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Austin Zoo (austinzoo.org)

10807 Rawhide Trail, Austin 78736, 512 -288-1490

Non-profit zoo with over 350 rescued animals - lions, tigers, monkeys, and reptiles. Includes a petting zoo with goats, deer, sheep, and llamas. A 20-minute train ride allows you to see emus, alpacas, and longhorns.

Austin Steam Train Association

(www.austinsteamtrain.org) 401 East Whitestone Blvd, Austin 78613 512-477-8468

Ride a real vintage passenger train. Trip takes about 3 hours. Themed rides offered throughout the year.

Blazer Tag Adventure Center (www.blazertag.com)

1701 W. Ben White Blvd, Austin, 512-462-0202

Suitable for kids 7 and up. Largest lazer tag arena in Texas. Three story, 10,000 square foot, with ramps & ropes, indoor rope course, video game arcade, concession stand.

Chapparral Ice Center (www.chaparralice.com)

2525 Anderson Lane, Austin, 78757 512-451-5012

Indoor ice-skating rink. Skate rental available. Free one-time 30-minute introductory class for beginners age 6 & up on Saturdays at noon.

Dinosaur Park (www.thedinopark.com)

893 Union Chapel Road, Cedar Creek, TX 78612 512-321-6262

Realistic life-size dinosaurs in a park setting. The walk through the park takes about 45 minutes. Bring a picnic, as there is not a concession stand.

Jourdan-Bachman Pioneer Farms (www.pioneerfarms.org)

11418 Sprinkle Cut Off Road, Austin 78754 512-837-1215

Living history museum that shows what farm life was like in the 1800s.

Jump USA Trampoline Park (www.jumpusapark.com)

10601 N. Lamar Blvd, Austin 78753 512-838-6200

40,000 square feet indoor sports and recreation center. Large trampoline, dodge ball court, indoor pool with floating hamster balls, bounce houses, and game arcade.

Kiddie Acres (www.kiddieacres.com)

4800 Howard Lane, Austin 78728 512-255-4131

Old fashioned amusement park on 5 acres. Includes carousel rides, Ferris wheel, pony rides, miniature train, 18-hole miniature golf course. Geared to toddlers and young children.

Millennium Youth Entertainment Complex (www.myec.net)

1156 Hargrave St. Austin 78702 512-472-6932

Owned by City of Austin, 154-seat movie theater, 16 lane glow-in-the-dark bowling alley, video arcade area, food court, 12,500 foot roller skating rink.

Mt. Playmore (mtplaymore.com)

13609 North IH 35, Austin, 78753, 512-989-8886

3000 foot playscape, arcade, restaurant with healthy food choices. Large toddler only area with age appropriate toys, activities, and play elements.

Playland Skating Center (playlandskatecenter.net)

8822 McCann Dr., Austin, 78757 512-452-1901

Largest roller skating rink in Austin. Wooden skating rink with light show, fog machine, disco ball, and sound system. Admission includes skate rental. Includes indoor playground.

Thinkery Austin Children's Museum (thinkeryaustin.org)

1830 Simond Ave., Austin, 78723 512-469-6200

Museum that helps kids learn with hands-on exhibits. Activities to interest kids from infants to 11 years old. Special play areas for infants and toddlers.

Texas Memorial Museum (tmm.utexas.edu)

2400 Trinity St., Austin, 78705 512-471-1604

Natural history museum located close to LBJ Library. Includes dinosaurs and fossils, Texas wildlife, and gems and minerals. It has a gift shop with lots of fun and interesting gifts for kids.

The Forum

NEWSLETTER INFO

NEWSLETTER

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NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc.www.PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181

Advertising.....advertising@PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181

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The Heart Gallery

At ages 13 and 14, Tikia and Lamound have found themselves searching for an adoptive family. Tikia and Lamound want to be engaged in something fun and meaningful, and they want to feel like they're part of something. Whether singing, dancing, playing outside, or going on adventures, Tikia and Lamound's vibrant energy will light up a room. Tikia and Lamound are looking to expand their bonds of love with a forever family.

The Heart Gallery of Central Texas is a project designed to promote and encourage adoptions from foster care and to provide an opportunity for waiting children to be discovered by potential families. There are no fees to adopt from the foster care system regardless of which agency you work with. There is only one pool of children, and they are all in CPS care, every licensed agency has the ability to assist in adoption of any foster child in Texas. Learn more here: www.heartgallerytexas.com

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CEDAR MYTHS DEBUNKED

I am frequently hired to help clients approach development of their raw tract of land they recently purchased. Without exception, I encounter surprise and curiosity when I strongly discourage removal of all the cedar (correctly called Ashe Juniper – it is not in the cedrus family). The most common misconceptions I encounter go as follows:

1. Cedar isn't a native tree right?

Ashe Juniper is actually a Texas native tree, which was found mostly in mountainous rocky areas (i.e.: the common name Mountain Juniper). Also, it was found in locations where natural fires or fires ignited by the Native Americans did not spread to.

2. Cedar is a very invasive tree!

Ashe Juniper is a successful native plant that is unchecked in reproduction, when the natural cycle (which includes fire) is significantly altered by human efforts. The reasoning of this argument would also conclude that Live Oaks are also invasive. Due to the lack of fires and the avoidance of removing any oaks during clearing of land, we now have the catastrophic consequence of interconnected roots across the entire hill country and the capacity of the oak wilt fungal virus wiping out the vast majority of our Live Oak trees. Historically, our oak motts were much fewer and mostly separated from one another preventing the devastation we now experience.

3. Cedar is a water hog and is sucking all the water out of my land.

Ashe Juniper is actually one of the most efficient water users in our entire cadre of native trees. It is usually the last species to die in a drought. It grows very successfully in places like Junction and Rock Springs, where few other species are able to grow. It is true they are evergreen, but the amount of water they require per diameter inch is less than a Live Oak. I say this not to advocate for the removal of all Live Oaks by any means, rather to show the reasoned conclusion of removal of Live Oaks will also decrease significantly the absorption of water from the ground by a tree species! The fundamental fact behind the shade value of trees to land is this: the Sun exponentially more than any amount or type of plant, causes the desiccation of the soil. Use of a tension-meter in an Ashe Juniper copse and then outside in a neighboring field will substantiate this.

4. Cedar will turn my land into arid, infertile land.

Ashe Juniper significantly minimizes erosion of topsoil. Watch a slow motion video of the effects of a full-speed rain drop on soil. By contrast, Ashe Juniper slowly drips the rain onto the ground. It is a fact that the topsoil under a cedar is deeper. Not only that, it is nutrient-rich humus. The dead needles condition the soil where beneficial bacteria and mycorrhizal fungi populations thrive; the berries and needles significantly help lower the alkaline soil ph.

5. All cedars around good trees should be removed though right?

Actually, Ashe Junipers situated around the perimeter of other trees help buffer them from winds minimizing erosion plus cool the micro-environment (soil temperature, cambial tissue in trunk, canopy of tree near Ashe Juniper) significantly around the tree. In addition, it reduces the loss of moisture of that tree as a result of the effects of the sun to its root system outside its own canopy.

Summary

Generally, my initial approach to Ashe Juniper removal on raw land is a 60% removal and 40% retention. With time, more removal is often warranted. Obviously, Ashe Juniper in a field for grazing or for growing coastal hay is a negative value. But even for livestock, a mature Ashe Juniper can offer excellent shade. Also, raising the Ashe Juniper canopy to 3' or 4' can allow for grass to grow underneath it. Furthermore, wildlife absolutely needs Ashe Juniper as well as highly desirable rare natives such as the Texas Madrone.



Pruning Dilemma, Part One

I am most frequently asked the question: "When is the best time to prune my trees?". If only you all knew what a complicated question that is! Here comes my long-winded response which is almost never explained this thoroughly to a curious client and even here, it will be a cliff notes version.

We will take a seasonal evaluation of pruning's pros and cons. First, let's start with Spring. During spring, the flow of sap and tree growth is at its highest. On the positive side – the tree's response to the pruning wound/injury is the quickest at forming what's called wound-wood; its purpose is to completely grow over the injury and minimize the amount and extent of dieback, rot, etc. to the tree. Also, new growth is invigorated even more by pruning. On the negative side – sap flow is increased and pathogens, insect pests and the like become a higher threat.

During Summer, the increased heat and lack of soil moisture lowers the amount of sap and so pathogen as well as pest dangers are somewhat less than Spring, and the time for the tree to cure its pruning wood is faster than in the Spring. Unfortunately, due to the greater likelihood of drought, which weakens the tree's

immune system, it often can't resist even some minor threats (such as hypoxylon canker). New growth also is spurred in other areas of the tree during the Summer – though not as much as in Spring. If adequate moisture is not present it can actually become a stressor on the tree. Furthermore, the formation of wound-wood from callus tissue is not as good as Springtime.

Fall is, for the most part, a balance between the Spring and Summer months – less woundwood formation than Summer, less pathogens/pests than Summer.

Winter has one of the least amount of pathogen or pest threat, yet it is also the worst time for woundwood growth. The benefit of increasing tree growth is practically non-existent. Also, during severe temperature changes and winter storms, the wood can actually expand and contract on larger cuts opening up cracks that greatly increase the extent of the injury into the parent branch or tree trunk.

My final position on the best season to prune is that "when is not the most important question"! The most important question is "Who should I select to do the pruning?". With that said, Spring is

(Continued on Page 7)



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(Continued from Page 6)

the best time to prune your trees from a woundwood standpoint and to increase the growth of your tree. It is the assumption and practice of pruning experts throughout the world who try to perform most pruning operations during Spring.

It is too much to cover in this article but my Pruning Dilemma Part Two will scrutinize assumptions leading to the premise to not prune oak trees during the best pruning season of the year! Texas Forest Service as well as others often recommend "no pruning". Again, the vital question is "Who" not "When" from my professional view.

Questions or comments this article or previous articles have generated, may be directed to me at: kevin@arborcareandconsulting.com



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The Forum

Local Running Group Seeks to Break Top Myths about Marathon Running

USA Fit Austin Launches New Season in Time for National Running Day

With National Running Day just around the corner on June 1, USA Fit Austin seeks to break the top myths about what an actual long distance runner looks like. The local full and half marathon training group program is accepting online registration for its 2016 season now through June 30 at www.AustinFit.com. The season will kick off with two orientation events on June 11 and 18 in the TXDOT Parking Lot at 150 East Riverside Drive.

"Most people don't believe they can complete a full or half marathon for various reasons," said USA Fit Austin Organizer and Head Coach Linda Brown. "Our mission at USA Fit is to show people they absolutely can succeed by providing training plans for every fitness level in a fun, non-intimidating and safe environment."

Brown herself joined USA Fit Austin in 2005. Now, as a coach, she hopes to bring the same motivation and encouragement that her coaches and fellow members gave her to help runners around the Austin area reach their own personal goals.

According to Brown, the top myths about marathon running include:

- Marathoners must be young.
- Marathoners must be athletes.
- Running long distances is dangerous to one's health.
- Runners must be a certain weight or size to successfully run a full or half marathon.

She said that members of USA Fit Austin defy all of these myths and have gone on to complete half and full marathons during their very first seasons with the group as well as meet personal health and fitness goals.

"The most rewarding part of our job as coaches is to see members achieve so much more than they thought possible, no matter their fitness level or stage in life," said Brown. "The only thing we ask our members to show up with is a goal and the passion to meet it. We take care of the rest."

Registration for USA Fit Austin is \$135 for new members and \$105 for returning members. Runners meet Saturday mornings for ability-based group trainings, enjoy weekly seminars and social events throughout the season and benefit from the encouragement and expertise of certified coaches. To learn more and to register, visit www.AustinFit.com.



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Local Austin Company Launches Eco-Friendly Wooden Sunglasses *with a Purpose*

Austin residents now have their own brand of sunglasses to protect their eyes from the blazing Texas sun in a stylish, eco-friendly fashion designed by locally based company, 512 Sunglasses.

Designed with Austinites in mind, 512 Sunglasses aims to capture Austin's unique, rebellious and colourful spirit through its carefully curated collection of sunglasses. Just like Austin, 512's are eco-friendly, made from a wide variety of wood grains sourced from around the world. All 512's sunglasses feature stainless-steel flexible hinges and hand-carved frames produced from lightweight materials like repurposed skateboard wood, bamboo, and ebony wood. All the sunglasses also come with a beautiful multi-purpose bamboo case.

Austinites will easily identify and fall in love with the designs featured in the company's fall collection, which are named after popular neighborhoods and hotspots in the city such as: Barton Springs, Zilker, Lamar, SoCo and many more.

But 512 Sunglasses is not all about business. As a socially responsible enterprise, 512 Sunglasses is not only eco-friendly but also people friendly. The company is deeply committed to improving the equality of humanity despite being a start-up. Through a partnership with World Vision each sale of a pair of 512's helps in the long-term sponsorship of children in dire need throughout Africa. Through World Vision, a humanitarian aid organization, children and their communities are provided with access to renewable food sources, water, education and other necessities while helping them develop into self-sufficiency.

Asked what inspired the idea for the sunglasses, founder of the company Gabriel Camacho said: "The inspiration was the city of Austin itself. We wanted to capture Austin's unique, rebellious and authentic spirit in our line of sunglasses while also offering eco-friendly and socially conscious products."

512 Sunglasses are available in designs for both men and women. They are all priced at \$64.99, including a multi-purpose bamboo case. Austinites can now purchase their own brand of sunglasses at 512 Sunglasses and make not only a fashion statement, but also support a local business that cares about the environment and the people in it.

Apart from their concern for the environment, 512 Sunglasses cares about the state of humanity. As a result, each purchase of one of the sunglasses provides a child in need with food and water for the month, as the company supports World Vision, a humanitarian organization that helps children with access to renewable food sources, water and education.

For further information or to purchase one or more of the 512 Sunglasses, please visit: <http://www.512sunglasses.com>.

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