



NOVEMBER 2019

Official Publication of the Cardiff Ranch HOA

VOL 4, ISSUE 11

Greetings Friends & Neighbors

As you read this, a new board has been installed and is running the neighborhood.

From the writers of this letter, thank you all, it was an honor to serve as a board member of our POA. Some of us may still be on your newly elected board, and for that we thank you, too.

As we transition into a neighborhood run exclusively by residents, we are moving toward a more proactive approach to our community's management and improvement.

We have added a new landscaper to our list of vendors, replacing Cannon Companies. You will see the landscaper out with trucks that have the name "Superior Lawncare". We hope our green area's soon have viewable improvements.

In addition to the change of landscaper, we are also working on the renewal of contracts for 2020. For that we are asking for your input. Please leave your comments

with procardi@ciramail.com so we can learn where our community would like to see our attentions focused. The subjects the board would like feedback on include:

- The pool schedule for this season. **Do you like the neighborhood pool staying open later in the season?** Please let us know what worked or not for you.
- **Do you like the coloring of the lake?**
- **The rearrangement of fitness gear in the gym?** If you were to propose the removal of a single piece of equipment in the gym, which would it be?
- **Are you happy with the finished product of the redesigned flag entry along 1463?**

As we improve our landscaping, we are looking forward to seeing neighbors improving their own front yards and lakeside backyards. If you are not sure what to do, simply ask your neighbors. The landscaping committee has drawn up a list of preferred trees and shrubs, which is available on the RealManage Resident Portal. These are mainly native to Texas so they require less maintenance and water. By having these plants recur in several yards, we can get some consistency in our green space and with that upgrade our home values.

As this magazine comes out, don't forget to pay attention to the events we have in our neighborhood. We just had the celebration of Halloween and will have Diwali happening on the 9th of November. Then there is a Kids Bazaar again in December as there is a charity event for Cardiff Ranch kids to help out with. Our events committee has been very active this year and we would like to thank them all for their enthusiasm.

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

CARDIFF RANCH

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RealManage Service Center 866-473-2573

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En-Touch (Customer Service) 281-225-1000
Fort Bend MUD # 58 (Water) 713-405-1750

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Tays Junior High 281-234-2400
Obra D. Tompkins High School 281-234-1000

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Kenny Welshons
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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@ciramail.com for more information.

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

Save the Date



**Bazar Kids
Crafts
December 12**

Christmas / T-PAK Party December 14



Round Tables

November 9, 9:30 a.m.

December 14, 9:30 a.m.

Board Meetings

November 21, 7:00 p.m.

Need YOUR Advice on Great Lawns!

Volunteer Yard Volunteers Needed - No Weeding Required!

We all want to work together to keep our yards beautiful, but if your yard skills are lacking, it can be tough to know what to do. Does everyone really know the rules, and even if they know them, do they have the green thumbs necessary to keep their yards up to par?

No one really wants to have a yard that doesn't meet HOA requirements. Getting a yard violation letter can be stressing, and frustrating, especially if you hail from a climate different from ours.

Let's not leave our neighbors feeling stranded. We can help!

We are looking for volunteers in Cardiff who consistently maintain their yards up to standards to help coach those who may be more intimidated by the removal of nut grass, how often to water, what to weed, and whether their bed edging is compliant. In other words, we need successful yard keepers to help those who want to be compliant, but don't know how or where to start.

Volunteering would involve going to the requesting residents' yards, scoping out the issues and recommending the fixes necessary to be compliant. So far, we have two volunteers, but quite a few more are needed.

Let's face it, it's easy to complain and point fingers. It's much harder, but far more rewarding, to find a solution. Please help us come together as a community in an attempt to help those in need of it. You can email tifflielytx@gmail.com for more information and to sign up.



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 cardiffranchnews@gmail.com.

Submit articles to: cardiffranchnews@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.)

CARDIFF RANCH

Pot Gardening

I bet that grabbed your attention! It's not that kind of pot gardening.

Rather, I'm talking about growing fruits and vegetables in pots, an effective and delicious means to provide fresh produce in limited land settings. If you have a pool or a backyard that precludes traditional in-ground beds, don't fear. Many, many types of food producing plants can be grown in pots, with the advantage of not wasting what you produce.

My stepmonster, chef extraordinaire, taught me this on her last visit to my house, after listening to my husband reminisce about his long lost arugula garden. "Grow it in pots," she said. "You have a million pots outside."

And I did and still do. I used them solely for flowers at that time. My pool was surrounded, achieving that New Orleans garden look I was after.

"You can do that?" I asked.

"Name something you want to grow, besides arugula."

"Lemons!" I exclaimed.

"Get a Meyer Lemon tree."

Two weeks later, it was in a pot in my back yard. The following year I had fat, juicy, dark yellow lemons. I then got a lime tree. After that, I was hooked. I grew tomatoes, strawberries, peppers, every herb imaginable, zucchini, onions, and radishes. And there are many more on the list that can be grown in pots. The vegetables and fruit blend in nicely with my potted flowers.

If you don't have a lot of pots and find them too expensive, you can use buckets. Drill holes in the bottom for drainage. They are not as attractive, but my daughter paints them for me (she's a brilliant artist), and they blend in perfectly with my fancy pots, becoming very attractive, lending an artsy quality to the landscape.

A great place to get pots on the cheap is garage sales. I've come home with \$20 worth of pots that would have been well over \$400 had I purchased them retail.

You can also find them deeply discounted at many retailers if they are damaged in any way. Nelson Water Gardens had a dent and ding area that I'm no longer allowed to venture in, if my husband has anything to do with it.

Gardening in pots does require daily maintenance, so you'll need to devote anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes a day watering. Pots dry out much quicker than traditional beds, and in the dregs of our Texas summer, watering twice a day may be necessary. The smaller the pot, the more watering it needs.

I love nothing better than telling my kids to run out and pull a lemon off the tree for lemon butter, or some arugula for a sandwich. It's labor that's always rewarded. It creates an oasis for a dinner party or backyard gathering, saves money on produce, and you know what's been sprayed on it.

The internet is full of ideas and articles for fruit and vegetable container gardens. Start your garden today. It is, after all, the time to plant arugula.

Squirrel Sense



I've lived in Cardiff since 2014. Until last week, I had seen not one squirrel in my neck of the neighborhood, to my relief. That all changed, however, when I spied one a street over. I'm now preparing myself for war, anticipating the onslaught of his squirrel friends and family.

I don't hate squirrels, but they hate me, and I know they'll find me

eventually, and then the terror will begin.

It all started in Terrell, Texas, a small town 30 miles east of Dallas. My husband and I bought a 1915 Arts and Crafts kit house. It was beautiful, full of built ins and charms. It was also one of the few houses in Terrell with a pool. Over my husband's concerns, we bought the gorgeous two story, a white picket fence in the front and multiple pecan trees soaring high in the back.

It was a disaster of a purchase.

A few days after we moved in, I decided to give the pool a try. I got on my float and pushed myself to the middle of the pool. As I was dosing off, I was hit with a pecan, dead center between my eyes. I roused and turned my head in time to see a single pecan, sinking down towards the bottom of the pool.

Oh, it just dropped off the tree and coincidentally hit me in the face, I thought.

I settled back on my float and once again shut my eyes. It was a mere 30 seconds later, and it happened again, same place, as if I had a bullseye on my forehead. I jumped off my float and looked up. There, above me, two squirrels started scolding me, chittering away in an aggressive and angry tone.

"This can't be happening," I thought, laughing rather nervously. "I'm being ridiculous, there's no way these squirrels are pelting me with purpose."

I got back on the raft. Thirty seconds later, after being bombed twice more with startling accuracy, I got out of the pool. My husband and his friend were playing video games inside. I walked through the living room to change, and my husband commented that I hadn't been very long in my new pool.

"That's because there are two mean stupid squirrels throwing nuts at my face and they keep hitting me!" They both rolled their eyes and told me to stop being dramatic, surely thinking that I got hit by a single pecan falling off the tree of its own accord.

"I'm not kidding! They hit me four times right between my eyes and started yelling at me! I've been in houses with squirrels around all my life and this hasn't ever happened! Have I ever complained about terroristic squirrels before today? This house has demented squirrels!"

They both looked at each other, dubious, as I complain about everything.

"Let us see," Fred said.

"No! My face hurts!"

"We're not going to believe you until we see it ourselves."

"Fine!" I screamed as I stomped off towards the pool, my husband and his idiot friend on my heels.

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CARDIFF RANCH

(Continued from Page 4)

I was barely on the raft before they pushed me out to the middle of the pool. As promised, it was seconds before a pecan was hurled from the treetops, smacking me slightly left of their usual target.

"Oh my God!" they squealed. "That's awesome! There are two of them!" Fred and my husband then resorted to hushed tones and as I was paddling back in, told me they had to run an errand and would be right back.

Thirty minutes later they were back with an arsenal of Airsoft rifles and pistols and ammunition. They must have spent well over two hundred dollars. I was horrified that they were going to shoot the pugnacious critters. I mean, they were awful squirrels, but their death was not my desire.

They were also smart squirrels.

Nothing more than bait at this point, I was forced back into that precarious position in the middle of the pool, my husband lay in wait on one end and Fred under the diving board on the other. Nothing.

Five more minutes, still nothing.

After ten minutes, I objected to being so callously used for their murderous intents and begged to be allowed off the raft.

They both grudgingly acquiesced, and I swam over to my husband. He was staring at Fred, a questioning look on his face.

"What are you staring at," I asked.

"Freddy," he said, "I think he shot himself." Turns out, Fred was the only soul to get shot that day, and that little plastic ball is still embedded in the meat of his palm under his thumb. He's also still an idiot, but I love him.

A few days later over a couple of glasses of wine, on a porch swing suspended from a Live Oak looking over Lone Star Lake and a good 80 miles away from my own house, I was telling my best friend the squirrel story. As she was laughing uproariously, I got hit in the head with a nut from the tree above us and we looked up to see a squirrel.

We broke the swing that day out of my frenzy of fear and her maniacal laughter.

That house in Terrell was haunted. We would hear footsteps from the creaky wooded floor above us, though no one was there. The dogs would stop mid trot and just stare. One August, we got an electric bill for \$1200. (It was not insulated.) The original windows always were drafty and rarely opened. The roof leaked during a particularly bad storm, and water poured through the top story and down through the living room ceiling, collapsing it. The pipes froze. My dogs always got loose and ran down the street. The kitchen had never been remodeled since it was built and was impossible to cook in. My neighbors liked to get drunk and roof at two in the morning while simultaneously playing bongos. Like I said, it was a disaster.

But it's the squirrels that come first to mind when I reflect on the house that almost broke my marriage. After the initial incident, it did not matter how many people were in the pool. They always took aim at me, unless my husband put an Airsoft pistol in view.

As I've stated before, I love wildlife, in almost any form. Squirrels and roaches are the exception. So if you see an Airsoft pistol hanging on my front door, you'll know why.



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CARDIFF RANCH

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Purple Martin Migration

By Cheryl Conley,
TWRC Wildlife Center



Everyone looks forward to the arrival of the Purple Martins each year. Most of us think their arrival means spring is just around the corner. But, at this time of the year, no one really thinks about them anymore. Most people don't know that they're very busy getting ready to migrate south.

Preparations for migration begin in July and August when the birds form large flocks and roost (a place where birds or bats regularly settle or congregate to rest at night). There can be thousands of birds in a roost. They call this gathering "staging." Some of the better-known roosts in the Houston area are Gordon Park in Stafford and around Willowbrook Mall. They spend their days eating flying insects to build up body fat for their long flight ahead.

So where do they go? In the spring of 2009, geolocators were attached to 20 birds from two Texas colonies. It was discovered that the birds wintered deep in the Amazon rainforest and traveled an amazing 250 to 300 miles per day! They can fly between 17 and 27 miles per hour unless a predator is chasing them when their speed can reach 40 miles per hour. They spend several months in South America in large roosts where they undergo their annual molt. Although their annual molt begins before migration, they don't molt their flight or tail feathers until they reach South America. Molting is very beneficial because it

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replaces damaged feathers and helps get rid of parasites.

Purple martins will spend several months in South America before heading back to North America. The scouts typically show up in our area in mid-January through early February. The term "scout" is used to describe the first martin(s) observed. They will go to the same nesting site from the previous year. The scouts can be either an older male or female but are usually males. Arrival of the remainder of the birds depends on their age and sex. Older male birds arrive after the scouts followed by the older females followed by the younger ones. The younger ones, or subadults, may not appear until 4 to 12 weeks after the first ones arrive. They fledged the previous year so their first priority is to find a nesting site.

According to the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas martins nest almost exclusively in bird housing provided by humans. Once they have occupied a martin house, they will continue to use it year after year as long as you clean it out in the fall and keep the starlings and sparrows from moving in.

TWRC Wildlife Center has been serving the Greater Houston for 40 years. We admit nearly 5,000 injured, orphaned or displaced animals every year. Learn more about us at www.twrcwildlifecenter.org.

Fall Baiting for Fire Ants

The month of September celebrated Fire Ant Awareness Week, so get involved! While you may not be seeing too many mounds yet, fall is a great time to bait for fire ants. Baiting in fall can help reduce the number of mounds appearing in spring. Baits take time for results to be seen, so be patient and schedule a regular baiting program for every spring and fall. If you need fire ants killed quickly, you may want to use an individual mound treatment.

Tips on using fire ant baits:

- Make sure you have a bait, not a granular
 - o Baits are either broadcasted over an entire property or sprinkled AROUND individual mounds for fire ants to pick up as food. Baits should NOT get wet.
 - o Granulars are sprinkled on TOP of a mound and watered in to carry the pesticide into the mound to come into contact with the ants.
 - o Read the product label BEFORE YOU BUY to figure out if it is a bait or granular.
- Broadcasting baits using a handheld spreader saves time and reduces the amount of chemical applied to the environment.
- Use the proper amount of bait and application equipment for your yard size
 - o Read the label; it will tell you the rate of application and equipment required for application.
 - o Many baits are placed at a rate of 1-1 ½ pounds per acre.
 - o Many people do not follow the label and put out more bait than is needed.

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- Check that fire ants are foraging before putting out bait.
 - o Place a hotdog slice or potato chip near a mound, leave for 10 minutes, then check for fire ant activity.
- Do not use stale or old bait.
 - o Smell bait to make sure it is not spoiled; spoiled bait smells rancid (if you are using spinosad fire ant bait, it smells somewhat funky normally so do not be alarmed).
 - o Store bait sealed in the original container out of reach of children and animals.
- Get your neighbors to bait the same time as you do; this will push reinvasion boundaries of fire ants further away from your property.
 - o Even better, organize a community-wide fire ant management program; they can help reduce the amount of fire ants within your community & save money on chemical costs for everyone in the neighborhood.

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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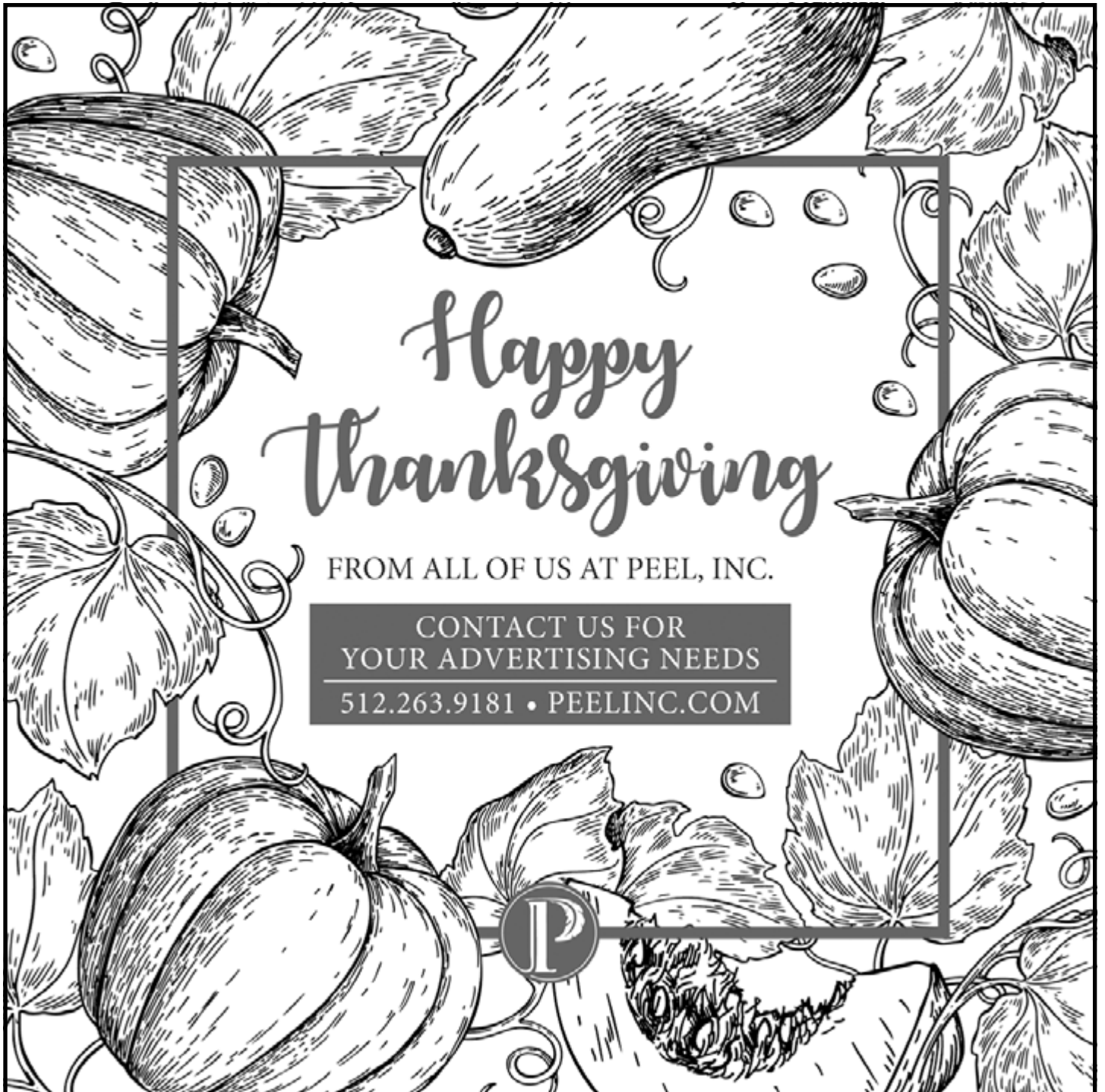


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