

By Gordon R. Watson

I have noticed that we have lots of Green Anoles this year. They vary in size from 1" to 7" (tail included) or so. They seem to be everywhere. Apparently having them around is a good thing. They are a good pest control operation as they eat small insects such as crickets, cockroaches, moths, grubs, beetles, flies and grasshoppers. If they like your home, it is likely that you aren't using pesticides which lessens their food supply or harm this cute critter.

While Anoles are lizards, they are neither Geckos nor Chameleons. The Anole does change color: green, yellow, brown, gray, or a mixture. They tend to be green in summer and brown when it's below 70 degrees. They can climb almost anything: bricks, plants, etc. They are also very good at jumping several feet. The male anole has a pink dewlap on its neck which he displays to attract mates or warn you that you are in his territory and is not happy about it.

While they look intimidating, they won't harm humans or pets. Their primary enemies are birds. As a defensive measure, their tail can come off, but it will regrow shorter. They are a reptile, and they do lay eggs in moist soil or rotten wood.

Photograph by Gordon R. Watson
Reference: Linda Brown's article, Galveston County Master Gardeners
http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/galveston/beneficials/beneficial-19_lizard_green_anole.htm

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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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 School.....281-357-3230
 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)281-290-6503
 ... 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)

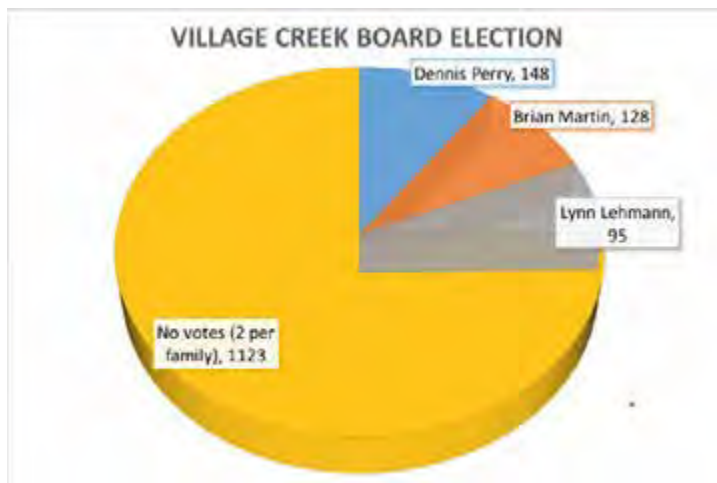
Digging? Two days prior to ANY digging in your yard, call 811 or use <http://www.lonestar811.com/>

NEWSLETTER

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Village Creek Board Election

Congratulations to Dennis Perry and Brian Martin for winning the two available seats. Also, thanks to Lynn Lehmann for running.



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The Tomball Gardener

By Gordon R. Watson

Vegetable Planting in September (from AgriLife Extension of Texas A&M)

Early September: Beans (Snap, Lima, and Bush).

Middle September: Beets, Chinese cabbage, Collards, Kohlrabi plants, Eggplants, Mustard, Peas (English and snap), and radishes.

Planting Trees and Bushes

September is a great time to plant containerized trees and shrubs that are not cold sensitive. It is not a good month for bare-roots or plants that may be damaged by early freezes. Typically, the days are not as hot as summer, and rains are often more common...conditions which are very good for new plants.

Dead-head (remove old blooms) perennials.

This will encourage the plant to add more blooms.

Mulch anytime

Most weeds hate shade, and mulch provides shade which reduces weeds, and reduces the need for water. Mulch also creates a wonderful fresh look for the yard. We are placing layers (about four or so) of newspaper down before we add mulch (at least in some areas. Keep mulch away from tree bark. Putting a pile of mulch against the tree will result in tree disease and roots growing above ground in the

mulch. Join the campaign against "tree volcanoes."

Lawn and Garden Watering

As the temperature drops, use the "seasonal adjustment" to lower your watering time to much less than in the heat of summer. Water your plants less, but if it doesn't rain, do water trees and shrubs to assure they have sufficient water.

Lawn Fertilizing

Fall is the most important season to fertilize a lawn. Wait until the growth slows, but has not stopped. For our area, November is a good time to fertilize. READ the instructions on the fertilizer bag, but keep in mind that fertilizer companies love to sell fertilizer.

Until next time, Happy Gardening!



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The Voice

The Voice Rustles up Some Vittles

If you have a favorite recipe, please send it to Watson.g@sbcglobal.net. Be sure to give its source (if available) and any other interesting personal information (for example, someone wrote “Great” on this recipe. Pictures are always appreciated.

Overnight Coffee Cake

Recipe provided by Sherry Watson. The original source is unknown (cut from an old magazine many years ago). This recipe is unbelievably simple, but it makes a beautiful presentation at the table.

- 1 pkg. frozen cloverleaf roll dough (about 25 rolls)
- 1 pkg. (four-serving size) vanilla pudding mix (not instant)
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup pecans, chopped
- 1 stick butter, melted

Separate frozen roll dough into pieces (each cloverleaf makes three pieces). Other rolls will work, but with larger pieces of dough, use only 20; more may be too many for your pan.

Combine dry pudding mix with brown sugar and pecans.
Melt butter.

Place pieces of frozen roll dough in a well-buttered Bundt pan. (Do not use angel food pan; butter leaks out!) Pour melted butter over frozen dough and sprinkle with pudding mixture.

Leave cake pan out overnight; the dough rises beautifully by morning. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Invert on serving plate to serve. Sticky – but good!

A large advertisement for Texas Direct Auto. It features a football player in a red jersey with the number 87, wearing a red helmet and holding a football. The background is a dark, starry space. The text "SCORE MORE" is written in large, white, bold letters on the left. At the bottom, the text "SELL US YOUR CAR!" is written in large, white, bold letters, followed by the Texas Direct Auto logo and the website "TEXASDIRECTAUTO.COM".

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The Mystery of the Missing Lawn Sprinkler Heads

A HOUSE DETECTIVE MYSTERY

Gordon R. Watson

I recently got a call from a client. He told me that his irrigation zone #3 was barely working. Water came out of some of the heads, but not much. As I drove over to his home, I thought about what could be wrong.

1. Timer not working. If the zone came at all, the timer is OK.
2. Valve not working. This is unlikely because they tend to either work or not.
3. Broken Sprinkler heads or broken riser. The riser is the black threaded pipe that connects the sprinkler to the elbow or tee below.
4. A Broken pipe underground. This would be unusual, but tree roots can break or restrict pipes.
5. A Broken wire to the valve. This would apply only if the zone isn't working at all.

The most common failure is a broken riser to the head, but this problem can be hard to find. Commonly, a head appears to be OK, but, underground, water is gushing out. Often lush grass makes the leak invisible. In this case, things were a bit worse. Some of the heads

were not visible, and the client didn't know where they all were. As the zone flowed, I walked around to look at each visible head to see if any of them were obviously leaking. If I couldn't see the leak, I turned the zone off and kneeled down to wiggle each visible head.

In this case, the heads that were visible were OK. I would have to plug each head until I found the problem riser. To do this, I dug down about 12" to the threaded tees or elbows. Then I screwed a ½" cap on and restarted the system. I watched for hidden sprinkler heads to come on. Sure enough, more popped up, and, finally, I found that one of the heads was entirely missing. The extra pressure caused this leak to be greatly enhanced. Water was gushing out on the surface where it was obvious.

I continued digging these 12" deep holes and adding ½" caps until I had found them all. It turned out that there were 13 heads. When I replaced the missing head, they all worked fine. I made a drawing which I will give to the client.



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The Voice

Taking Advantage of People

By Gordon Watson

Taking financial advantage of the elderly is, unfortunately, fairly common. As a rather minor example, my mother-in-law, received a letter yesterday. On the outside, there was what appeared to be a hand stamp in red saying, "PAST DUE." The return address was on G Street in Washington, D.C. It also said on the outside of the envelope, "IMPORTANT BENEFIT INFORMATION TO BE OPENED BY THE INDIVIDUAL NAMED BELOW. As we age, one of the things we fear is losing our mental abilities. Letters which appear to indicate we have forgotten something such as a PAST DUE warning are not taken lightly.

The letter was from an organization which lobbies to keep Medicare and Social Security benefits. My mother-in-law is over 90 years old, and it is all but certain that she will have no problems receiving Social Security and Medicare for the rest of her life. The amount she "owes" is \$12.00. This is \$12 which would be better spent on something she needs.



The Texas Driver (from the Texas Driver Handbook)

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