News for the Residents of Canyon Creek

Canyon Creek Chronicle

August 2017 Volume 11 Issue 8

Chinch Bugs

No Easy Fix

Author: Nathan Riggs

The heat and high temps of July and August aren't the only culprits that take a toll on your landscape and lawn. If your St. Augustine grass is looking sad and jaundiced, it may be under attack.

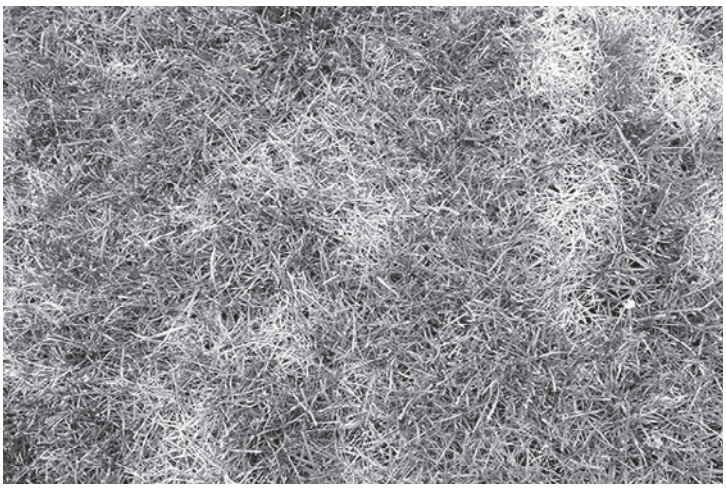
Summertime means a lot of different things to people — grillin', fun in the sun, barefoot walks in the lawn and other outdoor activities.

Unfortunately, the hot temperatures in July and August also have a daunting impact on local lawns and landscapes by creating water stress. When St. Augustine lawns in full sun become water stressed in July and August, they fall victim to attack by the Southern Chinch Bug (Blissus insularis).

Chinch bugs suck the sap from the grass at the point where the blade emerges from the runner, or rhizome. As they feed on the sap, chinch bugs release saliva into the wound, causing the grass to turn yellow and die.

This yellowing usually begins at a central point and radiates in a circular pattern outward as the chinch bugs expand their feeding area. St. Augustine grass is a chinch bug's favorite meal, but Bermuda and Zoysia grasses may be attacked as well.

Here are a couple of ways to test for chinch bugs in the affected area.



• Drench method: flood an area on the edge of the sick grass with a soapy solution (2 tablespoons of liquid soap to 1 gallon water). If chinch bugs are present, they will emerge from the grass to get away from the soapy water.

• Flotation method: take a metal can with both ends removed and push one end into the ground at the border of the sick grass. Slowly fill with water and see if chinch bugs float up. Repeat for several different areas.

Once you've determined chinch bugs are present, you must target the infestation. To reduce chinch bug populations, treat a 15-foot radius around the damaged area with a liquid insecticide approved for turf grasses. It is NOT NECESSARY to treat the entire yard because a) non-target beneficial insects will be adversely impacted by the treatment, and b) chinch bugs won't be present in the entire yard.

After treatment, you must PATIENTLY rehab the affected turf areas. Do not overwater your grass in an effort to get it back to health because the root system is still recovering from the chinch bug onslaught. Instead, water thoroughly, but infrequently to encourage a deeper, more drought-tolerant root system.

Lake Travis Retired Physicians to Meet in September

Lake Travis Retired Physicians will host Dr. Johnny Shane Ross on Wed., Sept. 6, from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at The Hills of Lakeway. Dr. Ross specializes in physical medicine a rehabilitation for Vibra Rehab Hospital of Lake Travis. His topic will be current concepts in inpatient acute rehab, and outpatient wound care and hyperbarics.

Retired physicians and their guests are welcome to attend. Reservations are required. Buffet lunch is Dutch treat at approximately $20/pp. For information, contact Dr. Bill Evans, group chair, at 512-261-3536, or by email to club organizer Pat Evans, patevans39@gmail.com.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

EMERGENCY 911
Fire 911
Ambulance 911
Sheriff – Non-Emergency 512-974-5556
Hudson Bend Fire and EMS

SCHOOLS

Canyon Creek Elementary 512-428-2800
Grisham Middle School 512-428-2650
Westwood High School 512-464-4000

UTILITIES

Pedernales Electric 512-219-2602
Texas Gas Service
Custom Service 1-800-700-2443
Emergencies 512-370-8609
Call Before You Dig 512-472-2822
AT&T
New Service 1-800-464-7928
Repair 1-800-246-8464
Billing 1-800-858-7928
Time Warner Cable
Customer Service 512-485-5555
Repairs 512-485-5080

OTHER NUMBERS

Balcones Postal Office 512-331-9802

NEWSLETTER PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc. 512-263-9181
Article Submissions ..... canyoncreek@peelinc.com
Advertising ..... advertising@PEELinc.com

ADVERTISING INFO

Please support the businesses that advertise in the Canyon Chronicle. Their advertising dollars make it possible for all Canyon Creek residents to receive the monthly newsletter at no charge. If you would like to support the newsletter by advertising, please contact our sales office at 512-263-9181 or advertising@peelinc.com. The advertising deadline is the 9th of each month for the following month's newsletter.

DON'T WANT TO WAIT FOR THE MAIL?

View the current issue of *The Canyon Chronicle* on the 1st day of each month at **www.peelinc.com**

SUDOKU

View answers online at www.peelinc.com

			1	2				
2	4		9					
	7	1	6					
7				9		8		
		2				6	5	
			3					
	5						3	7
9					1			
1	3	8				5		

The goal is to fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 through 9. Each digit may appear only once in each row, each column, and each 3x3 box.

How Would You Tell Your Child That You Have Cancer? Or Explain Why Dad Can't Give Piggyback Rides Anymore?

Three Texas organizations partner to open San Antonio's first Wonders & Worries
a therapeutic space where children ages 2-18 whose parent is suffering a serious illness, can receive support to help them cope

San Antonio physician Jeff Hallett knows a thing or two about talking to patients about illness. But when his wife, Robin, was diagnosed with breast cancer, they felt at a loss for how to tell their daughter, Rachel, aged 10.

"It doesn't matter your background or experience," Jeff Hallett, MD, said. "When you have to tell your child this kind of news, you want to do it the right way. And we didn't know how. So we called Wonders & Worries."

Wonders & Worries is an Austin-based nonprofit that teaches parents how to parent and kids how to cope during a parent's serious illness. It's the only program of its kind in the US, and first in San Antonio. It is the fifth office for the organization.

For the Halletts, they now have specialized support in their own backyard. "We have found Wonders & Worries to be a tremendous resource for us at a time when help is sorely needed," said Jeff Hallett, MD. "Robin and I can see that it has helped Rachel to cope with her mother's illness."

Since its inception in 2001, Wonders & Worries has served more than 6,500 family members in central Texas, and expects to reach about 100 San Antonio families in its first year. Services are offered free of charge and available in English and Spanish.

"The partnership between the START Center for Cancer Care, the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas, and Wonders & Worries meets a growing need," said Pam Sparks, director of physician integration at the START Center. "Nearly 3 million children in the US are living with a parent who is battling or has survived cancer."

Executive director of Wonders & Worries, Alex Gabbi, agreed. "Austin doesn't have a monopoly on sick parents." Gabbi is not only the executive director, but also received services from Wonders & Worries when his late wife, Heather, was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. "I look at my three kids and know that our program works. My children are well-adjusted and thriving because of what they learned from Wonders & Worries."

Rounding out this innovative venture is the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas. "We are honored to partner with two premier organizations that have a vision of healing and understand the impact that it has on children," said Marian Sokol, PhD, executive director for the Center.

Wonders & Worries co-founder, Meredith Cooper, praised the initiative for executing the vision she's had for the organization from the beginning. "This is another step towards all children and teenagers being able to reach their full potential despite a parent's illness," Cooper said.

Counseling and support groups are offered at the START Cancer Center location in the San Antonio Medical Center area. Referrals are welcome from physicians and families facing cancer, ALS, Parkinson's disease, MS and other serious diagnoses. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit www.wondersandworries.org or call 210-736-4847, ext. 247.

NATURE WATCH

DISCOVERING BLACKLIGHTING

by Jim and Lynne Weber

Lepidoptera is the order of insects that includes both butterflies and moths. While over 180,000 species of these insects have been identified worldwide, recent estimates suggest that this order may have more species than previously thought, and is among the four most speciose orders, along with Hymenoptera (sawflies, wasps, bees, & ants), Diptera (true flies, mosquitoes, gnats, & midges), and Coleoptera (beetles). Of the approximately 180,000 known Lepidoptera species, some 160,000 are moths, with nearly 11,000 of them found in the United States, and many are yet to be described.

Polyphemus Silk Moth

With such huge numbers and such a diversity of species, how does one go about studying moths? A good place to start is while knowing that most moths are creatures of the night, they are also attracted to light. The reason for this behavior is unknown, although one theory is that moths use a form of celestial navigation called transverse orientation. They attempt to maintain a constant angular relationship to a bright celestial light, like the moon. But since the moon is so far away, and the angle change is negligible, the moth appears to travel in a straight line. This theory is tested when moths fly near much closer sources of light, such as a porch light or a campfire. The angle to the light source changes constantly as the moth flies by, so the moth instinctively attempts to correct it by turning toward the light, thereby producing its erratic, sometimes circular flight.

One way for the moth to keep a constant angle to a stationary light source is by becoming stationary itself, effectively being 'trapped' by the light rather than 'attracted' to it. Those interested in studying moths have taken advantage of this fact, and have developed a method called blacklighting to attract and photograph moths. The first step is to set up a light source, and either an ultraviolet light (also known as a blacklight) or a mercury vapor light can be used. Mercury vapor is now the preferred source, as it provides a different spectrum of light than a blacklight, although a blacklight emits a broader spectrum of light. Moths can see waves of light that humans cannot, so providing them with different spectrums will generally produce the greatest response. The light is carefully hung or positioned in front a vertical white sheet, which the light bounces off to produce a big, concentrated, glowing mass, while providing a safe surface for the moths to land.

Imperial Moth

Small Heterocampa Moth

The blacklighting setup is positioned out of the wind and typically near a boundary between wooded and open areas. The light is turned on at dusk and left on all night, as different species of moths are most active at different times. After taking the desired photographs with a digital SLR with a macro lens and flash, the light is turned off and the sheet is given a vigorous shake to scatter the remaining moths. After all that was done to 'capture' them with light for observation and photography, it would be a shame for them to become easy morning quarry for insect-eating birds or other predators!

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our books, Nature Watch Austin and Nature Watch Big Bend (both published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.

FINE RENOVATIONS

Urbane & COMPANY

CUSTOM HOME BUILDER

WWW.URBANEANDCOMPANY.COM

PHONE:512-766-5221

EMAIL:BEN@URBANEANDCOMPANY.COM

INSTAGRAM: URBANENCOMPANY

FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED * OVER 15 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE

Wildland Fire Precautions

With warmer temperatures and drying vegetation, residents need to be reminded of the need for wildfire/brush fire safety awareness and preparedness.

Do not park vehicles on the dry grass. The heat from the vehicle's exhaust system can cause the grass to catch fire.

Remove combustible materials from around your home. Keep grass mowed short.

Pack critical medicines, important documents, and family heirlooms to be ready to leave at a moment's notice.

Agree on an evacuation plan that includes what to do if you get separated and where you'll go in case of evacuation.

TEN SIMPLE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM WILDLAND FIRE

Wildfire can strike home if you have not taken some steps to protect your house and property. The actions and precautions listed below are designed to help you prepare your home and lessen the threat of wildland fire damage to you and your property.

1. LPG/propane tanks should be far enough away from buildings for valves to be shut off in case of fire. Keep area around the tank clear of flammable vegetation.

2. Store gasoline in an approved safety can away from occupied buildings.

3. All combustibles such as firewood, wooden picnic tables, boats and stacked lumber should be kept away from structures.

4. Clear roof surfaces and gutters regularly to avoid build-up of flammable materials such as leaves and other debris.

5. Remove branches from trees to a height of 15 feet or more.

6. In rural areas, clear a fuel break of at least three times the fuel length around all structures.

7. Have fire tools handy such as: ladder long enough to reach your roof, shovel, rake and a bucket or two for water.

8. Place connected garden hoses at all sides of your home for emergency use.

9. Assure that you and your family know all emergency exits from your home.

10. Assure that you and your family know all emergency exits from your neighborhood.

Each family should be proactive to prepare for emergencies: Prepare a Basic Emergency Supply Kit; Make a Plan for Safety and Communicating with Family; Be Informed; and Get Involved in Preparing the Community.

A wealth of information to help you is available at:
http://www.ready.gov/wildfires
http://txforestservice.tamu.edu/main/article.aspx?id=8512

TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

CHIGGERS

Chiggers are the immature stage of a mite. They climb onto people walking through infested areas, crawl upwards, and wander around the body seeking a good site to settle down and feed. Feeding preference for these mites is in areas where skin is thinnest or where clothing fits tightly, such as the ankles, waist, behind the knees, and the groin area.

Chiggers do not burrow into skin as many people believe, so "smothering" them with nail polish is useless. When chiggers feed, they inject a digestive enzyme that breaks down skin cells which are then eaten. Itching and redness is caused by our body reacting to the enzymes injected into our skin. Itching typically begins 3-6 hours after being bitten, peaks at 24 hours, and can last up to two weeks.

The best way to avoid getting chiggers is to avoid infested areas. Since this is not always possible, here are some other things to try:

- Wear protective clothing- tightly woven items that fit loosely; including long sleeves & pants; shoes or boots
- Tuck pant legs into boots
- Avoid sitting on the ground
- Remove & launder clothing ASAP after being in infested areas
- Shower/ bathe after being in an infested area; scrub vigorously with a washcloth
- Use an insect repellent with DEET or picaridin

To treat chigger infestations around the home try the following:

- Keeping lawn trimmed
- Maintain vegetation; do not allow weeds to grow up & keep brush cleared
- Targeted residual pesticide sprays, usually pyrethroids

For chigger bites:

- Do not scratch pustules; opening pustule might lead to infection
- Oral antihistamines or topical anti-itch creams to relieve itching sensation

For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service or the Texas A&M AgriLife Research is implied.

The Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal access in its programs, activities, education and employment, without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity.

PEEL, INC.
308 Meadowlark St. South
Lakeway, TX 78734

CN