



The HOME FRONT

AUGUST 2019

Official Publication of the Cardiff Ranch HOA

VOL 4, ISSUE 8

Letter from the Board

Hello Neighbors!

This has been a busy summer for the Cardiff Ranch Board of Directors. For those that use the FM1463 entrance, you should have noticed that all the lighting has been updated and the waterfalls have been repaired. Working with a new contractor, we corrected some items that were causing persistent problems in these areas. Moving forward, we expect to see far fewer problems with infrastructure in this area and will help keep this area looking great.

After a lot of work of trying to secure funding and select contractors, we are seeing work in two green areas of the community. At the drill site, we are adding a gate on Roesner Road so that the area can be graded and regularly maintained. This work has been approved. It was surprisingly difficult to secure a contractor that was willing to do the work at a fair price and had the proper insurance and credentials. We hope that this work is completed quickly and ready for use during these nice fall days ahead.

We also saw work for the green space on Charlenes Way Drive begin. This project is being paid for by our friends at MUD 58. This is another project that took a lot of work to coordinate, and we would like to thank all the neighbors and the Landscaping Committee for all their efforts in both of these projects.

We are also updating the playground with new mulch and adding more benches to the area.

Hopefully many of you enjoyed our pool this summer. The pool will be open on the weekends through October this year and we hope to see you there.

Home owner tips: Summer time also sees a rise in insects and some can be harmful to our lawns such as sod webworms. Sod webworms are the larva of lawn moths and they live in roots of your lawn. They can cause considerable damage to your lawn and even kill an entire lawn in just a few days in the worst cases. Lawn grubs also live in the soil feeding on the grass roots. These grubs cause brown patches throughout your lawn. Treating your lawn is an easy way to maintain a healthy lawn that is attractive and pest free. Products such as "Bayer Advance Grub Killer Plus" is a good product to use to combat these pests. It is available at many of our local home improvement stores and can be found online as well. Please consider using such products to help keep your lawn and our community looking great!

As we move into the more active part of hurricane season, please be mindful of your daily activities. In 2017, we all saw how bad hurricane Harvey impacted our area. Water drainage is a critical part of our neighborhood. Please ensure that you or your lawn care professionals do not blow or sweep lawn clippings or other debris into the storm drains at the street. Lawn debris can build up and cause significant problems to our community drainage. All lawn debris should be placed in bags or your garbage cans and disposed of by Best Trash.

Thank you and have a great summer!

Your resident board members,
Prasad, Kenny, Ross and Inge

CARDIFF RANCH

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

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Emergency	911
Fort Bend County Sheriff	281-342-6116
Poison Control	800-222-1222
RealManage Service Center	866-473-2573

UTILITIES

Best Trash.....	281-313-2378
En-Touch (Customer Service)	281-225-1000
Fort Bend MUD # 58 (Water)	713-405-1750

SCHOOLS

Katy ISD	281-396-6000
Davidson Elementary	281-234-2500
Wood Creek Junior High	281-234-0800
Obra D. Tompkins High School	281-234-1000

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

RealManage

16000 Barkers Point Lane, Suite 250 Houston, TX 77079
(866)473-2573 • procardi@ciramail.com

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IMPORTANT INFO

To set up access for the pool and gym use please contact
(866)473-2573

The Clubhouse is available for rentals by association members. Please call (866)473-2573 or email procardi@ciramall.com for more information.

You can report violations or concerns by calling (866)473-2573 or emailing procardi@ciramall.com. Please include photos of the violation if possible. All violation reports remain confidential.

Save the Date!

Back to School August 10

Community Garage Sale September 14

Halloween October 26

Diwali November 2

Bazar Kids Crafts December 12

Christmas / T-PAK Party December 14

Board Meetings

August 10, 9:30 a.m.

September 14, 9:30 a.m.

September 19, 7:00 p.m.

October 12, 9:30 a.m.

November 9, 9:30 a.m.

November 21, 7:00 p.m.

December 14, 9:30 a.m.

Call For Submissions

We want your content! Do you have something fun to share? We want to hear it! This is YOUR newsletter.

Whether you want to submit just one article, a monthly column, or a quarterly editorial, we welcome your stories and community advice.

Here are some ideas, but don't feel limited to just these...

- 1) Gardening or lawn tips
- 2) Community resources for your ethnic or cultural group
- 3) Favorite recipes
- 4) Volunteering opportunities
- 5) A community crossword
- 6) Advice on just about anything: from pets to pools
- 7) Best places in Katy to bike or hike
- 8) Rainy day activities for your kids
- 9) Home maintenance dos and don'ts
- 10) Best of Nextdoor roundups on your favorite topics
- 11) News about a school event, tradition, or sports game
- 12) Recap of a community event

Here are a few items to please AVOID:

- 1) Anything with a business name or for a business purpose – sorry it's against our newsletter company's editorial guidelines.
- 2) Anything political or opinionated. Not the place for op-eds guys. Let's keep it fun and friendly!
- 3) Anything promoting a specific religion, belief, or cause (even if it's a really great one).

Want advice on what to write or if a topic is appropriate? Please email cardiffbranchnews@gmail.com.

Submit articles to: cardiffbranchnews@gmail.com.

Articles are due by the 1st of every month for the FOLLOWING month's newsletter. (E.g. articles submitted May 1, will go into the June newsletter.)

One Reason to Build a Pool That I Bet You Never Thought Of *by Tiffany Lively*

I'm constantly seeing social media posts from our neighbors, asking questions about building a pool. Some ask for recommendations, some ask price ranges, some just want to know if it's worth it to build one. The questions run the gamut. And there's always the poster who says "Don't build one! They're nothing but money pits." And I guess they are money pits, but not so much after the initial investment. As I stated in one of my responses to those posts... carpe diem, it's only money. My pool gives me a lot of relief and pleasure, but not for the reasons one would assume.

My decision to build came after three days of sheer agony. I awoke one evening at 1 am to a skin crawling scream. I sat upright and listened. I heard it again, but from right under my bedroom window. I got up and looked. There was nothing there. The screaming stopped as I stood at the window, but as soon as I put my head back on my pillow, it happened again. "What is that?" I asked myself. "It sounds like a banshee. But I know they're not real. In America. They only reside in the countries where men wear plaid skirts. Is it the ghost of a murdered child? Is my house built on an Indian burial ground and this is my punishment for living on top of their scared graves?" On the next scream, I awoke my husband.

"Ricky!!!!" I pinched his nose to rouse him.

"What?"

"Listen. A ghost is screaming at our window!"

"Screeeeeeeeeam!"

"See?! Hear that?"

"That's a frog, Tiffany. I'm going back to bed."

"There's no way that's a frog," I said. "You need to go out there. I need to sleep." He returned my command with a snore. I did not sleep at all that night, or the following two.

One YouTube search later, and I discovered my husband was right. Frogs scream. Loudly.

Our backyard had been improperly graded, and the constant rainfall that year caused water to pool right under my bedroom window, creating a quagmire oasis for frogs, toads and mosquitos, despite our sodding as soon as we moved in. The dog made it worse, tracking in mud five times a day. I was going through mops at a lightning speed. My pleas to the builder were largely ignored, and the situation continued from bad to worse.

The evening after the scream, before bed, I asked my husband to find the frog and remove it. He declined, laughing, and the frog again screamed all night, joined by another frog friend. After my second request to remove the frog on the third day and another sleepless night, I once again woke my husband. This time, going on three nights of sleep deprivation, I was in a full blown, hysterical meltdown. The angry tears and litany of delusional profanity, mixed with now multiple screams in the backyard, finally drove him to action. He put on his hunting boots, got his green light hunting flashlight and waded into the flooded backyard.

He came back in moments, no frog in hand, retrieved a trash bag,

and went back out, with narry a word nor glance my way. What did he need the garbage bag for, I wondered. Did I make a matrimonial mistake and marry a man afraid of frogs? We can't have two people in the family reluctant to deal with amphibians. To my relief, it wasn't his fear, but the sheer volume of frogs and toads that necessitated the garbage bag. That night he collected 25 toads and 3 bullfrogs from my backyard. He had to repeat this process once a week, as I made more calls to the builder.

We even had my kid's friend help on a sleepover, pretending like it was a big adventure. As the kids and I were releasing them at a nearby pond, the friend exclaimed, "Ahhhh. Look how cute! That baby frog is clinging on to the mommy frog's back!" I stopped taking other people's children, not wanting to be responsible for the destruction of their innocence. After two months of excuses from the builders, I realized I was going to have to fix the yard myself or get a divorce.

I decided to call a landscaper, as all that was in the yard was mud and a bit of remaining sod here and there. I collected 3 quotes to regrade and landscape. The cheapest was \$30,000. No decking, no outdoor kitchen. Just a backhoe, sod, flower beds and plants. I found that to be too much. My coworker overheard me one day lamenting my predicament.

"Build a pool," he said. "It will fix your drainage issues, give you some family enjoyment and a nice backyard."

I can't afford that, I thought.

"I gotta guy. He'll take care of you. You can afford it," he said, in response to the look on my face.

One call to the guy later and he was at my house. I designed a \$120,000 pool, he said, double my budget. But he suggested some alternatives that we agreed would give me the look I wanted at a better price point. He made it work with decking, a spa, water features and landscaping at a price I could afford.

I had a blast designing it, just the way I had always imagined in my head. I picked out everything. He told me the stamped concrete pattern I wanted would be a disaster. He was wrong. I ended up with a beautiful New Orleans courtyard look, lots of brick and bougainvillea. I truly consider it one of the finer things I've done in my life.

Best of all, no pooling of water, no drainage issues.

It's been 4 years, and I have not regretted my decision one time. Sure, I'm taking a financial hit. Though the pool adds to the value of the house, it will never add enough to recoup what I spent.

But it gives me far more than monetary value in return. I've had wonderful parties. I've cooled down after gardening on a hot Houston day. My family hangs out together in and by it, spending quality time with one another, time I know is slipping away. I've skinny dipped after everyone's gone to bed, glass of wine in hand, scream free solitude and stars above. And I sleep through the night, the glow of the pool lights visible from my bed and the sound of the water erasing the stresses of my day. So, build that pool if you're thinking of it, whether it sounds like a mass murder in your yard at night or not. It's only money.

CARDIFF RANCH

Real Pasta Carbonata

by Tiffany Lively

I have had many heated arguments about this family dish. Traditionally, it contains no cream, despite what you'll see in most restaurants. Cream, to me, peels away some of the simple, yet delicious flavors.

This recipe is a very quick and easy, perfect for last minute meals.

And kids like it!

Serves 4-6

- 1) Boil a pound of pasta in salted water until al dente.
- 2) Mix together 2 eggs, half stick of melted butter, ½-1 cup grated parmesan.
- 3) Fry ½ pound of bacon, then chop into small pieces.
- 4) Drain the pasta and put back in pot.
- 5) Add the egg mixture and bacon.
- 6) Toss, season with salt and pepper and serve.

I sometimes add peas and caramelized onions for a little extra color and flavor, but the dish is wonderful without them.

Bon appetit!



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Fall Webworms

Webworms can be found on a variety of trees and are most well-known for the webbing they create on the tips of branches. Webworms are caterpillars, or larvae, of a moth. Caterpillars cause damage by feeding on foliage that is inside the protective webbing.

There are 2-4 generations of webworms that occur each year. The first generation appears April- May and the last generation occurs in the late fall. The last generation is the most damaging generation, which provides these creatures with the name fall webworm.



Webworm larvae are about an inch long when fully grown. They are pale green to yellow with tufts of long hairs projecting from their body. Most people notice webbing that webworms create on the tips of branches. Webworms feed within the webbing and use it as protection from predators. When the caterpillars run out of foliage to feed on, they expand the web to encompass new leaves.

To manage webworms, the size and accessibility of the tree needs to be considered. Egg masses can be pruned from trees before they hatch in early spring. Egg masses are on the underside of leaves and are covered with hairs. Small webs can also be pruned from the tree when they begin to form in the spring. Larger webs can be knocked out of the tree or opened with a stick or jet of water which will allow predators inside the web to feed on caterpillars. Do NOT use fire to burn the web from trees! This causes more damage to the tree than if the caterpillars continued to feed.

Insecticides are also available for webworm management. Look for active ingredients such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* var. *kurstaki* (this product specifically targets caterpillars), spinosad, azadirachtin, or pyrethrins. Webs need to be opened before treatment with a pesticide so that pesticide gets inside the web where caterpillars are located.

Please note that webbing will remain in trees even after

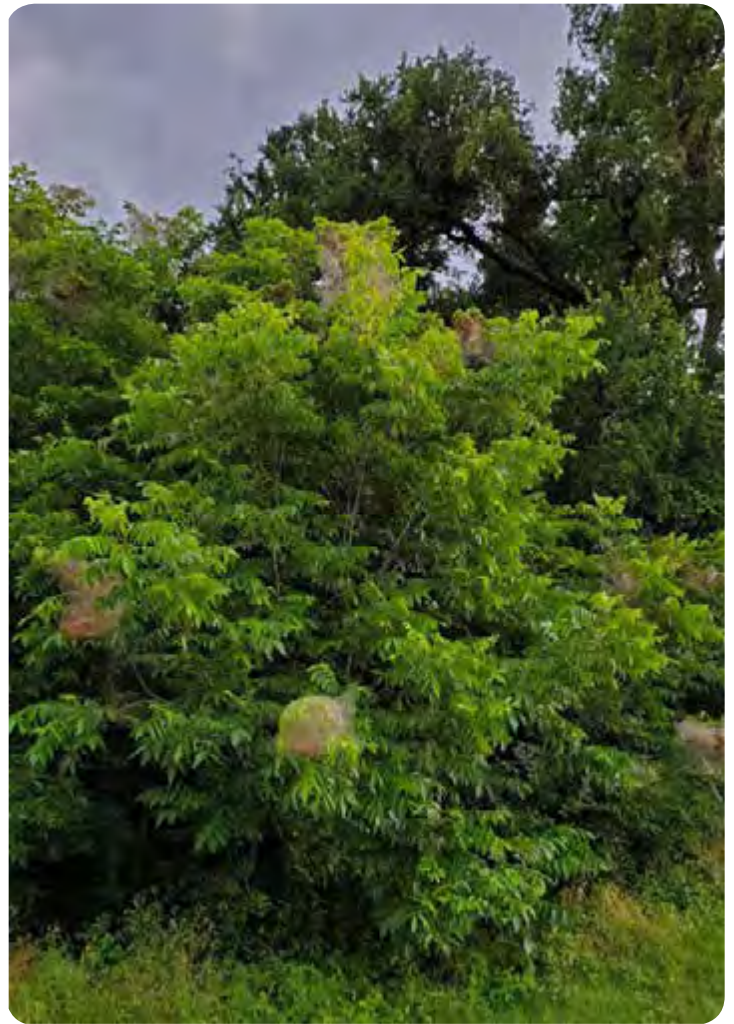
caterpillars are dead. Webbing needs to be removed by you or a strong weather event.

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

This work is supported by Crops Protection and Pest Management Competitive Grants Program [grant no. 2017-70006-27188 /project accession no. 1013905] from the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture.

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CARDIFF RANCH

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Tawny Crazy Ants

The tawny crazy ant, also known in Texas as the Raspberry crazy ant, was originally discovered by pest management professional Tom Rasberry (hence the name) in Harris County in 2002. Since then, the ants have been distributed to other parts of the state via people, plants, materials, and other things and are currently confirmed in 40 Texas counties.

Distribution map of Texas counties with confirmed presence of tawny crazy ants (in red).



Tawny crazy ants are about 1/8" and orangish-brown in color. With a good hand lens or microscope, you can see 12 segmented antennae, 1 node, and a circle of hairs at the tip of the abdomen. These ants can be confused with other ants, so if you are unsure of what you have check with your local Extension office.

Tawny crazy ants have a cyclical population level throughout the year with populations peaking in late summer, decreasing in the fall and then beginning to build again in the spring. Tawny crazy ants are capable of biting, but do NOT sting like fire ants. They are mostly nuisance pests, but can reach extraordinary population levels (in the millions) and can become a problem if they get into electrical equipment. Tawny crazy ants do not have nests or mounds like fire ants; they tend to nest under things- rocks, landscape timbers, flowerpots, etc.

For more information on this particular ant species go to <http://urbanentomology.tamu.edu/ants/rasberry.html>

Treatment Options

- Removing harborage areas- fallen limbs, rocks, leaf

litter, etc. These ants will nest under pretty much anything on the ground, so you may want to remove anything that is not necessary.

- Alter moisture conditions (crazy ants prefer moist, humid conditions)- reduce watering, repair any water leaks, and improve drainage
- Eliminate honeydew producers from area. Crazy ants tend honeydew producers such as aphids, whiteflies, hoppers, mealybugs and scale insects.
- Use pesticide sprays to treat infested areas- under rocks, along landscape edging, etc. Pesticide sprays can also be used to create a barrier around the outside of the home. Piles of dead ants may build up in treated areas. If this occurs, remove dead ants to keep the pesticide barrier maintained.
- Hire a pest management professional (PMP). PMPs have access to pesticides that are unavailable to homeowners for tawny crazy ant treatment and they also have experience dealing with pest problems regularly.

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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