

# THE ATASCOCITA FOREST COMMUNITY GAZETTE

VOL 1 ISSUE 1 | FEBRUARY 2017



THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ATASCOCITA FOREST COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

For the most up-to-date neighborhood information, announcements, and resident resources, visit us online at [www.AtascocitaForest.org](http://www.AtascocitaForest.org)

## FROM THE BOARD

It's a new year, and the Atascocita Forest C.A. Board is excited about the changes and improvements in store for the neighborhood in 2017!

First and foremost, the monthly printed newsletter is back by popular demand. This format allows all residents to stay up-to-date with what's going on in the neighborhood. We're also thrilled that the publisher now allows residents to choose whether to receive the paper version, electronic version, or both! Simply visit [www.peelinc.com](http://www.peelinc.com) to modify your subscription preferences.

Residents who are registered users on [AtascocitaForest.org](http://AtascocitaForest.org) will also be able to access the electronic copy of the newsletter on the neighborhood website. If you haven't yet done so, please be sure to register on our website as a resident / homeowner for the latest updates, information, and helpful resources. Over the last year we've made some major improvements and updates, and the site is now mobile-friendly!

We are also excited to announce that we will be reinstating the Yard of the Month initiative in the neighborhood, starting in March. Please see the short article on page 6 for more information on Yard of the Month.

Next, our construction focus for 2017 will be some much-needed upgrades and improvements to the community park area. We are

still finalizing plans, but the safety, accessibility, and aesthetics of the park area are our main focus.

Finally, we would like to reassure residents that we are working very closely with both our contract Constable patrol and our neighborhood security officers to monitor and respond to criminal activity and security concerns within the neighborhood. We have temporarily increased our budget for neighborhood security patrol and adjusted the schedule to increase the presence of law enforcement in the neighborhood. The safety and security of our neighbors is our number one priority. We strongly urge residents to keep an eye out for any suspicious persons or behavior and report anything that seems out of place to the Constable by calling the 24/7 non-emergency dispatch number at (281) 376-3472. Residents are also welcome to email the neighborhood security team to report suspicious activity at [security@atascocitaforest.org](mailto:security@atascocitaforest.org) (or use the Report Suspicious Activity form on our website – under Contact Information & Forms). Law enforcement is most effective when residents play an active role in monitoring activity within the community.

Wishing you all a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2017!  
The Atascocita Forest Community Association Board of Trustees



## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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Fire/Ambulance.....	911
Officer.....	911
Harris County Animal Control .....	281-999-3191
Poison Control .....	800-222-1222

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Atascocita Volunteer Fire Dept. ....	281-852-2181
Harris County Precinct 4 .....	281-376-3472
Texas No Call List Registration .....	866-TXN-OCAL
Emergency Roadside Assistance.....	800-525-5555

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### NEIGHBORHOOD MANAGEMENT

Community Asset Management .....	
www.CommunityAssetManagement.com	
Pam Valentine.....	pvalentine@cam-texas.com

### ATASCOCITA FOREST COMMUNITY ASSOC.

Email the Board .....	board@atascocitaforest.orgAshley
Website Questions/Problems.....	website@atascocitaforest.org
Newsletter questions.....	newsletter@atascocitaforest.org

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## Atascocita Forest Safety & Security Update

The safety and security of Atascocita Forest residents is the HOA board's highest priority. Recently, residents have had concerns about the apparent increase in crime in the neighborhood. While we do completely understand residents' concerns about the safety of the neighborhood, we want to emphasize that it is common in all communities to see a slight increase in property crimes and burglaries during the holidays.

In response to the events that have transpired, the board has voted to temporarily increase the security budget and is working closely with both our contract Constable patrol (provided by the MUD), and the neighborhood security patrol (limited to the Atascocita Forest HOA area) to closely monitor and respond to activity. Our neighborhood security patrol has added to and adjusted their schedule, enabling them to more actively patrol our area and identify and resolve issues in partnership with the contract Constable patrol.

Neighborhood security has also provided us with this current list detailing the crime events in the neighborhood through December in order to give residents a better idea of what is actually been happening in the neighborhood.

From the report:

"from December 1, 2016 – January 6, 2016, there was a total of 65 offense reports generated for the entire MUD district, which includes our section of Atascocita Forest.

Of those 65 offense reports, 13 were from the Atascocita Forest HOA section. Below is a brief summary of the reported offenses that have occurred in our section. There were other calls for service in the area, and deputies responded, but no crime was reported and therefore no report was generated.

- 12/10 – Family Disturbance
- 12/12 – Family Disturbance – Assault on family member

*(Continued on Page 3)*

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*(Continued from Page 2)*

- 12/14 – Information Report – Unwelcome juveniles at the complainant's residence
- 12/16 – Robbery of an individual – Note: this was the incident involving a gun shot at the end of Apple Hollow Dr. and Cyril Dr. The suspects in this incident have been identified.
- 12/17 - Telephone Harassment
- 12/19 – Burglary of a Residence
- 12/20 – Family Disturbance
- 12/24 – Family Disturbance
- 12/24 – Burglary to a motor vehicle (nothing stolen)
- 12/28 – Suspicious Person (identified as a repo man snooping around)
- 12/31 – Family Disturbance – Assault on family member
- 1/3 – Fraud

End of Report. “

We would like to take this opportunity to again emphasize how important it is for residents to work closely with law enforcement

to help keep our neighborhood safe. Law enforcement works best when residents are aware and actively report suspicious activity to the authorities. If you see anything in the neighborhood that does not seem quite right, please call the Constable's non-emergency dispatch line at (281) 376-3472. In the event of an emergency, always dial 911.

We also encourage residents to contact our neighborhood security patrol to report suspicious activity, including on-going activities or behaviors (such as kids knocking over mailboxes, etc.). You may email neighborhood security at [security@atascocitaforest.org](mailto:security@atascocitaforest.org). We also have a Report Suspicious Activity form on the neighborhood website: [www.atascocitaforest.org/p/Report-Suspicious-Activity](http://www.atascocitaforest.org/p/Report-Suspicious-Activity).

Please note that you can also view past months' Constable security reports on the MUD District's website: [www.trailofthelakesmud.com/monthly-security-reports/](http://www.trailofthelakesmud.com/monthly-security-reports/). Please be aware, however, that these reports are usually two months behind, as the reports are generated and then must be approved by the MUD board before being released.

**SELL US YOUR CAR!™**

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The advertisement features a black and white background with a sunburst pattern. Several dogs are positioned around the text: a small dog at the top left, a Chihuahua at the top right, a small dog in the middle, two puppies at the bottom left, and a dog at the bottom right. The text 'SELL US YOUR CAR!™' is in large, bold, black letters, and 'TEXASDIRECTAUTO.COM' is in white letters on a dark banner at the bottom.

## ATASCOCITA FOREST Q & A

We want to hear from you! In an effort to increase residents' engagement with the newsletter and the community, we invite you to send us questions about the neighborhood, the HOA, or other topics relevant to the Atascocita Forest community. Each issue, we will select one or more questions to answer and publish. Please note that questions should ask about general information that would be helpful and informative to the entire neighborhood. The board reserves the right to select the questions answered and published: submitting a question does not guarantee that the editor will publish it in the newsletter.

To submit questions, please email [newsletter@atascocitaforest.org](mailto:newsletter@atascocitaforest.org). Please include your first and last name and the street on which you live. We also encourage you to include your contact information in case the editor needs to follow up with you regarding your question. We will only publish your first name and last initial and the street on which you live in the newsletter (e.g. Ben S., Cyril Dr.)

To get started, the editor has selected a question that residents frequently ask on social media:

**Q:** Can you please explain the difference between Atascocita Forest and The Forest? Why is the neighborhood split this way?

**A:** We see this question quite frequently. It's a simple question with a somewhat complicated answer. Atascocita Forest and The

Forest are two separate HOA areas. The Atascocita Forest Community Association (HOA) is comprised of approximately 1600 homes in sections 1-17 of Atascocita Forest (the "old" section on the west side of Woodland Hills Dr. and the "new" section at the back on the east side of Woodland Hills Dr. from starting at Dappled Trail / Wood Arbor Ct.) and The Park at Atascocita Forest, which is located on the north side of Will Clayton adjacent to Humble Middle School. You can view a map of the Atascocita Forest HOA area on our website under About Atascocita Forest.

Atascocita Forest / The Forest is the newest section of the Atascocita Forest subdivision, south of Will Clayton and east of Woodland Hills Dr. Even though this new section is called Atascocita Forest, the developer, Long Lake Ltd, opted to create a separate HOA for this section, called The Forest, rather than join the existing Atascocita Forest Community Association HOA. The Atascocita Forest Community Association board was not involved in this decision. The Forest has its own board and is managed by Crest Management.

Because this section is under a separate HOA, residents of The Forest do not have access to Atascocita Forest's amenities, including the pool and park complex next door to Whispering Pines Elementary. The Forest has its own pool across the street from Whispering Pines.

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# SPRING LAWN CARE PREPARATION TIPS

Spring will be here before you know it! To help you get your yard ready for the spring and summer seasons (and Yard of the Month!), we've gone to Randy Lemmon, noted lawn and garden guru and host of the GardenLine program on 740 KTRH, and Robert "Skip" Richter, the Harris County Horticulture Agent and another Houston-area gardening guru, for some early spring lawn preparation tips.

## Fertilization

Much of Atascocita Forest is composed of heavy clay or gumbo soil, which does not provide the best growing medium for much of anything, even turfgrass. Due to the composition of this type of soil, it is hard for nutrients to penetrate deep within the soil, so regular fertilization is critical. Lawns in Atascocita Forest are almost exclusively St. Augustine grass, but the following fertilization tips will work on Bermuda and Zoysia varieties as well.

### Late February – Early March:

Spread a 15-5-10 fertilizer for an early green-up. Randy explains that "most companies that make slow-release fertilizers also make a non-slow release 15-5-10 that provides for a quick two-week green up before we get to the heart of the fertilizer schedule." Note that this step is optional and does not replace later fertilization requirements.

Robert suggests "apply[ing] half of the fertilizer in one direction and the other half at a 90-degree angle across the lawn" in order to prevent steaking. He also suggests adding a half inch of water (or rainfall) to the lawn after fertilizing "to start to release the nutrients to the growing turf."

### Late March – Early April:

Spread slow-release 3-1-2 ratio fertilizers, including 19-4-10 Nitro Phos Super Turf, 18-4-6 Fertilome Southwest Greenmaker, 18-0-6 Fertilome Zero Phosphate Formula, 15-5-10 Southwest Fertilizer Premium Gold, and 20-0-10 Bonide Premium Lawn Food.

Use the spreading technique suggested by Robert Richter this time as well.

Randy and Robert both warn against using a broad weed-and-feed product on your lawn. Randy explains, "spot weed-and-feed treatments are recommended for those with turf-only landscapes or landscapes that have been established for many years. Most weed-and-feeds contain Atrazine, which burns roots of young trees and shrubs."

Robert adds that weed-and-feed products "may not be the best choice for your lawn for several reasons. First, the time to weed is usually not the time to feed. Depending on what herbicide is in the product and whether it is a pre-emergence or post-emergence herbicide, it may not be effective on the weeds you have in your lawn. Finally, when over-applied some products can damage trees and shrubs whose roots run under the lawn."

For those who prefer to use organic methods, Randy recommends several organic fertilizer products, including Micro Life 6-2-4, Nitro

Phos Sweet Green 11-0-4, Southwest Fertilizer Earth Essentials 5-1-3, Nature's Guide Premium Turf 6-1-4, Medina Growin' Green 4-2-3, Lady Bug Natural Lawn & Garden 8-2-4, and Soil Mender Turf Mate 4-2-3. He adds that these products are available mostly at independent retail garden centers rather than 'big box' stores, but that larger stores such as Lowe's do sometimes carry Medina products.

Robert also adds that "your clippings are the best fertilizer for your lawn! They contain the right ratios of all nutrients ... and decompose rapidly in our warm, humid climate." During a season, he says, "this can add up to a lot of nutrition... Don't bag your clippings!"

## Organic Schedule:

**February** – spread corn gluten meal as a pre-emergent herbicide (Randy notes that corn gluten meal can be challenging to find, but to call around to local, reputable nurseries and garden centers, as they are the most likely to carry it; you can also purchase it online.)

**March** – Spread an organic fertilizer as listed above

**April** – spread compost as a top dressing

## Dealing with Weeds

Grassy and broadleaf weeds are a plague to healthy, beautiful lawns and can quickly get out of control. Randy explains that the best way to deal with weeds is to prevent them from coming up entirely. Fostering a healthy lawn with the proper mowing, watering, and fertilization strategies is the best defense.

Grassy weeds, such as crabgrass, are particularly challenging. He warns that

herbicides that are labeled as "crabgrass control" or "crabgrass killer" will most likely harm or kill any surrounding grass as well. Anything glyphosate-based, he says, such as Roundup, Eraser, or Killzall, will kill the turfgrasses around the crabgrass.

For an herbicide treatment, use a pre-emergent control specifically for crabgrass, goosegrass, and dallisgrass to prevent them from popping up late in the spring and summer. Randy suggests products such as Amaze, Betasan, Balan, or Treffan. Also, Barricade, Dimension, or Pendimethlin as a 2-in-1 control.

For broadleaf weeds, such as dandelion, plantain, clover, and wild bluegrass, which pop up early in the season, you can use a post-emergent broadleaf herbicide while temperatures are still 45-75 degrees. Randy recommends Fertilome Weed-Free Zone and Bonide Weed Beater Ultra, both of which are liquid herbicides. While there are some granular formulas, Randy says that he's "always recommended the liquid versions of broadleaf weed control, because the granular weed-and-feeds with atrazine are so damaging to groundwater supplies and the roots of trees and shrubs." There are some newer granular products which claim to be a safer alternative to products containing atrazine: Fertilome Dollarweed Control Plus, for example. Randy clarifies that he only really recommends broad spreading of granular

*(Continued on Page 7)*



## Atascocita Forest's Yard of the Month is Back!

The board is pleased to announce that starting in March of this year, we will reinstate the Yard of the Month program throughout the Atascocita Forest HOA area.

Yard of the Month is a great way to showcase the hard work of residents who take pride in the appearance of their home and lawn. We hope that this initiative will encourage residents to take good care of their yards so that our community looks clean and attractive. Please note that all residents, including home-owners and renters, are eligible to participate in Yard of the Month.

The Yard of the Month program will run from March through September. Each month, a representative from Community Asset Management, our management company, will select an outstanding yard from the Atascocita Forest HOA area (which includes the old and new sections of Atascocita Forest and The Park at Atascocita Forest). Please note that the judging criteria will not place heavy emphasis on the apparent expense of the yard (such as extensive flower beds, etc.). We don't want residents to feel like they have to spend a large amount of money on their yard in order to be in the running. Rather, we will be focusing on the neatness, maintenance, and care of the street-facing exterior of the yard and home.

Some general guidelines for Yard of the Month include:

- All grass should be healthy (no bald or brown spots), weed-free, and mowed and edged along all edges (including sidewalks, driveways, curbs, etc.)
- Driveway and sidewalk joints should be clean and free of weeds
- Trees should be neatly trimmed and pruned
- Bushes and hedges should be neatly trimmed and shaped
- Flower beds should be clean and tidy: weeds should be removed, flowers should be deadheaded and healthy (if applicable)
- Edging materials, such as wood, stone, etc. should be neatly positioned and in good condition
- Planters, pots, statuary, bird-feeders, fountains, and other yard accessories should be clean, tidy, and well-seated

(not leaning or lopsided)

- Flags and other cloth-type décor should be clean and in good condition (not faded, frayed, etc.)
- The street-facing exterior of the home should be clean, tidy, and in good repair: broken or peeling fascia boards should be repainted, repaired, or replaced; home exterior should be clean and free from mildew, etc.; driveway and sidewalk should be clean and free of leaves, debris, trash, etc.

Each month, the winner will receive a prize and a sign to be placed in their front yard for the duration of the month. A CAM representative will drop off and pick up the sign at the beginning and end of the month respectively. A photo of the winning home will also be taken and published on our website, the neighborhood Facebook group and NextDoor page, and will also be published in the newsletter (any personally identifying information in the photo, such as license plates, will be blurred). Please note that the same property cannot receive the award more than one time in the March – September Yard of the Month season. If your home wins the award in April, you will not be eligible to receive the award again until the following April.

Be sure to check the newsletter each month for helpful lawn care tips, tricks, and recommendations from area lawn and garden experts!

### SEND US YOUR *Event Pictures!!*

Do you have a picture of an event that you would like to run in this newsletter? Send it to us and we will publish it in the next issue. Email the picture to [newsletter@atascocitaforest.org](mailto:newsletter@atascocitaforest.org).

Be sure to include the text that you would like to have as the caption. Pictures will appear in color online at [www.PEELinc.com](http://www.PEELinc.com).



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weed-and-feed products to those with a significant weed problem over a large area. For those with “a few weeds here and there, it is still ... better to spot-treat.”

Temperature is a critical factor in the effectiveness of these broadleaf weed control products. Randy explains that the “previously mentioned cool-season herbicides become ineffective and stressful to grasses once the high temperatures are consistently in the 80s.” If you miss this window and temperatures are too high to use a cool-season herbicide, Randy recommends GreenLight Wipe Out, Bonide Weed Beater for Southern Lawns, and Fertilome Weed Out.

Both Randy and Robert agree that the best weed control is a dense, healthy lawn of turfgrass. Robert suggests that when you do have a weed problem, properly identify and specifically target them with the appropriate strategy for the best results. Randy recommends a very informative and easy to use website to help homeowners quickly identify weeds: [www.weedalert.com](http://www.weedalert.com). Users can search weeds by name, by region, or by appearance using a web form that filters down the possibilities based on the weed’s appearance and characteristics. Users may also order a completely free weed identification poster from the website.

Information for this article was obtained from [www.randylemmon.com](http://www.randylemmon.com) and from the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Harris County Horticulture Blog.

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