

Woodwind Lakes



It's all right here

September 2015

Volume 4, Issue 9

FIRE ANT TREATMENTS

TEXAS A&M AGRI LIFE EXTENSION

There are numerous ways to manage fire ants, but they are often broken into two categories- broadcast treatments and individual mound treatments. Individual mound treatments are used to treat one mound at a time and can be labor intensive and may result in more pesticide being spread into the environment. Broadcast treatments will spread product (granular or bait) over a large area.

Individual mound treatments include pouring boiling water onto the mound, using insecticide mound drenches, spreading insecticide granules onto the mound and watering them in, sprinkling insecticidal dusts on top of the mound or using bait-formulated insecticides around the perimeter of the mound. There are also many “home remedies”, but be advised that many of these do not kill fire ants. Many home remedies make the fire ants move to a new location (often 1-2 feet away), but do not kill the ants.

Bait-formulated insecticides most often consist of a defatted corn cob grit coated with soybean oil; the soybean oil is where the active ingredient (what kills the pest) is dissolved. Worker

ants collect bait as a food source and take it back to the colony to share with other ants, including the queen. Depending on the active ingredient, the bait may cause the queen to die or be unable to produce viable eggs, which gradually kills off the colony. When using baits, results are often slower to observe when compared to individual mound treatments, but can provide 80-90% suppression for 12-18 months. A bonus to broadcasting baits is that the amount of active ingredient is generally very small, which places less chemical into the environment.

With any pesticide treatment, read and follow all label instructions. Make sure to water in the pesticide if the label instructs to do so. Failure to water in chemicals when recommended by the label does an inadequate job of killing the ants. Baits should not be watered in or used before a rainfall event; baits will not be picked up by ants if they get wet.

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com.

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The *Woodwind Lakes Newsletter* is mailed monthly to all Woodwind Lakes residents. Residents, community groups, churches, etc. are welcome to submit 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 consideration please email it to stephen@sterlingasi.com. The deadline is the 9th of the month prior to the issue.

TREE RETREATS

by Jim and Lynne Weber

NATUREWATCH

One of the most common lizards in the Austin area is the Texas Spiny Lizard (Sceloporus olivaceus). It is also one of the largest, averaging 7.5 to 11 inches in length, with the females being larger than the males.

A Texas spiny lizard is often hard to spot, as its dorsal pattern can vary by locality, serving as adequate camouflage in its chosen habitat. Typically grey in color with black, white, or reddish-brown blotches or crossbands down its back, it blends in perfectly against the bark of resident trees. Its underside is usually uniformly light grey, and males commonly have bright blue patches on either side of the belly. The scales appear particularly pointed and spiny, and it has long toes and sharp claws suitable for climbing.

All of these features serve this lizard well, as it is diurnal and arboreal, spending much of its time in trees. While it prefers larger tree species with a significant amount of leaf litter below, such as live oaks, post oaks, red oaks, pecans, hackberries, and elms, it may also be found in brushy trees such as mesquites and junipers. This lizard can also be seen climbing on man-made structures such as fence posts, walls, and telephone poles, especially when the base of these objects is covered in brush.

Typically shy and wary, this lizard quickly retreats to the opposite side of a tree trunk in the presence of a predator or human observer. If startled when approached closely, it will suddenly jump from a tree trunk and flee

noisily into the leaf litter below, making it almost impossible to locate. Trees not only provide protection for this lizard, but they also provide for its food. Being insectivorous, it can find cicadas, crickets, grasshoppers, beetles, ants, butterflies, and caterpillars in the leafy canopy.

Male Texas spiny lizards are territorial, often defending a single tree from encroachment by other males. When challenged, the two males will have what appears to be a push up contest, until one is intimidated enough to give up and scurry away. Active on the surface from March to November, these lizards are reproductively active throughout the warmer months of the year. Females lay up to four clutches of eggs in a shallow depression in leaf litter, with hatchlings emerging 45-60 days later. In the cooler months of the year, they take cover for weeks at a time under rocks, logs, and in deep leaf litter, and are occasionally seen basking in the sun on warmer, sunnier days.

So when you're out and about in your yard or at a park, and you hear something skittering in the leaf litter or retreating up a tree, it most likely is a Texas Spiny Lizard!

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, check out our book, Nature Watch Austin (published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.

5 Things to do Before Putting Your Home on the Market ...

- 1. Have a pre-sale home inspection. Be proactive by arranging for a pre-sale inspection. An inspector will be able to give you a good indication of the trouble areas that will stand out to potential buyers, and you'll be able to make repairs before showings begin.
2. Organize and clean. Pare down clutter and pack up your least-used items. Store items off-site or in boxes neatly arranged in garage. Clean windows, carpets, walls, lighting fixtures, and baseboards to make the home shine.
3. Get replacement estimates. Have big-ticket items that are worn out or will need to be replaced soon? Get estimates to replace - the figures will help buyers determine if they can afford the home, and will be handy when negotiations begin.
4. Find your warranties and surveys. Gather all warranties and user manuals, along with the survey of the property.
5. Spruce up the curb appeal. Pretend you're a buyer and stand outside your home. What is your first impression? Are lawn and bushes neatly manicured and trees trimmed? Are there pretty flowers and plants framing the entrance? Are there any dead or sorry looking plants? Are the beds weeded and fresh mulch added?



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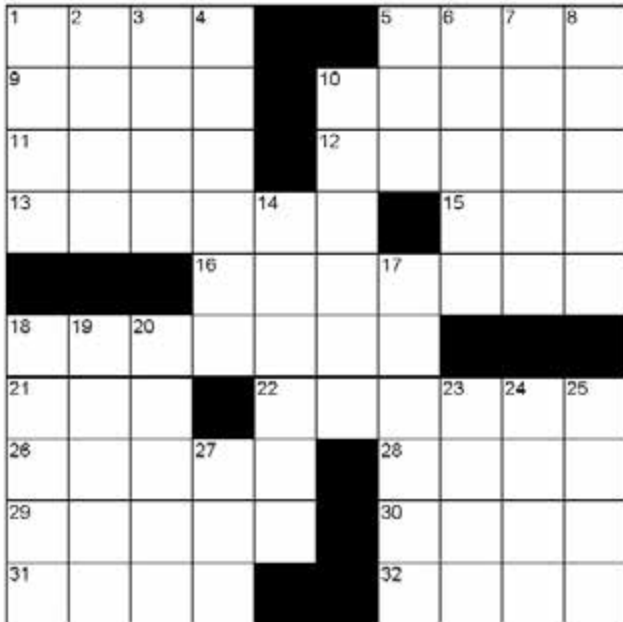


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ACROSS

1. Canned meat brand
5. Recommend
9. Volcanic rock
10. Strength
11. Consumer
12. Refastens
13. Mire
15. Flurry
16. Remove a light bulb
18. Easier to get at
21. Frosty
22. Pretended
26. Spring flower
28. Basic's opposite
29. Buddy
30. Sliding toy
31. Ball player __ Aaron
32. Food

DOWN

1. Ghetto
2. El __ (Texas city)
3. Maintain
4. Plunder
5. Vase
6. Measuring instrument
7. Point
8. Render capable
10. Public transportation vehicles
14. Short-tempered
17. Put a fold in
18. Catch a ride
19. Sporty car brand
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23. Ca. University
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25. Chances of winning
27. Writing liquid

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RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Carrots au Gratin

Ingredients

- 2 lbs. carrot, sliced
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 Cup chopped onions
- 1 1/2 C milk
- 1/4 Cup oleo, divided
- 4 oz. processed
- 3 T. flour
- American cheese, cubed
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 T. dried parsley

Cook carrots until tender crisp. Drain. In saucepan saute onions in 3 T butter. Stir in flour, salt, & pepper. Gradually add milk and bring to boil. Cook for 1 minute or until thickened. Stir in cheese until melted. Add carrots and parsley. Pour in greased 2 quart baking dish. Melt remaining butter and pour over carrots. Bake at 350° 20-25 minutes or until bubbly. (8-10 servings)

Enjoy!



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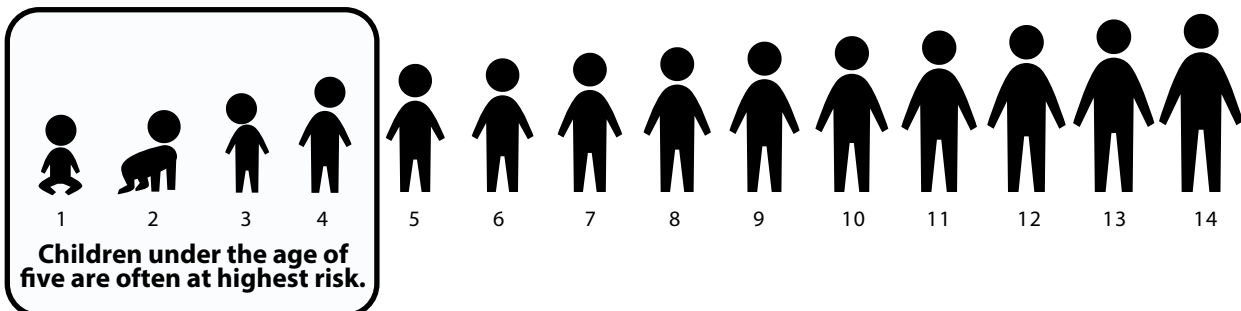
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TENNIS TIPS

By USPTA/PTR Master Professional
Fernando Velasco



With this issue, I will be offering tips on the fundamentals of the game of tennis. Kristen Somerholter, a Member of the Grey Rock Tennis Club shows the proper form and technique for the forehand groundstroke:

Step 1: Early Anticipation: The upper body turns with the right wrist slightly “cocked” back and level with the hip. Notice the eyes focused toward the incoming ball and the balance of the left hand

in front of the body.

Step 2: Point of contact: Once the racquet starts accelerating, the right wrist is still slightly “cocked” back, but will have a small snap when making contact with the ball. Optimum point of contact is in front of the opposite foot. Notice that the eyes are still focused on the tennis ball and her weight has transferred to her left foot.

Step 3: Follow Through: Once the ball has made contact with racket, the arm needs to follow through for a long period of time to allow maximum compaction of the ball and help from the strings and the frame. Notice that the body has slightly turned watching where the ball is landing. The knee has flexed to allow more flexibility and power for the ball.

Step 4: Finish: If the racket has great momentum, let it continue following through the body and finishing it around the neck. This will allow for a more powerful impact and depth on the ball. The smile on her face shows that she hit a great shot!!

Look for next Issue: The Backhand Groundstroke

An advertisement for TexasDirectAuto.com. It features a bulldog wearing a dark blue football jersey with a Texas state flag design and a silver football helmet. The text "WE PROTECT THE POCKET" is written in large, bold, blue and red letters. Below this, a dark blue banner contains the text "SELL US YOUR CAR!" in large, white, bold letters. At the bottom, the website "TEXASDIRECTAUTO.COM" is written in white, bold letters, with a small Texas state flag icon to the left.

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WOD



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