



Volume 23

June 2018

No. 6

GETTING THE "DIRT" ON YOUR SOIL

by: TakeCareofTexas.org

TEST YOUR SOIL – Grass and other plants can be weak and unhealthy for a variety of reasons, including over-application of fertilizer. The best and only sure way to know if the soil in your yard lacks sufficient nutrients is to get a soil test from a qualified soil lab. A soil test can tell you just what your soil needs, and how much of it. A basic soil test covers soil hydrogen ion concentration (pH or acidity/alkalinity) and the primary nutrients: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (NPK). For an additional fee, you can request testing for micronutrients, organic matter, and soil texture. Your county Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agent can help you get an inexpensive soil test, go over the results with you and advise you on the best subsequent course of action. For information on your local Texas A&M AgriLife Extension office, visit <agrilifeextension.tamu.edu>. If you do encounter a problem in your lawn, try solving it using natural, non-invasive methods.

What can I do to make sure my soil is healthy? A soil test is the best way to find out which nutrients your soil lacks. In most cases, compost is the best soil additive you can use. It contains micronutrients, such as iron and manganese that are often absent in synthetic fertilizers. Compost also balances both acidic and alkaline soils, bringing pH levels into the optimum range for nutrient availability. For more information, see *Mulching and Composting: A "Take Care of Texas" Guide (GI-36)* <TakeCareOfTexas.org/publications>.

Is it okay to use some pesticides? Synthetic chemical pesticides can be effective at wiping out pests, but rarely provide long-term solutions, and may create additional problems by wiping out

beneficial plants, insects and animals along with the pests. Ensuring that your lawn and soil are healthy, as well as using native and adapted plants, will help you reduce the need for pesticides. If you decide to use pesticides:

1. Look for the least toxic products that will do the job, and make sure they target the particular pest you're facing.
2. Read the label first, including all precautions and restrictions, and then follow the directions carefully.

How frequently should I fertilize my yard? The best times to apply fertilizer, if it's needed, are at the beginning and end of the growing season, which will vary according to the temperature range in your region. To prevent runoff, do not overwater after applying fertilizer and avoid fertilizing just before a rainstorm.

What are some tips for mowing?

1. Avoid cutting grass too short. Mow often enough that each mowing removes no more than one-third of the grass blade. For example, if you set your cutting height at 2 inches, then cut before the grass is more than 3 inches tall.
2. Keep your mower's blades sharp and clean, and mow when the grass is dry.
3. Mow over leaves, so that they will decompose along with the grass clippings.
4. Consider using mulching blades/kits to shred clippings and leaves as you mow.
5. Consider use of more efficient equipment to help keep our air clean. Hand tools, such as push reel mowers, are lightweight, quiet and easy to use and do not generate emissions.

E-BLASTS! E-BLASTS!... GET YOUR E-BLASTS HERE!

Is trash coming today? If not, will it be picked up tomorrow? Who are those strange guys digging in my back yard? I lost my HOA meeting notice, when is the next one? Find out answers to these types of questions and receive more timely alerts by signing up for e-blasts from Willowbridge HOA by completing the Contact Information Sheet found at willowbridgehoa.com on the cover page.

Willowbridge - Stonebridge

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

All Emergencies.....	911
AT&T - Billing	800-585-7928
Repair	800-246-8464
CenterPoint Energy	713-659-2111
Cy-Fair Hospital.....	281-890-4285
Harris County Animal Control	281-999-3191
Harris County Flood Control.....	713-684-4000
Harris County Sheriff's Office (HCSO)	713-221-6000
Newsletter Publisher - Peel, Inc.	888-687-6444
Advertising.....	advertising@PEELinc.com
Website	www.PEELinc.com
Poison Control Center	800-222-1222
Reliant/NRG.....	713-207-7777
Trash - Best Trash	281-313-2378
Vacation Watch (to place) - HCSO Pct. 4	281-290-2100
W. Harris County MUD #11	281-807-9500
(Tops Water Management)	
Willow Place Post Office	281-890-2392

ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY

Amenities Access Card.....	Request at
.....	access@grahammanagementhouston.com
Beautification Committee.....	Open Position
Clubhouse Reservations and Pool Parties.....	
Mandi Branam.....	
.....	mbranam@grahammanagementhouston.com
Lost Pet Coordinator	
Sonia Moore.....	msrco@aol.com
Marquee Coordinator	
Barbara Lallinger.....	blallinger@hotmail.com
Newsletter Coordinator	
Barbara Lallinger & Krystina Cotton.....	
.....	willowbridgenews@gmail.com
Soccer Field Coordinator	
Jay Guarino.....	jvguarino@hotmail.com
Tennis Coordinator	
Cory Fein.....	coryfein@yahoo.com
Website Coordinator.....	willowbridgehoa@live.com
Welcoming Committee	
Gracie Galvan.....	galvangracie@hotmail.com
Yard of the Month Committee	
Nominate your favorite.....	willowbridgehoa.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Ryan Lovell	Vice President
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David Smith.....	Director

HOA INFORMATION

Willowbridge Homeowners Association Inc. - Graham Mgmt
Mandi Branam..... 713-334-8000
E-Mail mbranam@grahammanagementhouston.com
Fax 713-334-5055
2825 Wilcrest Dr., #600 Houston, Tx. 77042

If you have any questions or comments regarding the neighborhood please contact the numbers above.

BOD MEETINGS

Quarterly meetings: *4th Thursday of January, April & July at 6:00 pm. **Annual Homeowners Meeting:** *4th Thursday of October at 6:00 pm. (*Unless otherwise notified via website & marquee)

HARRIS COUNTY ROAD AND BRIDGE

To report street or curb damage, missing/damaged street signs and street flooding: (281) 353-8424 or www.hcp4.net.

If a resident wants to request a new sign or replace a damaged one, they have to go online and fill out a request.

STREET LIGHT OUT?

If you notice a street light out PLEASE report it to CenterPoint Energy. We pay for all of the street lights in our subdivision... every month...regardless if they are illuminated or not!! This is also a serious safety issue. To report an outage, follow these steps:

- By Phone: During normal business hours (7 am – 7 pm)
- Call (713) 207-2222
 - Give the Customer Service Representative the 6 digit pole number (located approximately 6 feet up the pole), the street name and closest address.
 - Online (anytime): centerpointenergy.com

NEWSLETTER ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Newsletter Article submission Deadline is 3rd of each month. Please give a 2 month advance notice.
willowbridgenews@gmail.com

SPENDING A DAY ON THE RECYCLE TRAIL

A 25 year resident of Willowbridge (and an avid recycler, so much so, that she washes the foil sealing from yogurt cups for recycling) with a full truck bed, recently spent a good part of her day visiting various recycling facilities in our neighborhood. Unfortunately this process was necessitated because she is moving from our wonderful neighborhood. Wanting to offer more recycling opportunities to our residents, this writer spent "time on the trail" with her and gathered the following information to impart to our neighborhood recyclers.

DOCUMENT SHREDDING Vanish Document Shredding / 4846 Cranswick Rd 77041 / 713.682.6474 / info@vanishdocuments.com. Vanish has experience in shredding documents and media since 1986. They offer on-site (personal) and off-site (commercial) shredding. All shredded paper material is recycled (see companion article in this edition "Don't Leave a Paper Trail"). She left a multitude of boxes here and I even threw in a couple of bags.

ELECTRONIC RECYCLING CompuCycle / 8019 Kempwood Dr. 77055 / 713.869.6700 / CompuCycle.net CompuCycle has been in business for 21+ years and is a woman owned, Houston based, certified electronics recycling company providing end-of-life IT Asset Management and Disposition Services of E-Waste (old computers, monitors, printers, electronics, cell phones, etc.), They recycle over 12 million pounds annually, servicing both residential and commercial customers. This is great place to recycle lots of things (electronic) that you would not normally think of.

METAL RECYCLING Coastal Metal Recycling / 14002 Hempstead Highway (corner of W. Tidwell) 77040 / 713.690.6767 / scrap@coastalmetalrecycling.com. Coastal is family owned and operated since 1990, and is a buyer of all non-ferrous metals (insulated wire, carbide litho, copper, brass, aluminum, stainless, nickel, alloys, valves, AC coils, gold and silver). They also buy appliances, motors, car batteries, wheels/rims, electric motors, weights and bicycles. Their motto is "Keep Calm We've Got You Covered Rain or Shine", providing convenient drive-thru service away from Houston's weather. My friend unloaded an old satellite dish here.

METAL, ELECTRONIC, APPLIANCE, AUTO BATTERY & AUTOMOBILE (with Title) RECYCLING C & D Scrap Metal / 6775 Bingle Rd. 77092 / 713.862.5588 / cdscrapmetal.com C & D has 50+ years' experience in the recycling business. Their list of recyclable items is VERY long and may be accessed at cdscrapmetal.com. You may have seen their television ad noting that all purchases are paid in \$2 bills. We didn't make it this far, because the truck bed and back seat of her 1999 Chevy Silverado truck is still going strong!

DON'T LEAVE A PAPER TRAIL!

"PROTECT YOUR IDENTITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT BY SHREDDING"

Even in the digital age, businesses and individuals deal with paper every day. Employee records, client records, bank statements, receipts, insurance policies, vendor invoices, tax returns, credit card bills and even JUNK MAIL contain information that can be used to steal your identity and your money.

Identity theft continues to be a growing problem in the United States. Research shows that the majority of identity theft occurs when the thief has direct contact with the victim's personal information, through a stolen or lost wallet, rifling through a personal mailbox (or breaking into a bank of mailboxes such as ours), trashcan or recycling bin, or even taking documents from the inside of a home or business. "In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to overlook all of the documents that contain personal and financial information," says Eric Avery, co-owner and executive vice president of Avery Archives, a full service records and information management company based in Lake Charles, La. "Tossing intact anything that contains your name, address, phone number, birth date or financial-record numbers puts you at risk of identity theft. You may not realize that almost every pre-approved credit card and loan offer has enough information for anyone to open an account." Avery says shredding documents is one of the most cost-effective ways to prevent fraud and identity theft. In addition to privacy protection, shredded paper processed for recycling is environmentally friendly. One ton of paper recycled saves 17 trees, three cubic yards of landfill space and 20,000 gallons of water!

Be a savvy shredder. Before you shred anything, make sure you won't need the document again. There are timelines on how long certain documents should be kept, particularly if those documents are used for business or needed for taxes. **YOU SHOULD SHRED:**

- *Credit card or loan offers
- *Expired credit cards
- *Canceled checks
- *Computer printouts containing personal/financial information
- *Correspondence related to any of these items
- *Credit card receipts
- *Medical and financial records
- *Tax records



Willowbridge - Stonebridge

HEALTH TIP - BE FOOD SAFE WITH PRODUCE

The recent E. coli outbreak from Romaine lettuce prompted this article. With modern conveniences such as pre-washed and pre-bagged lettuce we sometimes forget that there still might be food safety issues involved. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, an estimated 76 million people in the U.S. become sick by eating contaminated foods or beverages or by coming in contact with someone who has a foodborne illness.

Be "food safe" to reduce your risk of illness from fresh produce. There are many steps you can take to lower your risk of illness from fresh produce:

- **Buy wisely.** Don't buy produce that is bruised or damaged. When buying fresh cut produce, choose only items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- **Refrigerate promptly.** Certain fresh fruits and vegetables (strawberries, lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) should be stored in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40 degrees or below. If you aren't sure an item should be refrigerated, ask your grocer. Produce that is bought already cut or peeled should be refrigerated within 2 hours.
- **Prepare produce with clean hands.** Wash hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap before and after preparing fresh produce.

• **Wash produce thoroughly.** Rinse fruits and vegetables under running water. Scrub firm produce, such as melons and cucumbers with a clean produce brush. All unpackaged fruits and vegetables, as well as those packaged and not marked pre-washed, should be thoroughly rinsed before eating. This includes produce grown at home and from a grocery store or farmer's market.

• **Don't cross contaminate.** Don't give bacteria the opportunity to spread from one food to another. Consider using one cutting board only for foods that will be cooked such as raw meat, and another one for foods such as raw fruits and vegetables.



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Not Available Online

WHO YOU GONNA CALL ???

Not Ghost Busters...they can't help you with any of these, but maybe this list will help clear up some of the confusion and misinformation that abounds.

SECURITY PATROL – Harris County Sheriff's Office (not the Harris County Constable's Office) 713.221.6000. West Harris County MUD #11 (WHCMUD #11) took over security patrols for all subdivisions and businesses serviced by the MUD several years ago. Please note that no funds for these patrols are deducted from your HOA annual assessment (\$615).

WALLER PARK – Reports may be made to Graham Management 713.334.8000. Graham will forward information, concerns, etc. to WHCMUD #11 who took over the park in 2013. The MUD spent \$500,000 to renovate and upgrade the park at that time (see WillowTalk February 2014). As with the Security Patrol, no funds are deducted from your HOA annual assessment for the maintenance, repairs, upkeep, etc. of Waller Park.

STREET LIGHTS – Are owned and maintained by CenterPoint Energy. The HOA has absolutely no control over the type, design, color of bulbs used, etc. Please report street light outages to CenterPoint at 713.207.2222 or centerpointenergy.com (see bottom right of page 2 in each issue of WillowTalk).

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THE FLOOD ZONE BY: ASSURANT

Hurricane Season opened June 1; however flooding isn't just from hurricanes and doesn't just happen on the coast...it can happen anywhere and it can come from many sources. Hurricane Harvey taught us that flooding can happen in some of the least suspected areas. Listed below are some prime examples.

1. Unusually heavy rain
2. River overflowing its banks
3. New land development
4. Community releasing water to relieve pressure on a dam
5. Levee breaking
6. Water runoff from putting out a forest fire
7. Rain causing flooding due to defoliation after a forest fire
8. Melting snow and Tsunami (neither likely for us)

10 WAYS TO BE PREPARED

1. Maintain a flood insurance policy.
2. Review your policy to become familiar with what is covered and to make sure your limits are adequate.
3. Itemize and photograph possessions.
4. Save your flood insurance agent's contact information in your phone.

5. Make an emergency kit and include a spare cellphone charging cord.
6. Keep important papers in a safe, watertight, portable container.
7. Plan an evacuation route.
8. Have a phone plan worked out with family members.
9. Have a place to meet in case you get separated,
10. Have a plan for your pets, too. Do not leave them behind

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