

Tomball Texas Gardener



Vegetables: Warm weather has arrived, so get those warm weather plants in the ground as soon as possible. Large tomatoes have a short season here, so plant them soon (last month would have been better). Consider cherry tomatoes too, as they tend to survive the summer heat well. Placing mulch around plants, such as tomatoes,

will help keep the soil cool for a bit. Plant tomatoes deeply to provide better root growth. Lay them on their side a day or so before planting. You will be surprised. The horizontal portion goes underground. Remove leaves before burying that part of the stem.

This is the month to plant okra. (it is a star performer here) and sweet potatoes (which also grow really well). Add some fertilizer for most plants.

Perennials and Annuals: Divide clumps and remove old growth now. Plant warm season perennials and annuals. Plant bulbs now. This is the time to plant annuals, though many of us prefer to stick with the less labor-intensive perennials.

Trees, Shrubs, and Vines: Those trees, shrubs, and vines that have been dormant have awakened for their spring, summer, and fall show. Prune lightly if required. Oaks probably shouldn't be pruned this month because of the potential for disease transmission.

Fertilize trees with inexpensive pure nitrogen such as ammonium sulfate. Water deeply after fertilizing: 1 inch of water to drive the nitrogen down to the roots.

April is the peak season for roses. When the rose flowers fade, do a light pruning (deadheading) to remove the old blooms. Add ¼ cup fertilizer to each plant soon after...to encourage new growth.

Lawns: Healthy grass is your best defense against weeds. Apply lawn fertilizer after the second mowing and monthly thereafter during the growing season. Consider using straight nitrogen lawn fertilizer now. This would be fertilizer such as 12-0-0 (I.e., with no phosphorus and potassium). Make sure you are getting sufficient water to those areas which tend to grow weeds rather than grass. If it doesn't rain, you will need to irrigate your lawn.

The Warm Air Mystery Another House Detective Story

Gordon R. Watson

Summers can be interesting in Tomball as heat and humidity amble in from their winter hiding places. The office swelters with open windows. There is a slight hint of a breeze clanking the metal blinds against the window sill. My secretary's Remington typewriter taps, dings, and zips. A slightly out of balance fan flaps counterclockwise overhead and a desk fan whirrs on her desk. I can smell the office fragrance: paper, ink, mimeograph solvent. There is a hint of automobile fumes from the street below.

As I sit there, I think of those clients who have those newfangled home air conditioners. What should they do before the air conditioning season starts? I take a few notes:

1. Put your favorite anti-algae into the condensate line of your attic air conditioner. I use a cup or so of bleach. That brought back memories of the time a client nearly flooded an upstairs bathroom when a pipe came loose. It was an interesting case. After some sleuthing, I figured out that the condensate drain pipe had clogged with algae or worse. The pressure from the rising water level forced a joint under the bathroom sink apart. If this had happened while they were on vacation, it would have been a serious problem.

2. Check or replace air filters. Take the time to look through your old filter at a bright light and compare it to a new filter. Generally, you can easily see a light through a clean filter. If in doubt or the replacement filter is inexpensive, change it. A dirty air filter results in less air flow, and will eventually cause a unit failure.

3. While it is running, look and listen to the inside air handler. Other than adding bleach, there isn't much for the homeowner to maintain on these units. Do note that there should be no water in the pan below the inside a/c unit.

4. Look at the outside unit while it is running. Is there anything obviously wrong such as debris on the coils, funny noises, etc.?

Cleaning outside coils or any other maintenance beyond your

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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY DIAL 911

SCHOOLS

Tomball ISD281-357-3100, www.tomballisd.net
 Willow Creek Elem (K-4).....281-357-3080
 Northpointe Int (5-6).....281-357-3020
 Willow Wood Jr (7-8)281-357-3030
 Tomball High (9-12).....281-357-3220
 Tomball Memorial High School281-357-3230
 Transportation.....281-357-3193

SERVICES

Harris County Animal Control281-999-3191
 Lost/Found Pets Nextdoor.com
 Harris County Veterinary Public Health.....281-999-3191
 Municipal District Services (24 hrs) 281-2906503
For leaks, outages and Sewer stoppage
 Reliant–Street lights www.centerpointenergy.com/outage
 Republic Waste.....713-849-0400
 Trash pickup Tues/Fri
 Recycling Fri (only newspapers/#1 & 2 plastics/aluminum cans)

NEWSLETTER

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(Continued from Cover)

understanding should be left up to a contractor. Air conditioning units normally run at 220 Volts and are extremely dangerous for the average homeowner. Leave any maintenance beyond what you are VERY familiar with to the professional. Remember to never exceed your own qualifications. A trip to emergency is far more expensive than a competent contractor.



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Plant of the Month **TEXAS SAGE**

By G.R. Watson

The Texas Sage is one of my favorite plants. It grows well in the Tomball, Texas area. It is evergreen, so attractive throughout the year. It has tiny beautiful purple flowers. Ours is in full sun and has a height of about 4 feet and the same width. We prune this yearly to maintain control. It is apparently drought tolerant after being established. Most reviews say that it is generally problem-free and a good plant for those without a green thumb.



MANY VILLAGE CREEK ROOFS ARE DAMAGED FROM APRIL 19, 2015 WIND & HAIL STORMS. THE HAIL SIZE WAS APPROXIMATELY 3/4" BUT HAS DAMAGED ROOFS THAT ARE AT LEAST 12 YEARS OLD DUE TO THEIR DETERIORATED CONDITION.

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***NOTICE...Most insurance carrier claim filing deadline is April 18th 2016 and depreciation recovery of 6 months from date of claim settlement**

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The Voice

The Voice Travel Tip Dental Crowns

It is not uncommon for a dental crown (cap) to come off. While it is not a big deal if you are at home, if you happen to be on a cruise or in a foreign country, it might be a serious issue. Talk to your dentist about this. At very least, obtain adhesive from a drugstore (\$5) before the trip. These are relatively inexpensive, but will allow you to temporarily cement a crown in place until you can return for an actual repair.

Community Kudos

- Thanks to the residents who use Nextdoor.com to find lost pets.
- We APPRECIATE the residents who clean up after their animals. It helps make others have a nicer walk or run.
- We appreciate residents who drive the speed limit and stop at STOP signs. If we all work together Village Creek will be a safer place to live.

Village Creek Calendar

Key Events and Dates to Remember for 2016:

Pool Grand Opening 5/28
July 4th Parade 7/04
Back to School Luau 8/28
Cookies with Santa 12/04
Community Garage Sale
Spring 4/15 and 4/16
Fall 10/14 and 10/15

Upcoming Board Meetings

April 18, 2016
May 16, 2016
June 20, 2016

Meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. and are held at Longwood Golf Club, 13330 Longwood Terrace Drive, Cypress, TX 77429.

BASHANS PAINTING & HOME REPAIR

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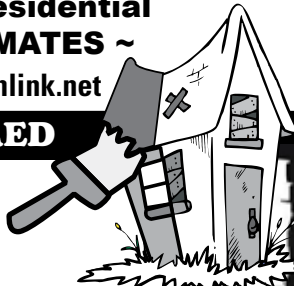
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Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center

If you are able, please consider giving blood. No matter where you are in the Houston area, you will find a nearby donation site, and there are numerous available dates which makes scheduling easy. Tomball Hospital and Walgreens on Northpointe occasionally have mobile unit drives, and it is easy to find. If you have never given, you may want to go to redcrossblood.com to check their requirements. Once you decide to give, go to <https://www.commitforlife.org/donor/schedules/zip> and enter your zip code to set up an appointment on line. Optionally, their phone number is (888) 482-5663.



The Voice Saves you Money

I saw this on NBC News awhile back. Most of us have heard of (or used) such web sites as Hotels.com. But did you know that the web site <https://www.saveonmedical.com/> is the medical equivalency? Go on their web site and put in the procedure (such as a CAT scan of the chest). Then put in your zip code. A list of facilities in your area will pop up (with costs and average cost in our area. It is apparent that this service is new, so you won't always find the procedure and costs. Still, we like the idea, and it is likely that it will expand rapidly as hospitals and clinics want to keep their facilities full (just as hotels do).



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Cy-Fair Emergency & Imaging Center
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Cy-Fair Emergency & Imaging Center
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Apple Dumplings

Eulyne Fulton, Salinas, California

- 1 Granny Smith apple peeled and cut into 1/8ths
- 1 can Crescent Rolls
- 1 Stick Butter
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 t. cinnamon
- 1/8th cup flour (2 Tbsp.)
- 1/2 can (6 oz.) 7-Up

Wrap the 8 apple pieces in 8 Crescent rolls. Put in 8" x 8" or 9" x 9" baking dish (that has been sprayed with Pam). Melt butter. Add sugar, cinnamon and flour to butter. Spread over the apple/rolls. Pour 6 oz. 7-Up over all. Bake at 350 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes. Serve warm (with half and half or ice cream if desired). For double recipe, use 9" x 13" or 11" x 15" pan.



The Voice Saves You Money Saving on Insurance

Television commercials commonly advise us to check our insurance rates to save big bucks. While these ads can be annoying, there is some truth to their message (even if the advertiser is not the company that will save you money). If you haven't checked lately with car, home, and other insurance companies for rates, you may find it beneficial to do so. You may be surprised at the potential savings...particularly if you have been with the same company for a long time. Be sure you compare apples to apples such as the same coverage and same deductibles.

What's in the House Detective's Briefcase?

Gordon R. Watson

An electrical outlet or ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) that is incorrectly wired, faulty, or has a loose or broken wire may be working fine, but could cause someone to be badly injured or worse.

A handy, relatively inexpensive tool that every home should have is the GFCI Outlet Tester. Amazon's biggest seller is the Sperry Instruments GF16302 for less than \$10. If you plug this into any outlet, it lights up to tell you if the circuit is active whether it is wired correctly, and it even allows you to test a GFCI to see if the is working. A faulty, incorrectly wired receptacle (or one with a loose or broken wire) can be quickly identified, so you can call an electrician to do a repair.

It wouldn't be a bad idea to go through one's house to check them all. Most likely, they will be OK, but I would not be surprised if one out of a hundred had a problem. I will report back when I get around to doing this.

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