

## THE FOREST CREEK FORUM

*A Newsletter  
for the Forest  
Creek  
Community*

The Forest Creek forum is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Forest Creek residents. Each newsletter will be filled with valuable information about the community, local area activities, school information, and more.

If you are involved with a school group, play group, scouts, sports team, social group, etc., and would like to submit an article for the newsletter, you can do so online at [www.PEELinc.com](http://www.PEELinc.com). Personal news (announcements, accolades/honors/celebrations, etc.) are also welcome as long as they are from area residents.

**GO GREEN!** Subscribe via [Peelinc.com](http://Peelinc.com) to have an email sent to you with a link to a PDF of the newsletter, or have an email sent to you instead of having a newsletter mailed to you!

## 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.

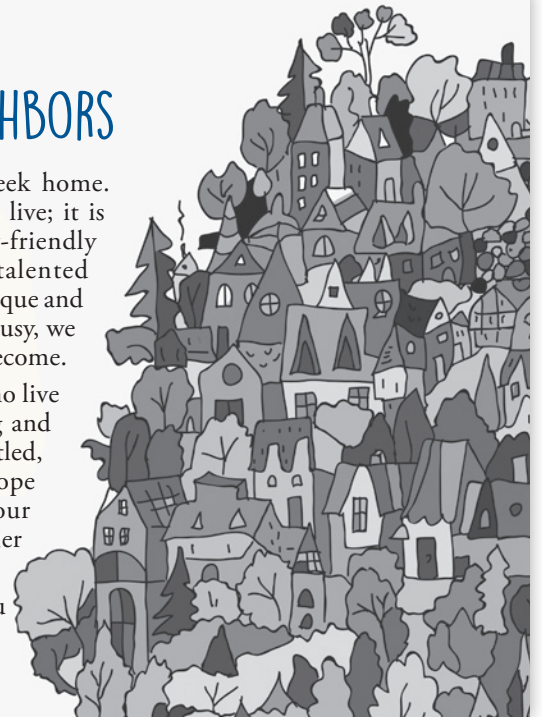
*(Continued on Page 3)*

## INTRODUCING GET TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBORS

We are all very fortunate to call Forest Creek home. But, Forest Creek is more than just a place to live; it is a vibrant community brimming with family-friendly neighborhoods, chock-full of fascinating, talented people. Our variety is what makes us so both unique and extraordinary. However, sometimes, we get so busy, we lose sight of how interesting and diverse we've become.

We believe that getting to know the people who live nearby will help us create a sense of belonging and shared identity. We have created a column entitled, "Get to Know Your Neighbors" which we hope will strengthen connections, build trust in our wider community, and contribute to a happier neighborhood for everyone.

If you know of a person or a family that you believe is making Forest Creek a better place to live, please let us know. We would like to introduce them to your neighbors.



# The Forum

## NEWSLETTER INFO

### NEWSLETTER

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## Round Rock New Neighbors

Round Rock New Neighbors is a non-profit social club for women with over 180 members from Round Rock and surrounding communities. Since 1978, RRNN has been active in providing women the opportunities to come together and meet new friends and neighbors. The name may fool you, but you do not have to be new to the area to join the fun. We have new members who have lived in Round Rock for many years.

All women are welcome!

Our general meetings are held on the second Wednesdays of each month September through May. We meet at the Williamson Conference Center located behind the Wingate Hotel on the frontage road of I-35, north of Hwy 79, starting at 10:30. Come join us for a great catered lunch and program. Reservations must be made by the Friday before the meeting.

Cost is \$17.00 payable at the door for first time visitors.

For more information, please call Jan Percy 512-810-3214



## Forest Creek Animal Hospital

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(Continued from Cover)

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.

## The Minimalist Gardener

By Flint Sage

**Trees:** Mature trees and bushes will need an inch of water every one to two weeks to just stay alive. If your trees are in lawns, you will need to add a bit more water, as they are competing with the lawn for moisture. Younger trees will need even more water to keep their roots in moist soil. Do a slow soaking a few feet from the trunk to a foot or two beyond the canopy (outermost leaves). Summer is not a good month to plant trees or bushes because they need nearly daily watering.

**Lawns:** Arrange to keep the mower clippings on the lawn. There are few arguments for bagging clippings.

**Vegetables:** August is the time to plant southern peas, okra, and peppers. In general, though, it is the worst month to plant most things as it is too hot!

**Fall Color:** If you want fall color, this is the time to plant marigolds and petunias. If using seeds, start them in a shady part of the yard. They will need daily water.

**Mulch:** Mulch keeps water in, keeps the heat out, and significantly reduces the need for weeding. Keep mulch six inches or so away from the tree and bush trunks. Lay down a minimum of three thicknesses of newspapers under the mulch. Wet the papers to keep them from blowing away before mulching.

**Roses:** Expect roses to look quite bad by late summer. In August, cut back between 1/4 and 1/3 of the bush. Fertilize each rose with 1/2 pound of ammonium sulfate in mid-August. Distribute the fertilizer around the drip line. If no blooms appear in the first week of September, add a second application. Water thoroughly after pruning and fertilizing.



We tried Chinese Okra this year (photo). We had some huge ones that got lost in the abundant large leaves. These plants remind me of Kudzu. They are vines that try to cover everything. We removed them before they covered the entire State. We probably won't plant them next year.

**Fruit Trees:** According to Texas Gardener Magazine, this is the month to stop fertilizing all fruit trees.

## YOUR COMMUNITY, YOUR VOICE

Do you have an article or story that you would like to run in this newsletter? Send it to us and we will publish it in the next issue.

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## 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](http://www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com)

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## 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>

## 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](http://www.wondersandworries.org) or call 210-736-4847, ext. 247.

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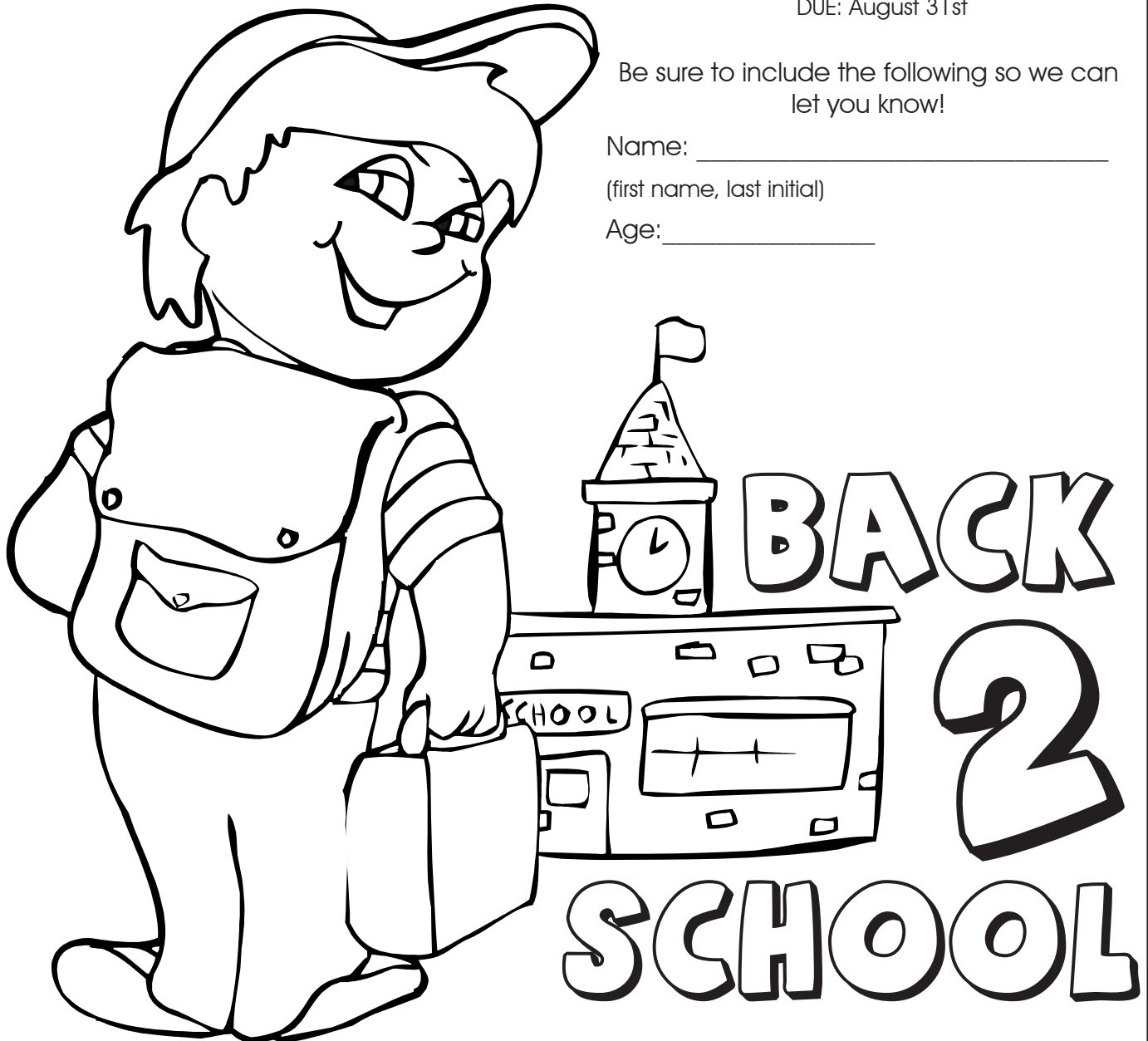
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