

BUTLER'S BRIDGE

WEST BEND COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 3

MARCH 2020

March 2020 COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Observed as:

- Women's History Month
- National Nutrition Month

Birthstone: Aquamarine, Bloodstone & Jade

Astrological Signs: Pisces (till 20th) & Aries (21st →)

Flower: Daffodil

Zero Discrimination Day	1
Read Across America Day	2
World Wildlife Day.....	3
Employee Appreciation Day	6
National Cereal Day.....	7
Daylight Saving Time Begins.....	8
International Women's Day.....	8
Purim Starts.....	9
Holi (Hindu Festival)	10
iHeartRadio Music Awards	10
Mario Day	10
World Kidney Day.....	12
World Sleep Day	13
Pi Day.....	14
World Consumer Rights Day.....	15
Saint Patrick's Day	17
Board Meeting	18
Start of Spring (Spring Equinox).....	19
St Joseph	19
International Day of Happiness	20
International Day of Nowruz	21
World Down Syndrome Day	21
World Poetry Day	21
World Water Day	22
National AG (Agriculture) Day	24
World Tuberculosis Day	24

***Meeting date is subject to change,
please check website for the latest updates.**

WHY I DON'T RECOMMEND DYED MULCHES

by Randy Lemmon

Ranking with my disdain for the “Annual Crape Myrtle Massacre” and killing trees with weed-and-feed fertilizers is my disgust for dyed mulches.

I especially loath the black variety.

Among the many reasons for my hatred is that the wood sources are very questionable trash wood. And I don't care what they dye it with, it's still a dye that leaches into the soil, causing negative side effects.

Let me take you back a few months to a debate I had with a landscaper at a party. I could tell right away he was one of those “I got a bone to pick with you” guys. He agreed with me on crapes, and stated that he didn't use weed-and-feeds. But then he argued that he just complies with customer requests when it comes to applying dyed mulch. I told him he was being “environmentally irresponsible”... and lazy, and he actually didn't argue either of those points.

I asked him to write down the following five reasons to employ in convincing clients not to use dyed mulch. After considering the list, a revealing look washed across his face. And at that point, I knew I had converted him to Texas-native and naturally shredded mulch.

If you are a landscaper or have a neighbor or friend using dyed mulches, please consider these five points. If your landscaper insists on using dyed mulch, get a new landscaper.

1. **It doesn't look natural:** It looks artificial, and to me, it's the equivalent of putting plastic or fake flowers in a landscape – an artificial look that people make fun of. Mulch for a landscape should be part of nature ... and it should reflect the area's natural aspects. Plus, when dyed mulch dries out or the leaching happens, it looks gray and ugly. Then, more dyed mulch gets lumped on top. Ugh!!!

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IMPORTANT NUMBERS

MANAGEMENT COMPANY

CIA Services, Inc.

3000 Wilcrest, Houston, TX

713 981-9000

EMERGENCY

Emergency Situation	911
Constable Precinct 5	281 463-6666
Sheriff Emergency & Non	713 221-6000
Harris County Sheriff (Store Front).....	281 564-5990
Harris County Sheriff (sub-station)	281 463-2648
Poison Control	800 764-7661
Crime Stoppers	713 222-TIPS

UTILITIES

AT&T (Repairs).....	800 246-8464
Center Point Energy (Electric).....	713-207-2222
Center Point Energy (Gas)	713 659-2111
Mud #120 (Water)	713 405-1750
Street Light Repairs -need Pole#	713 207-2222
Trash (Texas Pride Disposal)	281 342-8178

PUBLIC SERVICES

Local U.S. Post Office	281 920-9337
<i>12655 Whittington Dr, Houston, TX 77077</i>	
Toll Road EZ Tag	281-875-EASY (3279)
Volunteer Fire Dept.....	281 498-1310
Steve Radack (<i>County Commissioner</i>)	713 755-6306
Animal Control.....	281 999-3191
Dead Animal Pick-up (Precinct 5).....	713 439-6000
Dead Bird Report.....	713 440-3036
Graffiti Clean-up.....	281 463-6300
Mosquito Control (Health Dept.)	713 440-4800
Mow the Bayou.....	713 684-4000

SCHOOLS

Alief Independent School Dist.	281 498-8110
Alief Transportation (to report Bus).....	281 983-8400

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NEXTDOOR.COM

Nextdoor is the free and private social network just for **West Bend** neighbors. On Nextdoor, neighbors share crime and safety concerns, local events, recommendations, items for sale/free, ideas about how to make our neighborhood better, messages from the Harris County Sheriff's Dept., and the Houston Chronicle.

Our neighborhood is using a private online network called Nextdoor where you can access the West Bend Governing Documents, By Laws, Deed Restrictions, Important Contact Numbers, Maps and our Neighbor News and Events.

Please join us to build a better neighborhood!
www.nextdoor.com/join Code: MZXJX

ARCHITECTURAL CONTROL COMMITTEE

The (ACC) Architectural Control Committee must be informed if you are planning to change the exterior style, color, or have plans for additions or any removal to your property. A mandatory Architectural Review Form will need to be completed and signed. You may obtain this form on-line at www.ciaservices.com

(Continued from Cover)

2. Most dyed mulches are made of recycled waste wood: It's almost always composed of trashed pallets, old decking, demolished buildings, or - worse yet - treated "CCA lumber." CCA stands for chromium, copper and arsenic - chemicals used to preserve the wood. That ground-up trash wood is then sprayed with a dye or tint to cover up the inconsistencies in the wood and give it a uniform color. Most dyed-mulch manufacturers claim their dye is "organic," but they rarely reveal their wood sources. So, if it looks like chipped-up wood with no elements of compost or organically enriched soil, that's an indication of a questionable wood source.

3. There's a negative effect on the soil: Dyed mulch doesn't break down into the soil the way native and shredded mulches do. Instead, dyed mulches - especially the midnight-black variety - leach the dye and possible CCA contaminants into the soil, killing good bacteria, beneficial insects and earthworms.

4. Nitrogen fixation almost always follows: This is indicated by yellowing leaves on annuals and perennials. The soil's natural nitrogen, needed to help keep the plants green, starts working hard to break down the mulch wood instead.

5. Shredded native mulches with composted elements break down in the soil: The best mulches become part of the soil's organic content over time. That makes for more beneficial soil bacteria and enhances the environment for earthworm production. Composted mulches, or those naturally aged, actually release nitrogen into the soil, helping the plants rather than robbing from them.

Now, you may be wonder which mulches I do recommend. That list can be found with my ...

10 Commandments of Mulch.

While some mulch manufacturers dye shredded hardwood mulches and try to convince you that they're a "new innovation," it's still dyed. And the dye still leaches into the root system, but at an even faster pace! On the positive side, those suppliers are at least trying to make positive changes in colored mulches, and that gives me hope that one day they will be usable. But I still don't like the unnatural look, and until that changes, I'm nowhere close to recommending any dyed or colored mulches.

I've long asked landscapers to come forward with data showing that dyed mulch is good for a landscape.

Bring me the research. No one has ever been successful.

In fact, it seems that the only landscapers who want to argue with me on this issue are those who got fired or are about to be replaced because they don't do the environmentally responsible thing; or they're too lazy to explain the five points to their customers. The last time someone chewed me out because they were fired by a customer who wanted the change, I was told, "You don't know anything ... you don't know what the hell you're talking about." Really?!

QUARTERLY INSPECTION AREA OF FOCUS

West Bend Community Improvement Association

The following areas will receive a more comprehensive evaluation during the specified quarter. However, bi-weekly deed restriction inspections done by the auditor will continue to check the items below, in addition to all other areas throughout the year.

Homeowners are legally obligated to maintain their property in accordance with the West Bend Community Improvement Association governing documents.

December – February

- Sidewalk & Driveway repairs
- Power washing of sidewalk & driveway

March – May

- Gutter cleaning including house & street
- Removal of pine needles & leaves

June – August

- Mildew removal
- Power washing exterior home
- Painting

September – November

- Fence Repairs
- Tree Trimming

The Quarterly Inspection Area of focus is an attempt to decrease the number of first letter violation notices. It gives homeowners the opportunity to rectify any problems in a focus area before the quarter approaches.

Thank you for your continued cooperation.

REMINDERS...

- Assessments are Due Every Year on January 1st.
- Please drive safely, obey stop signs, and observe speed limits.
- Approval is required on any Exterior Modifications....www.ciaservices.com
- Remove trash cans from public view on non-trash days.
- Remove Holiday Decorations and Lights by January 20th.
- Please drive safely, obey stop signs, and observe speed limits.
- Architectural Review is required on all Exterior Modifications (www.ciaservices.com)
- Garage Doors are to be the same color as the body of the house and not the trim
- Remove trash cans from public view on non-trash days.
- Yard of the Month begins in April.

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YARD OF THE MONTH GUIDELINES

West Bend Community Improvement Association

Homeowners of West Bend C.I.A. will be sponsoring a self-governed "Yard of the Month" program. The purpose of the program is to recognize West Bend C.I.A. neighbors who demonstrate above-average efforts in maintaining their property, thereby contributing to the overall appearance of the community at large. There is a great award and the program is administered entirely by volunteers. All award winners receive an official "Yard of the Month" lawn-sign, to be placed on their property for the duration of their award month. If your sign becomes lost or damaged, please request a replacement by sending an e-mail to www.ciaservices.com. Position of the sign should be prominent in the yard located midway between the street and the front of the house. West Bend C.I.A. Yard of the Month group congratulates all "Yard of the Month" award selections and encourages all neighbors to join the efforts of these homeowner's in keeping their yards and homes beautiful.

CONTEST GUIDELINES:

All current West Bend C.I.A. properties are automatically eligible by default.

- Award winners are selected based on the recommended judging criteria listed below.
- Recipients must reside in West Bend C.I.A.
- Key criteria include manicured yard, beautification, originality and creativity.
- The upkeep of the yard can reflect the efforts of the residents themselves or that of a professional landscaper or groundskeeper.
- An award duration term lasts a single calendar month and runs from the first day of the month to the last day of that same month.
- The same property cannot receive more than one award in the same rolling 12 month calendar period. At least 12 months must elapse between awards for the same yard.
- Recipients receiving awards in the middle of the month shall surrender their award at the end of that same month.
- More than one Yard of the Month recipient may be selected in a single month. In other words, multiple yards may be concurrently recognized.
- While an individual's home is being recognized as a West Bend C.I.A. "Yard of the Month" they are expected to maintain their yard in the same manner that allowed them to win the title.

RECOMMENDED JUDGING CRITERIA

West Bend C. I. A. Yard of the Month candidates are judged solely on the **total exterior appearance of their property and front yard as viewed from the street.** General upkeep of the

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yard and property is paramount. Factors include the overall appearance, tidiness and neatness of the front of the property as evidenced by pruned, trimmed and shaped foliage, edged and defined lawns, borders & flower beds, and a visually appealing facade.

LAWN: Healthy grass with no bare spots or excessive weeds. Grass shall be mowed and edged, and grass around foundations and fences shall be trimmed. Debris (garbage, pet feces, etc.) shall be picked up and removed. A unified, simple, and balanced landscape design. Neat and natural.

LANDSCAPE & FLOWER BEDS: Beds weeded and edged. Flowers deadheaded and dead plants removed. Trees and shrubs pruned. Natural areas cleaned. Beautification efforts including new flowers, new trees, new shrubs, etc. Plantings in scale with the surroundings and limited to a few different types of plants rather than too many which may confuse the eye.

WALKWAYS & DRIVEWAYS: Walkways and driveways shall be clean (including trash containers or yard products removed from view). Area in front of curb free from debris and dirt. Evening appearance after dusk including accent lighting, safety lighting, visible interior lighting, etc.

AESTHETICS: Overall look of landscaping (formal versus

informal, use of color and textures, garden art). Inviting look of front entryway (hanging baskets, pots, cleanliness etc.) Originality/creativity (any special touches of the owner i.e., yard art, bird feeders, etc.)

Summary note: *While lack of strict adherence to the criteria above does not necessarily result in a disqualification, these principles offer general guidelines that should be recognized by the West Bend C.I.A. Yard of the Month program. WBCIA Yard of the Month is dedicated to improving the quality of living and appearance of our community. We encourage residents to take pride in their homes and neighborhood. In turn, we look to celebrate those who do a superior job in maintaining their yards in such a way that they enhance the overall curb appeal of the entire community. Yards of the Month are awarded at the beginning of each calendar month. Yards are judged on neatness, landscaping and color. All yards are eligible. If you feel your yard is being overlooked, please send a voting e-mail with your name, address & phone number to www.ciaservices.com.*

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Trim Your Trees Please ...

Trees are a valuable asset to properties and the environment. In West Bend, tree canopy provides shade and significantly reduces utility bills. Mature healthy trees can increase a property's value by as much as 25 percent.

Trees must be properly maintained and pruned for the health of the tree as well as for public safety. ***Please raise your tree canopy to 14 feet over the street, and 8 feet over the sidewalks.*** It is important to ensure that large vehicles such as fire trucks, school buses, ambulances and garbage trucks are able to navigate and operate safely.

Overhanging tree limbs can delay emergency vehicles when seconds make the difference between life and death. ***Clearance is also essential for the visibility of traffic signs and street lights.*** Untrimmed trees can cause irreversible damage to trucks.

STREETLIGHT OUTAGE



CenterPoint Energy maintains streetlights throughout West Bend.

If a light is out or blinking, please call CenterPoint at 713-207-2222 or report it online <https://slo.centerpointenergy.com/>. You will be asked to provide:

- a pole number for the non-functioning lights you want to report
- contact information (in case more information is needed to locate a streetlight)
- an e-mail address (if you want feedback regarding your repair request)
- the number of streetlights you would like to report

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TIPS FOR SAFE NIGHTTIME DRIVING

Driving at night can be tricky—especially through neighborhoods or dimly lit landscapes—so it's important to keep in mind a few basic guidelines to make sure you and your vehicle both are well-prepared for the trip. Consider the following suggestions to help get you to your destination safely.

Ensure headlights are aimed properly. If you think your headlights are casting light too far above or below your line of vision on the road, you may need to adjust their aim. You can do this either by following instructions in your vehicle owner's manual or seeking help from a vehicle maintenance professional.

Dim dashboard lights. Most vehicle makes and models come with a dimmer for the instrument panel. Make sure it's set to the lowest brightness to limit distraction. Also remember to turn off overhead or visor lights while driving, which also can limit visibility at night.

Don't wear tinted glasses. Yellow lenses sold to enhance nighttime driving could actually decrease visibility instead of amplify colors and objects. If you wear prescription lenses, opt for an anti-reflective coating, and clean them thoroughly and frequently to optimize effectiveness at night.

Learn how to spot animals and objects. While driving at night, be on the lookout for wildlife creatures' eyes, which can easily be spotted as pairs of glowing retinas. Any animals' eyes—like raccoons or deer—typically will reflect the light from your headlights long before their true shapes come into view.

Don't focus on headlights in oncoming traffic. Keep your eyes

on the road in front of you and avoid looking into the headlights of oncoming traffic—especially if you notice a car using the high-beam headlight setting. If the headlights on the car behind you cause a glare in your rearview mirror, adjust the mirror.

Clean your windshield. Use a clean microfiber cloth or newspaper to clean the windshield—inside and out. Make sure the windshield is streak- and smudge-free before driving at night, and try to avoid wiping window condensation with your hands. Fingerprints and oils from your skin can cause streaks that limit visibility in the dark.

Know when to use your fog lights. Many vehicles come equipped with fog lights, which typically are located underneath the front headlights and are aimed low, where fog usually appears on the road. Fog lights also can be useful on a particularly dark road to further illuminate your path.

Adjust your exterior mirrors. Pointing your side-view mirrors down slightly can help reduce glare from other drivers' headlights and still allow you to see by tipping your head forward a few inches.

Have your eyes checked. Your eyes' ability to keep moving and scan the landscape rather than solely focus on one spot is imperative for successful nighttime driving. Visit your eye doctor for regular checkups to determine whether prescription lenses could help you see better at night.



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