



VOLUME 15 | ISSUE 10 | OCTOBER 2018

*September's Yard of the Month is located at 17106 Ajuga Court.
Thank you for keeping Village Creek beautiful!*



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

IN CASE OF ANY EMERGENCY DIAL 911

SCHOOLS

Tomball ISD 281-357-3100, www.tomballisd.net
Willow Creek Elem (K-4)..... 281-357-3080
Northpointe Int (5-6)..... 281-357-3020
Willow Wood Jr (7-8) 281-357-3030
Tomball High (9-12)..... 281-357-3220
Tomball Memorial High School..... 281-357-3230
Transportation..... 281-357-3193

SERVICES

Village Creek Management Company spectrumam.com
Email: villagecreek@spectrumam.com..... 832-500-2221
Village Creek Board Website..... myvillagecreek.com
Village Creek Website Unrelated to the Board
..... VillageCreekCommunity.com
Harris County Animal Control 281-999-3191
Lost/Found Pets Nextdoor.com
Harris County Veterinary Public Health..... 281-999-3191
Municipal District Services (24 hrs) 281-290-6503
... For water leaks, water outages, water quality, or sewer
leaks or stoppage. Street lights out & power outages.....
..... www.centerpointenergy.com/outage
Harris County traffic signal outages..... 713-881-3210
Best Trash..... 281-313-2378
customerservice@besttrash.com, and www.best-trash.com

Trash and Bulk Waste on both Tuesdays and Fridays
Recycle on Tuesdays only. Recycle only plastics (1-7), steel and
aluminum cans, cardboard, paper, plastic or paper grocery
bags, and glass (any color).

Digging? Two days prior to ANY digging in your yard, call
811 or use <http://www.lonestar811.com/>

NEWSLETTER

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Editor..... Gordon R. Watson
... villagecreek@peelinc.com or Watson.g@sbcglobal.net

The Minimalist Gardener

by Flint Sage



The fall months are a good time to plant trees and shrubs. Summer is undesirable because of the need to keep the root ball damp with our interesting weather.

Fertilize your Saint Augustine lawns when you no longer need to mow your lawn every week. According to Doug Welsh's Texas Garden Almanac, this will commonly happen on October 15th +/- one week.

Check the bag for the area covered (Frankly, though, the Minimalist Gardener doesn't ponder numbers or coverage much). The fertilizer spreader number usually don't match the bag numbers anyway. Control weeds with a healthy turf rather than herbicides; however, if needed, apply weed killers as directed on the container.

Does your lawn have bare spots or spots with some grass other than Saint Augustine? Commonly, unhealthy turf indicates a weakness in our irrigation system. Nothing shows an irrigation system's weakness better than a drought. While it has been a wet year overall, we have had extended periods of local drought.

Plant beets, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, collards, kohlrabi, lettuce, mustard, parsley, peas, radish, spinach, and turnips. We have had great success with carrots.

Mulch anytime. There is little bad to be said about a three or four-inch layer of mulch, but keep it away from tree trunks. Placing a few layers of magazines or newspapers under the mulch is a good idea. As you lay down the paper, weigh it with a handful of mulch to keep it in place.

Assuming the heat drops a bit, The Texas Garden Almanac says we can shut off our irrigation system in October with the caution that, if there is no rain, you should turn it back on to water every 3 or 4 weeks. You will need to water your vegetables during their growing season.



Pumpkin Patch

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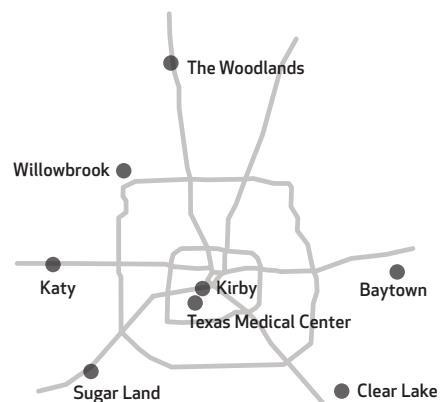
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Village Creek Committees

ARC Committee

by Steven Winters, Chair. Joe Wright and Ben Yerby, members

The September ARC request turn-around time was less than five days, and fence requests still dominate the project requests for this month followed by tree trimming and removals. Recently the Board sent out new guidance (for review) for tree trimming, removal, and replacement. While the guidelines are not yet official (as I write this) the ARC encourages all residents to review these changes and see how they fit your particular situation. After considering the changes myself, I went outside and looked at the trees in my yard bordering the street and to my surprise found several places where vehicles had damaged limbs hanging over the street even though they appeared to be well within compliance of the guidelines. It looks like I have some trimming to do. In my view, it is better that I do it than a 7-ton garbage truck or school bus, and it probably will look better and be healthier for the trees. The ARC has 13 requests this month. Fences: 7, Storage sheds: 1, Patio: 1, Solar: 1, Remove trees: 2, and other: 1.

Social Committee

Lisa Rawles, Chair

This year's Luau and Meet and Greet were a great success. Lisa, as usual, organized the Luau and was helped by her perpetually smiling husband, Jimmy Rawles. Thank you, Christi Pickard and Amy Martin for doing a perfect job with the Meet and Greet. Of course, we were all impressed that the Principal at Willow Creek, Ms. Sullivan, was able to attend. Photo: Village Creek Luau and Kinder Meet and Greet.

Reminder: Village Creek's community-wide garage sale is on October 12th and 13th (Friday and Saturday). Place your items in your garage or on your driveway. Be sure to have a rainy-day plan. Clean out the garage or attic. Make a little money and make someone happy with a wonderful bargain.

Pool Committee

Gordon Watson, Chair. Stacy Cheeseman, Member

The pool was popular this year. The splash pad finally got its shade to the relief of all. One improvement was that we employed a weekly housekeeping service to keep the restrooms clean and sanitary. There were no major equipment failures. We appreciate all that Stacy did on her own to keep the pool and deck looking good along with handling the many other issues.

Landscape Committee

Sherry Watson, Chair. Kristin Jonec and Laura Domangue, Members

Work was completed recently removing trees throughout Village Creek. Some were dead, and some were unwanted or poorly placed. Bids to complete the improvements are in the works. A proposal was presented to the Board to begin a long-term project to restore our three native forests located near Sweet Rain Park, between

Midland Creek and Lake Vista Drives and at the front west side of Village Creek Trail.

Near Scarlet Forest Park (Old Splash Pad) a Municipal Utility District dug a large overflow channel to help prevent flooding. During the project, several HOA lines were cut and repaired. They planted sod, and an area above the trench was seeded.

There are several proposals to improve the appearance of Lake Vista Drive North, Village Creek Trail, and the area around the lake. There is much to be done.

HOA Guidelines for the number of trees, types of trees, and tree sizes have been proposed to make it simpler for residents to manage their trees. The Board asked the public to comment on the proposal by email from Spectrum. Make sure you have registered your email with Spectrumam.com as the new Board will be using your email address to notify residents of information concerning Village Creek. Send a note to VillageCreek@Spectrumam.com to do this.



The Voice Cooks Up Some Vittles

Broccoli with Cheese Sauce

Sent in by Village Creek's April Watson. This is a low carb recipe and Village Creek tasted-tested as delicious.

Source: ThePioneerWoman.Com

PREP TIME: 5 Minutes

DIFFICULTY: Easy

COOK TIME: 15 Minutes

SERVINGS: 6 Servings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 heads Broccoli Cut Into Florets
- 2 cups Whole Milk
- 1 Tablespoon Butter
- 1 clove Garlic (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon Seasoned Salt
- 1/2 teaspoon Black Pepper, More To Taste
- 1/4 teaspoon Salt
- 1/4 teaspoon Chili Powder, More To Taste
- 12 ounces, weight Velveeta Cut Into Cubes
- 4 ounces, weight Sharp Cheddar Cheese, Grated
- 4 ounces, weight Monterey Jack Cheese, Grated

INSTRUCTIONS

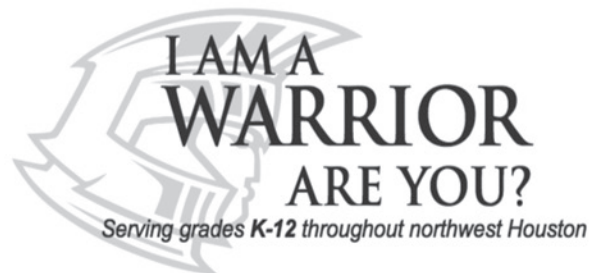
1. Steam the broccoli florets for 3 to 4 minutes, or until slightly tender but not overly soft.
2. To make the sauce, heat the butter and milk over medium-low heat until hot. Stir in the garlic (if

using), seasoned salt, black pepper, salt, and chili powder. Add the Velveeta and stir it until it's melted and creamy. Stir in the cheddar and Monterey jack until melted. Taste and adjust seasonings.

3. Serve ramekins of cheese sauce with warm broccoli florets.



CYPRESS CHRISTIAN SCHOOL



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The Voice

Recycling Containers

by Gordon Watson



Recycling is MUD-5's responsibility and not part of the Village Creek Board's responsibility. Acting as a Village Creek Resident and not speaking for the Board, I called Best Trash to ask some questions about recycling containers. Their website says, "We are happy to collect your additional recycling material. Please place the additional recycling in a bag, box or container clearly labeled "RECYCLE" next to your regular recycling container." You are on your own with respect to what you purchase or what you do about containers. Their web site does have some excellent ideas, so please check it out. <http://www.best-trash.com/guidelines-faq/recycling/>

My question:

We currently use one of your small recycle bins, but generally find that it is too small. In addition, there have been a few issues of recycling blowing out of the open-topped container. My question is, "Can we use a closed top container, like our trash container, for recycling. Or, are there other options to solve our problems?" Thank you.

Gordon Watson

Answer from Best Trash:

Thank you for contacting us. Residents are welcome to use their own container for recycling, we just ask that the container be labeled as – RECYCLE on four sides.

Casey Vinson
Best Trash

Clarification Question from Me:

Just to clarify, it is OK for us to use a wheeled container with a lid (even a hinged lid) for recycle as long as it is marked "Recycle" on four sides? Since I will be distributing this via social media to 747 homes, do you want to include a size limit on the container or any other restrictions?

Gordon Watson

Clarification Answer:

There are no size restrictions for the recycle container. It only needs to be labeled. Our suggestion is have it labeled on all sides so the crew can clearly see it.

Casey Vinson
Best Trash

Improve Your Writing with Technology?

by Gordon Watson

When I write for The Voice, my wife goes through the document with a fine-toothed comb. She usually finds a few mistakes in each article. Occasionally, some errors get through. Quite often when I write an email and copy her, she reminds me that my proof-reading skills could use some improvements.

Still, I have a tough time writing without mistakes. I can look at a sentence for a long time and not see a missing word. I did, by accident, find a handy tool.

Here is the method: When you finish your document in Microsoft Word, save it as a PDF after saving it as a Word document. Here are the steps (at least in the Word Version I use). It is more straightforward than it looks:

1. When you finish writing the document, instead of "Save," click "Save As."
2. Select the location you wish to save the file.
3. Where it says "Save as Type," Click "Word Document."
4. A drop-down menu will come up. Click "PDF."
5. After a bit, the document will come back as a PDF document.
6. Right click on the document. A menu will appear.
7. Pick "Read Aloud." A male, computerized, voice will read your document. Watch the material as he reads. Any missing words or other odd problems will often be obvious.

Another useful feature of PDF's is that if you fill your document with photos, it might become too large to send by email. Generally, saving the document as a PDF will reduce its size such that email is now feasible.



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MUD DAUBERS



Mud daubers are a great wasp to have around. They are solitary, generally docile, and can help to reduce various bugs in the landscape. Mud dauber wasps are $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1" in size and come in a variety of colors. They have a very thin, thread-like waist.

Mud daubers create a mud structure that they provision with insects and/or spiders; they lay an egg on each prey item within a cell in the nest, and then seal the nest off. When larvae hatch from eggs, they eat the items provisioned for them, pupate, and then emerge as adults to begin the process over.

Management is not usually needed for mud daubers as they do not guard their nest like other wasps. While they are capable of stinging, they are not considered to be aggressive. If you do not like the look of the mud nests, you can remove them with a putty knife.

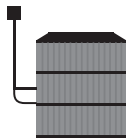
For more information or help with identification, contact Wizzie Brown, Texas AgriLife Extension Service Program Specialist at 512.854.9600. Check out my blog at www.urban-ipm.blogspot.com

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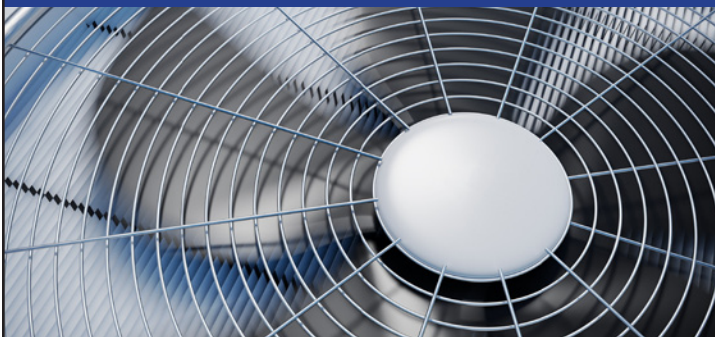
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Guests in Your Attic

by Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center



Who doesn't enjoy seeing squirrels scamper from tree to tree? Everyone loves seeing birds at their feeders. Who doesn't love seeing the does with their fawns? We live side by side with wildlife. Is it any wonder that conflicts arise between humans and the animals?

This is baby season for raccoons. You may find that a mama raccoon has taken up residence in your attic or garage. The best advice we can offer you is to leave her alone. Within a couple of weeks, she will lead her babies out of your attic or garage to live in the wild. If you just can't wait, here are a couple of things you can try. Put a bright light in the area at night and play some LOUD music. Some say talk radio is best. You can throw some moth balls in the area or ammonia-soaked cotton balls. She will probably choose to move the babies to a darker, quieter place outside. When she moves out, it's your responsibility to find out how she got in and block the entrance or your attic will always look like an apartment for rent to wildlife.

We often receive calls from homeowners asking for advice on how to stop raccoons that are getting into trash cans. Solution: try using some bungee cords to secure the top. Another issue we hear about is that raccoons are eating food that is being put out for feral cats. Since raccoons are nocturnal, simply removing the cat food at night will fix the problem except in the spring when mama raccoons can be seen looking for food during the day. No, they are not rabid! They are just hungry. Some homeowners ask about trapping and relocating. While removal may seem like a solution, it usually only creates an enticing vacancy for another animal in search of a meal. Remove raccoons from an area and it's only a matter of time before others move in to take their place. Additionally, the survival rate of relocated raccoons is very low. Raccoons are territorial and putting a lone raccoon into an area already populated with other raccoons can often result in death as the other raccoons will consider him/her as an intruder.

There are products available that may help not only with raccoons but other animals as well. One such product is the motion-activated sprinkler. When an animal gets close to the food source, the sprinkler goes off and scares them away. Just do an internet search and I'm certain you'll find other products that may work as well.

With urban sprawl and loss of habitats, we need to learn to live in harmony with wildlife. TWRC Wildlife Center can often help you find solutions to your issues. Check our website at www.twrcwildlifecenter.org or call us at 713-468-8972.

Widow Spiders

There are four species of widow spiders found in Texas, the best known being the black widow. Coloration for widow spiders can vary dramatically, but Southern black widows are typically jet black with two reddish-orange triangles on the underside of the abdomen, forming an hourglass shape. The triangles sometimes do not touch each other creating a broken hourglass shape. Males and juveniles are smaller and often show more color, with bright markings on their sides or back.

Females lay eggs in an oval sac which can hold from 25 to over 900 eggs. Depending on temperature and time of year, eggs usually hatch after about 20 days. Spiderlings stay near the egg sac for several days where they consume their brothers and sisters. Survivors throw a thread of silk to the wind and are carried off in a process called "ballooning". They eventually locate a sheltered spot where they build a loosely woven web and remain for the rest of their lives. As time progresses, widows build larger webs to capture larger prey. Males eventually leave their webs to find females for mating. In a natural setting, most females do not eat males after mating.

GO GREEN



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2018 Fall Festivals

- Sept 29 - Nov 25 ♦ Sat, Sun & Fri 23th - Texas Renaissance Festival TexRenFest.com
- Oct 6 ♦ 13th Annual Baytown Grito Fest VisitBaytown.com/Grito-Fest
- Oct 4 - 7 ♦ Original Greek Festival GreekFestival.org
- Oct 11 - 14 ♦ 40th Annual Houston Italian Festival HoustonItalianFestival.com
- Oct 13 ♦ Vintique Flea Fall Market VintiqueFlea.com
- Oct 19 - 21 ♦ International Gem & Jewelry Show 10times.com/gem-jewelry-houston.com
- Oct 20 ♦ 35th Annual Texian Market Days GeorgeRanch.org
- Oct 20 - 21 ♦ Wings Over Houston Airshow WingsOverHouston.com
- Oct 20 - 21 ♦ 21th Galveston ARToberFEST ARToberFest.com
- Oct 20 & 27 ♦ Kemah Boardwalk Halloween Costume Contest KemahBoardwalk.com
- Oct 21 ♦ #HoustonStrongFestival HoustonStrongFestival.com
- Oct 28 ♦ Sugar Land's Halloween Town SugarLandTX.gov/916/halloween-town
- Oct 28 ♦ 18th Annual Boo Bash TradersVillage.com
- Nov 2 & 3 ♦ Sugar Plum Market, Stafford Center, Stafford TX SugarPlumMarket.com
- Nov 8 - 11 ♦ International Quilt Festival Quilts.com
- Nov 8 - 11 ♦ 38th Annual Houston Ballet Nutcracker Market NutcrackerMarket.com
- Nov 8 - 12 ♦ Annual Houston Cinema Arts Festival CinemaArtSociety.org
- Nov 16 - 18 ♦ Holiday Christmas Gift Market, Katy TX HomeForTheHolidaysGiftMarket.com
- Nov 17 - Jan 6 ♦ Festival of Lights, Moody Gardens, Galveston MoodyGardens.com
- Nov 18 - Jan 14 ♦ Houston 'Zoo Lights' ZooLights.HoustonZoo.org/
- Nov 22 ♦ 69th Annual HEB Thanksgiving Day Parade HoustonTX.gov/ThanksgivingParade
- Nov 30 ♦ 99th Annual Mayor's Holiday Celebration & Tree Lighting HoustonTX.gov/MayorsHoliday/
- Nov 30 ♦ Sugar Land Christmas Tree Lighting SugarLandTX.gov/918/Christmas-Tree-Lighting
- Nov 30 - Dec 2 ♦ 45th Dickens on the Strand, Galveston Galveston.com/DickensOnTheStrand
- Dec 7 - 8 ♦ Lights in the Heights Woodland-Heights.org/LITH/
- Dec 9 ♦ 4th Annual Telemundo Houston Toy Drive TradersVillage.com



I hope this schedule of fall festivals and events helps you and your family and friends in planning weekend activities during the coming months. Buying or selling, please remember me.

Kara Puente

Village Creek Sales Specialist
#1 Village Creek Realtor

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