protruding from the abdomen until the day before hatching. The nymphs, or baby cockroaches, look similar to the adults, but are smaller and without fully developed wings.

German cockroaches may enter buildings through infested boxes, grocery bags, furniture and dried pet food. They may also enter around loose-fitting doors and windows as well as through sewer lines, attics, and where pipes penetrate the structure. Cockroaches are associated with filth, but even well-maintained structures can become infested.

German cockroaches are active at night, and are usually only visible during the day if they are disturbed or there is a severe infestation. They like to rest in tight, dark spaces such as under or inside cupboards, behind loose baseboards or in bathrooms. They are omnivores, feeding plant and

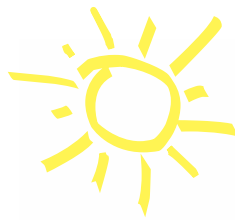
animal products such as meats, starchy foods, baked goods, leather, book bindings and wallpaper paste.

Inspection is important to any cockroach control program. Identify the type of cockroach and their location. Eliminate indoor hiding places such as paper or cardboard. Sticky traps can help to reduce cockroach populations without the use of chemical. Place traps against walls near cockroach feeding and hiding areas.

Some type of chemical control will be needed to eliminate cockroach infestations. Baits are a combination of toxicants and food attractant. Baits should be placed in areas where cockroaches are known to feed. Residual sprays are available in ready-to-use containers or concentrates that are mixed with water. Sprays are fast and easy to apply. Dust treatments should be used in cracks and crevices, wall voids, under refrigerators or around pipes. Dusts should be applied in a light, even coat that is barely visible. Do not apply dust or residual sprays to areas that have bait.

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