



Landscape Corner

June Lawn Comments: A must-read publication is Texas A & M's "Maintaining St. Augustine Grass," by Taylor & Gray.

This is a summary, but there is so much in the article that you must read it completely. Some highlights are the following:

- a. 3" mowing height for both sunny and shady areas.
- b. Leave clippings on the lawn.
- c. Water to a depth of six inches. Note that watering several times (rather than one) during the watering day will help prevent run-off. Water running onto the street is a good indication that we are watering too fast for the water to soak in. Or a misguided sprinkler head.
- d. Water only when grass begins signs of distress (usually 5 to 10 days, depending on weather).
- e. During growing season, begin fertilizing 3 weeks after the grass turns green and when there is little chance of a late frost. Apply 1 pound of soluble nitrogen per 1,000 square feet of lawn every 8 weeks, or 1 1/2 pounds of slow-release nitrogen every 10 weeks.

Note that "Texas Gardener Magazine" says that NO fertilizer should be required in the summer if you leave clippings on the lawn.

June Vegetable Activity: Continue planting heat-loving vegetables such as corn, eggplant, southern peas, okra, cantaloupe, sweet potatoes, pepper-plants, squash, watermelon, and pumpkins. Soil, for most vegetable gardens, should be maintained damp (not wet) 3" below the surface. Most of the information about "when" to plant vegetables comes from Harris County's Garden Planting Dates Fact Sheet. Search those words.

June Trees and Shrubs: Water young trees weekly to assure the roots stay damp (not wet). Water older trees if there isn't any rain. Keep mulch around plants to retain moisture. Keep mulch away from trunks. You should see the "flare" at the bottom of the tree.

The Strange and Windy Night

Another House Detective Mystery by Gordon R. Watson

The April, 2016, storms dropped nearly a foot of water on the Tomball area over three or four days. Many had severe property damage; a few were injured; and some, sadly, lost their lives. The House Detective's office is on the second story above a hotel lobby in downtown Tomball. Fortunately, this time, neither our office nor our home was damaged.

It was quite a storm. I got up a few times to check outside. The storm reminded me of a movie genre regarding a large, old mansion. The lightning flashes were incessant: lighting up the scraggly oaks. The thunder was persistent, shaking the house to the foundation. The rain was ceaseless, and the wind tested every window, shingle, and door. Nature wasn't quite finished. As the storm progressed, she paused... then threw some hail at the house for good measure. By the time it ended, the lake near our home was higher than I had ever seen it.

Our home did lose power for part of one day, and it made me think about how much we rely on electricity. I am sure many of you can relate. First, the alarm clock was off. It has a backup battery which seems to never back up the clock. Then there was no lighting with which to shave, brush teeth or comb hair. The coffee maker wouldn't work. The gas stove didn't work because it requires electricity to light it. I used a match. The newspaper didn't arrive because many of the roads were impassable. Of course, the television was off. Frankly, we rely so much on power that there wasn't much to do. I gathered our "emergency kit" from a closet. The lantern required six D cells, and I could barely find enough of them to get it to work. I made a mental note to get some smaller lanterns that use AA cells. Then I tried our transistor radio. It worked, but its sound was so scratchy that I made

(Continued on Page 2)

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

IN CASE OF ANY EMERGENCY DIAL 911

SCHOOLS

Tomball ISD	281-357-3100, 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 School.....	281-357-3230
Transportation.....	281-357-3193

SERVICES

Harris County Animal Control	281-999-3191
Lost/Found Pets	Nextdoor.com
Harris County Veterinary Public Health.....	281-999-3191
Municipal District Services (24 hrs)	281-290-6503

... For water leaks, water outages, water quality, or sewer leaks or stoppage.”

Street lights out & power outages: www.centerpointenergy.com/outage

Harris County traffic signal outages.....	713-881-3210
Republic Waste.....	713-849-0400

Trash on Tue and Fri. Heavy items on Fri only.

Recycle Fri (#1 through #7 plastics; aluminum, steel & tin containers; glass bottles and containers; newspapers; cardboard; and mixed paper)

Digging? Two days prior to ANY digging in your yard, call 811 or use <http://www.lonestar811.com/>

NEWSLETTER

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(Continued from Cover)

another mental note to get a good radio. I threw it in the recycle bin.

My neighbor came over, and we had some instant coffee. We talked about politics, philosophy, airplanes, and the weather. After a bit, he left to start his generator, so I decided to get our generator out as well. I pulled it out of its dusty storage place. I knew its battery was five years old and useless, but it has a rope starter as well. I found some gasoline (which I know was about a year old but probably had some life-extender in it). Fortunately, as I was about to get the generator hooked up, the lights came back on. I put the generator back in its dusty home.

This emergency was a good wakeup call. It has made me rethink being ready for a real emergency. As most of you know, Hurricane Ike left many in the Tomball area without power for several weeks. While we may not ever have that happen again, the weather does seem to be getting “more interesting” as time goes on. I see in the “Houston Chronicle” that a meteorologist has determined that the Houston area is getting heavier rainfall events now than ever before. We are pondering whether flood insurance should be in our budget. I plan to be somewhat more prepared for the next interesting weather-event.

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Saving You Money

By the Editor

My wife is a savvy shopper who keeps her eyes open. At a local store, she recently found a 2.25 ounce can sliced olives for \$1.56 in the pickle area. Then, she found a 3 ounce can of sliced olives for \$.88 in the pizza area. The smaller can was produced in California, and the larger (less expensive) can was produced in Spain. There is no noticeable difference in taste, and the ingredients appear to be the basically the same (olives, water, salt (or sea salt), and ferrous gluconate). The California version is about 2.4 times as expensive when size is considered.

As a side note, if allergens, gluten, or sea salt are important to you, the California version says that it doesn't contain any major food allergens and is gluten free. It also contains sea salt rather than plain salt.

The Voice on Health

By the Editor

According to The American Cancer Society, skin cancer is by far the #1 cancer in the United States. They advise that it is also one of the easier cancers to cure if caught early. Most skin cancers can be found at home with simple feeling or looking. Don't wait for something to go away. Check with your doctor if something feels or looks odd. Waiting for a self-cure is not a good idea with any illness, but particularly all types of cancer.

The Cancer Society says that eight of ten skin cancers are basal cell. These are generally easy to spot and can usually be successfully removed as an in-office procedure without further care. The doctor can quickly diagnose it, deaden the spot and remove it for testing. There commonly is absolutely little or no pain. The doctor will send it away for a biopsy. This takes about a week. Often it will turn out to be non-cancerous.

There are a few things that we all can do to reduce skin cancer risk such as using suntan lotion, wearing good hats with ear covers, and wearing tops when swimming. For further information on skin, and all cancers, the American Cancer Society web site is excellent. <http://www.cancer.org/>



The Voice

FIXIN' VIDDLES: BETTER THAN MOST CHEX MIX

Recipe from: Quick Fix (<http://www.chef-in-training.com>)

Submitted by April Watson

- 8 cups Chocolate Chex cereal (If you can't find them, like me, I used 6 cups Rice Chex Cereal and 2 cups Cocoa Krispies)
- 3/4 cup packed brown sugar
- 6 Tbsp. butter
- 3 Tbsp. Light Corn Syrup
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1 cup MINI Reese's Peanut Butter Cups
- 1 cup mini marshmallows
- 1/2 cup caramel bits
- 1 Tbsp. heavy cream
- 1/2 cup milk chocolate chips (more if you would like)
- 1/2 cup white chocolate chips 1 tsp. coarse sea salt.

Pour measured cereal into a large microwaveable bowl.

Line cookie sheet with waxed paper or foil.

In 2-cup microwaveable measuring cup, microwave brown sugar, butter and corn syrup uncovered on high for 1-2 minutes, stirring after 1 minute, until melted and smooth. Stir in baking soda until dissolved. Pour caramel mixture over cereal, stirring until evenly coated.

Microwave on high for 3 minutes, stirring every minute. Spread on cookie sheet. Cool 10 minutes.

Break into bite-sized pieces.

Make sure Chex mixture is cool to the touch (so candy doesn't melt). Evenly sprinkle mini peanut butter cups candy and mini marshmallows over the Chex mixture.

In a small microwaveable bowl, microwave caramel baking bits and cream uncovered on high for 1 minute or until bits can be stirred smooth. Use a spoon or fork to drizzle over Chex mixture.

Repeat with milk chocolate baking chips and again with the white baking chips.

Quickly sprinkle coarse salt over all the Chex mixture while candy drizzles are still wet. Refrigerate until set. Break apart and store in tightly covered container.

Enjoy!

Plant of the Month: Chinese Fringe Tree



By the Editor with help from Monrovia.com

We have a Chinese Fringe Tree planted in our backyard in full sun, though it can tolerate partial shade. It is known as a small tree and is deciduous in our area. After about five years, our tree is about 9 feet tall and 6' wide. It will grow slowly to 15 feet high and 20 feet wide (or so). It attracts birds and has very showy and fragrant white flowers in the spring. According to Monrovia.com, the blooms appear luminescent in the moonlight.

The tree requires regular watering during its first growing season to establish deep and extensive roots. Watering requirements thereafter are not as critical, but the tree will not tolerate an extended drought. Feed with fertilizer before new growth in spring. Prune during the winter.

In China, the young leaves of this tree are used as a substitute for tea and some are considered equal in fragrance to some of the best green teas.



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Articles and Advertisements

By The Editor

If you are interested in writing an article for "The Voice," please consider sending it to the Editor, Watson.g @ sbcglobal.net. The articles should have the following attributes:

- Interesting to a large variety of readers
- Short and to the point

Before you submit your article, please read Peel's information on articles at <http://www.peelinc.com/articleSubmit.php>

Do you own a business? Consider advertising in "The Voice." It is funded entirely by Peel, Inc., and relies entirely on advertising for its existence.

Do you have any ideas for or to improve "The Voice?" Let us know at Watson.g@sbcglobal.net.



The Voice Travels

By The Editor

Most tourists like to pick up some memories of distant places when they travel. Being practical, we decided that we would pick up coffee cups with the local name on it. We were usually lucky enough to get them home in our too-heavy suitcases without breaking. Then we got the idea that it might make more sense to use some of the pictures of the places we visited and have a photo shop put them on coffee cups, along with the location and date. Coffee cups in tourist stores usually cost in the neighborhood of \$10 to \$15. This is about the price that we pay for the local drug store to make our custom photo coffee cups (postage is a big part of the cost). I do like how personal the custom-made cups are since they include a personal picture, date, and location.

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* According to the American Cancer Society **Tomosynthesis, (3D mammography) an FDA approved imaging technology designed for early breast cancer detection, is available here.



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The House Detective Hint of the Month

By Gordon R. Watson

Sometimes, you need to put a nut on a screw, but there just isn't room to put two fingers and a nut into the available space. This happened to me awhile back working on the House Detective's office coffee maker. I wrapped a piece of scotch tape around the nut and my finger. I didn't even have to punch a hole in the tape. It worked better than I could imagined.

Desperation is a close relative of invention.



Veterans Buy Homes

Excerpt from VA.gov

VA Home Loans are provided by private lenders, such as banks and mortgage companies. VA guarantees a portion of the loan against loss, enabling the lender to provide you with more favorable terms.

The guarantee VA provides to lenders allows them to provide you with more favorable terms, including:

- No down payment unless required by the lender or the purchase price is more than the reasonable value of the property.
- No private mortgage insurance premium requirement.
- VA rules limit the amount you can be charged for closing costs.
- Closing costs may be paid by the seller.
- The lender can't charge you a penalty fee if you pay the loan off early.
- VA may be able to provide you some assistance if you run into difficulty making payments.

You should also know that:

- You don't have to be a first-time home buyer.
- You can reuse the benefit.
- VA-backed loans are assumable, as long as the person assuming the loan qualifies.

Get in touch with the VA for more information and help. VA.gov

Recycling and Trash

By The Editor

Here is the latest information provided to "The Voice" from Kay Serventi, Municipal Territory Representative, of Republic Services:

Recycle the Following:

- Plastic #1 through #7 (no Styrofoam or bubble wrap)
- Aluminum, steel, and tin containers
- Glass bottles and glass containers (make sure they are in a plastic bag to prevent falling onto the street and breaking)
- Newspapers
- Corrugated Cardboard and Boxboard
- Mixed Paper

Items which should not be recycled are the following:

- Paper towels, facial tissue & toilet tissue
- Plastic bags and packaging (These clog the recycling machinery)
- Wax-coated paper drink containers
- Food and wet waste
- Food serving items such as plates (plastic, paper, or Styrofoam).
- Ceramics, dishes, coffee mugs, drinking glasses, light bulbs, Pyrex, flammables, toxic substances, hazardous medical waste and syringes



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