

# The Ranch Report

VOLUME 12 ISSUE 3

MARCH 2018

## AERATION NOW CAN HELP YOUR SPRING AND SUMMER IRRIGATION

In order to prepare your lawn for a healthy spring growing season, you should employ basic lawn care practices at this time of year, which includes aerating your yard. It is important that nutrients reach the soil beneath your grass, and aeration can help you get that done.

Aeration involves making small holes in the soil to allow air, water and nutrients to get to the grass roots.

This helps the roots grow deeper and produce a stronger, more vibrant lawn.

Aerating helps alleviate soil compaction. Compacted soils have too many solid particles in a space, which prevents proper circulation of air, water and nutrients within the soil. Excess lawn thatch or heavy organic debris buried under the grass surface can also starve the roots from these essential elements.

So when is the right time to get this aeration done? These next six to eight weeks leading up to the spring season, when grass begins to grow again, is a good time to aerate.

The two main aeration tools are the spike aerator and a plug aerator. The spike aerator poke holes in the ground with a solid piece of metal. Plug aerators remove a core or plug of grass and soil from the lawn. Most landscaping companies and horticulturists recommend the use of the plug aerator. The machines can be rented or you can have a lawn care service aerate for you. After aerating, it's always a good idea to apply about a half-inch of compost over the aerated yard. The compost fills in the holes left by the plug aerator and brings organic materials into the root zone.

If you have noticed that your turfgrass isn't looking its best or that water has difficulty penetrating through the soil surface, it may be time to aerate your lawn. Lawns with clay soils that get a lot of foot traffic typically require aeration more often as they become compacted over time. Here's a great tip to check to see if your yard needs to be aerated.

Using a shovel, dig a square-foot section of grass about six inches deep and take a look at it. If the grass roots don't extend further than two inches deep into the soil, your lawn would benefit from aeration.

**If you plan to aerate your own yard, here are a few helpful tips to get the job done:**

- Before you get started, make sure the soil is moist enough. There's nothing more frustrating than trying to aerate soil that is bone dry. Aerating the day after a rain shower or watering your lawn the day before is advised.
- Most aeration machines cover only a small percentage of soil surface per pass, so make multiple passes over the most compacted areas. Save resources (and your energy) by leaving unaffected areas alone.
- The soil plugs can be left on the ground after aeration and allowed to decompose. Or, you can rake them into piles to throw in the compost bin. However, this isn't necessary as it should take about two to four weeks for the soil cores to break down naturally. Sprinkle compost (sand or peat moss can be used instead of compost) over the lawn to fill in the holes.
- An aeration myth is that if you apply a pre-emergent herbicide on your lawn in the spring, aerating your lawn will destroy the herbicide "barrier." This is not true — research shows that aeration will not affect crabgrass control or weed prevention.

After aerating, it's important to continue appropriate lawn care practices.

Aerating will help you save water over the spring and summer seasons. Instead of running off or only penetrating a few inches, water will be better absorbed in an aerated yard. That makes your entire landscape and your water bill happier.



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## Introducing "Get To Know Your Neighbors"

We are all very fortunate to call Avery Ranch home. But, Avery Ranch 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 Avery Ranch a better place to live, please let us know. We would like to introduce them to your neighbors.

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Ambulance.....	911
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.....	8801 Pearson Ranch Road
Cedar Valley Middle School.....	428-2300
.....	8139 Racine Trail
Pearson Ranch Middle School.....	704-1500
.....	8901 Pearson Ranch Road
McNeil High School.....	464-6300
.....	5720 McNeil Dr.

#### LEANDER ISD

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.....	11501 Staked Plains Dr.
Stiles Middle School .....	570-0000
.....	3250 Barley Rd.
Vista Ridge High School.....	570-1800
.....	200 S. Vista Ridge Dr.

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## Change Austin's Future on April 19

You have the power to break generational cycles of poverty, trauma and neglect. You can shape the future of a child and our community. That future starts now.

The annual "Learning Starts Here" luncheon, benefiting Mainspring Schools, brings people together to help disadvantaged, full-of-potential kids and their families in Austin.

Join us on Thursday, April 19 to learn about the issues facing Austin's families and children in poverty, celebrate the achievements of the last year and consider how we can help these children in the future.

What: Mainspring Schools "Learning Starts Here" Luncheon

When: 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. on Thursday, April 19  
(lunch is served at 11:30)

Where: Renaissance Austin Hotel

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Seth Pollak

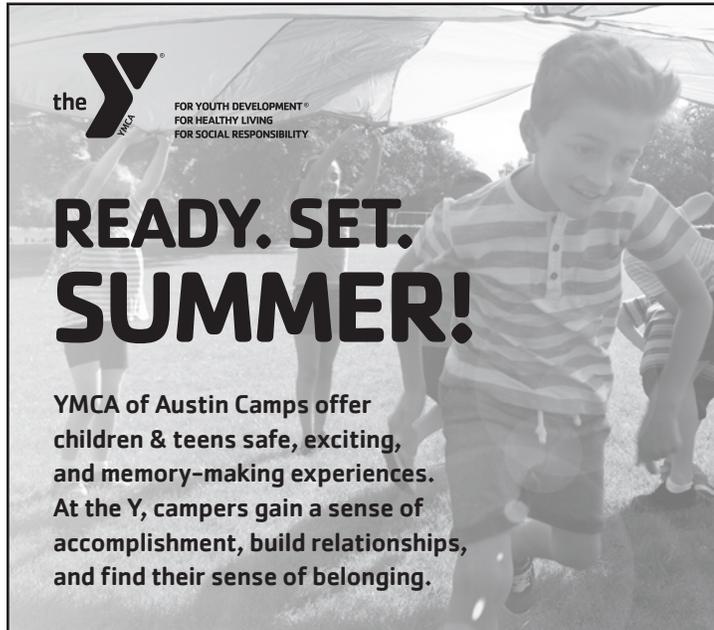
Dr. Seth Pollak, professor and researcher at the University of Wisconsin, will discuss the role that early experiences in children's lives have on development of brain structure and function, which is a crucial topic for so many children at Mainspring and across Austin.

Backed by years of fascinating research, Dr. Pollak's particular area of interest is how the quantity and quality of early experiences in children's lives influences how they think about and process information. The goal is to understand how developmental change occurs to develop effective prevention and intervention strategies for children most at risk for emotional, learning and behavior problems.

To purchase tickets, visit [www.mainspringschools.org/learning-starts-here-luncheon/](http://www.mainspringschools.org/learning-starts-here-luncheon/)

On behalf of these kids, families and staff, thank you for caring about this important issue.

[www.mainspringschools.org](http://www.mainspringschools.org)



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Sherry Salkhordeh O.D.

# Alzheimer's Caregiver Support Group

In Texas alone, roughly 1,270,000 caregivers provide an average of 20 hours a week of unpaid care for friends and loved ones. Caregiving is a demanding undertaking and results in high levels of stress. One core service of Alzheimer's Texas is to provide support to caregivers through volunteer facilitated support groups.

"These groups educate and inform participants about dementia and help caregivers develop methods and skills to solve problems," says Christian Wells, President of Alzheimer's Texas. "They encourage caregivers to maintain their own personal, physical and emotional health as well as providing peer guidance on how to care for the person with dementia."

At 7:00 pm on the third Tuesday of every month, caregivers in the Austin area can gather at Tarrytown Methodist to share their experiences in a safe, supportive environment. Meetings last about an hour and there is no charge to attend.

"We provide a safe, confidential space for caregivers to share what only other caregivers might understand," says Barbara Wiederaenders, facilitator at Tarrytown Methodist. "The mutual trust is precious and supportive."

### Event Details:

When: 3rd Tuesday of Every Month, at 7:00 pm

Where: Tarrytown Methodist  
2601 Exposition, Room 227  
Austin, TX 78703

Contact: Barbara Wiederaenders, (512) 451-0684 or  
(512) 845-6117

To find out more information about this program, Alzheimer's disease or Alzheimer's Texas, email [vcardenas@TXAlz.org](mailto:vcardenas@TXAlz.org) or call (512) 241-0420.

### About Alzheimer's Texas

Alzheimer's Texas is dedicated to eliminating Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research and to enhance care and support

for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders, their families, and caregivers. The organization provides care consultations, 24-hour helpline, support groups, respite care, educational and social engagement programs, and professional training. Alzheimer's Texas was founded in 1982 and serves Central Texas. For more information, visit [www.txalz.org](http://www.txalz.org).

## 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!

You are cordially invited to attend one of our monthly luncheons and coffees. To find out more about these events and who to contact, please visit our website at [www.rrnewneighbors.org](http://www.rrnewneighbors.org)



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## Heart Gallery of Central Texas

Meet Chasity, 11, she is waiting for a forever family. Chasity is a sweet and kind young girl. She is somewhat shy but likes being around others. She is very comfortable around those who are caring and affectionate toward her. She is very polite and will use 'please', "thank you", and "sorry". Chasity greatly enjoys being outdoors, and she especially likes going to the water park. She loves coloring and showing off her work. Chasity has development, emotional, and learning disabilities and receives special education services. She loves praise and likes to let everyone around know when she is able to accomplish a task. She is working on becoming more independent and pushes towards doing things on her own.

The Heart Gallery of Central Texas, a program of Partnerships for Children, features portraits of Central Texas children in the foster care system who are available for adoption. Working together, our community raises awareness around adoption, foster care and permanency.

heartgallerytexas.com



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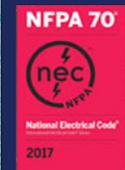
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## March Gardening To Do List

### Plant: ornamental & wildlife

- Annuals: It's a tricky month for annuals since we get hot days. But the soil is still cold and freezes could still arrive. Late: plant cosmos, sunflowers, morning glory, gomphrena but keep an eye on upcoming freezes. Avoid planting caladiums.
- Wildflower transplants: early in month, you can still plant bluebonnet, larkspur, poppy and other transplants.
- Perennials & vines
- Ornamental (clumping) grasses like muhly and Mexican feather grass (late month)
- Trees, shrubs, roses (as soon as possible before heat sets in)

### Plant: herbs

- Nasturtiums, chives, catnip, comfrey, fennel, horseradish, feverfew, oregano, thyme, rosemary, Mexican mint marigold, peppermint, lemongrass (after last freeze)

### Prune

- Roses (early)
- Evergreen shrubs
- Prune dormant perennials and ornamental (clumping) grasses.
- Trees: DO NOT prune red oaks and live oaks unless damaged. Spray immediately with clear varnish.
- No need to apply pruning paint to other trees
- Avoid topping crape myrtles: simply remove sprouts or entire limbs at the trunk.

### Divide/Move

- Dormant perennials, roses, shrubs and trees. Still time, but don't wait!

### Fertilize

- Citrus with high nitrogen fertilizer like Citrus-tone. Fertilize every few weeks through growing season.

- Add compost to beds as you cut back dormant perennials. Fertilize with slow-release granular late in the month or as dormant perennials leaf out
- Add compost around trees and fertilize. Be sure to dig out grass several feet from the trunk, ideally to the drip line of the tree canopy.
- Watch for powdery mildew. Apply a natural fungicide like Serenade.

### Lawn

- Mow weeds before they set seed. Do not fertilize at this time except with compost!
- Plant other turf late in month once freezes aren't coming

### Prep

- Add compost to vegetable gardens along with organic fertilizer in prep for more summer crops
- Soil test

### Other tasks

- Keep floating row cover available; avoid covering plants with plastic
- Mulch, but avoid touching the base of trees and roses
- WEED!

### Tips

- When planting, dig hole twice as wide as root ball but no deeper than where it sits in the pot.
- Backfill and water until it sinks in.
- Continue filling in.
- Water again until it sinks in and pack the soil down.
- Mulch.



## RANCH REPORT

# Carmelitas

## INGREDIENTS

32 caramel squares, unwrapped  
½ cup heavy cream  
¾ cup butter, melted  
¾ cup brown sugar, packed  
1 cup flour  
1 cup rolled oats  
6 ounces semisweet chocolate chips  
1 teaspoon baking soda

## DIRECTIONS

Combine caramels and cream in a small saucepan over low heat. Stir until completely smooth; set aside. In a separate bowl combine melted butter, brown sugar, flour, oats, and baking soda. Pat half of the oatmeal mixture into the bottom of an 8 x 8 inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for ten minutes. Remove pan from oven and sprinkle chocolate chips over crust.



Pour caramel mixture over chocolate chips. Crumble remaining oatmeal mixture over caramel. Return to oven and bake an additional 15 - 20 minutes, until the edges are lightly browned. Remove from oven and cool completely before cutting

Serve and store at room temperature.



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## An Accredited Preschool Can Shape Your Child's Future



Choosing the right preschool for your child can shape your child's future. A parent's challenge is to find the right environment. You want a program that nurtures your child, one that offers you transparent and frequent communication and one that gives your child a head start in school. But you want more than that. You want a program that encourages an inventive and creative child – one that doesn't squelch a child's natural curiosity.

How does a parent find that special program? There are several ways. Parents can talk with friends and other parents, consult the online state licensing website, and even visit preschools.

Most parents don't know about accreditation or perhaps don't think it matters in the long run. Most early childhood programs choose not to satisfy the requirements of a national accreditation. They simply adhere to the state licensing minimum standards and feel it is not necessary to do more. To become accredited is difficult and expensive for the program.

The best way to begin your search for a program that suits your family's needs is to look for preschools accredited by a national early childhood accreditation agency. These agencies have quality standards and they visit preschools periodically to ensure that their standards are being followed. Search the website of each agency to determine the accredited preschools most convenient for you.

NAEYC, National Association for the Education of Young Children, is the oldest, largest and best known early childhood program national accrediting agency. In Texas there are over 9000 child care centers licensed by the state but only about 300 NAEYC accredited early childhood programs.

Unlike other accreditations, NAEYC standards require frequent one-to-one, face-to-face interactions between each child and teacher, smaller group sizes, as well as strong parent participation. Primary consideration is given to each individual child's experience. Since 1985 NAEYC has always had health and safety standards, and, even more importantly NAEYC focuses on developmentally appropriate curriculum and teaching practices, tracking of children's development, and has high standards for teacher education, management and leadership.

Montessori schools accredited by the AMS (American Montessori

Society) are very few in Texas. Interestingly, any program may call itself Montessori since the word montessori is in the public domain.

According to the AMS, there are only about 10 AMS accredited programs in Texas. These adhere to the Montessori standards and are visited every 7 years. Programs can be a member of AMS, but not be accredited.

SACS CASI accredits the next largest number of preschools in Texas, but they also accredit elementary, middle, secondary, adult/vocational, college preparatory, special purpose, unit (K-12) and non-degree granting postsecondary schools. SACS CASI is an accrediting division of AdvancED. Many of the SACS CASI preschools gain their accreditation based on the common curriculum used by their company franchise or chain of schools.

NAC accreditation is part of the Association of Early Learning Leaders, and its standards include family engagement, health and safety, curriculum, interactions between teachers and children, classroom health and safety and administration standards. There are currently 172 early childhood programs in Texas accredited by NAC.

Texas Rising Star is a quality rating system sponsored by the Texas Workforce Commission which assigns 2, 3 and 4 star designations to child care centers participating in the Child Care Subsidy program for certain low income and other qualifying families. Its quality ratings are another guide for families to find programs which maintain a higher quality environment.



# RANCH REPORT

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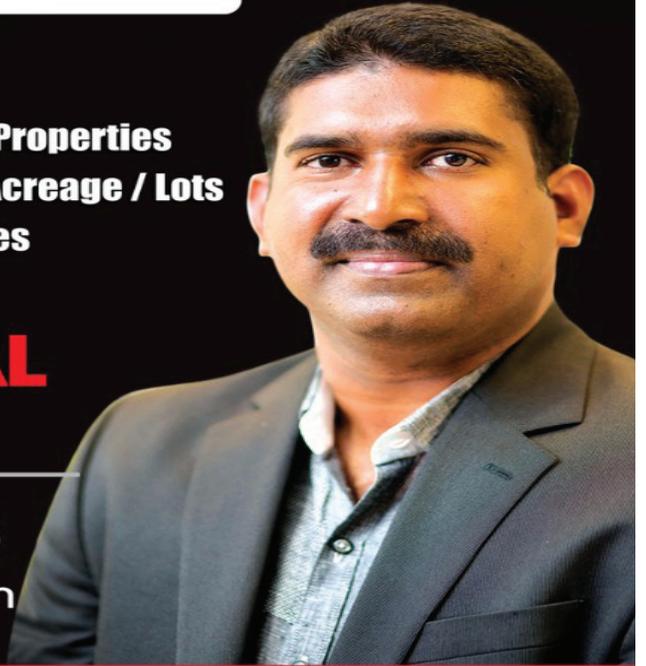
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