

VOLUME 9, NUMBER 7
JULY 2020

MERIDIAN *Community Monitor*

NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF MERIDIAN



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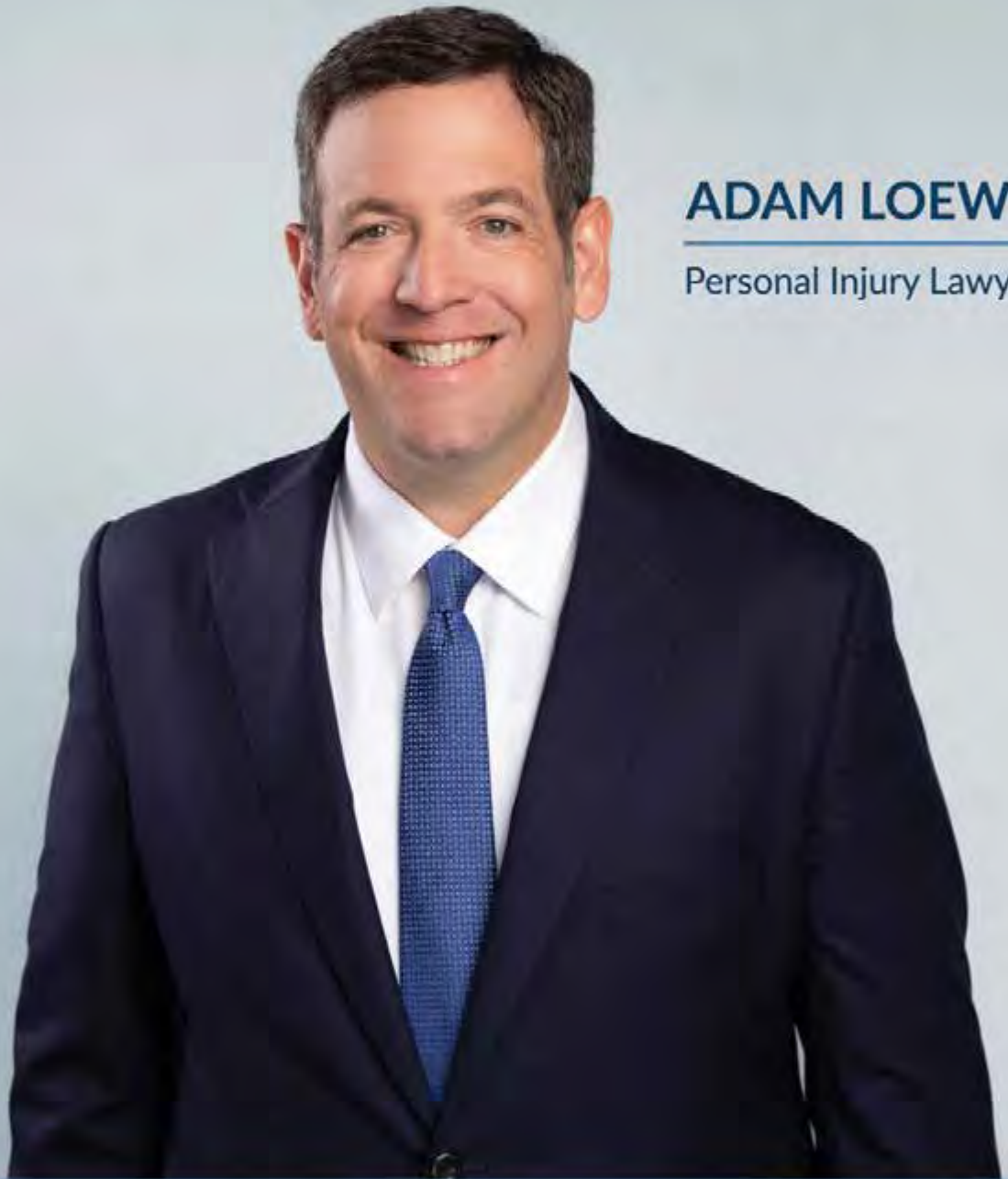
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A Newsletter for Meridian residents

The Monitor is a monthly newsletter mailed to all Meridian residents. Each newsletter is filled with valuable information about the community, local area activities, school information and more. If you are involved with a school group, play group, scouts, sports activity, social group, etc. and would like to submit an article for the newsletter you can do so online at www.PEELinc.com or you can email it meridian@peelinc.com. Personal news for the Stork Report, Teenage Job Seekers, special celebrations, birthday announcements and military service are also welcome. Our goal is to keep you informed!

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NEWSLETTER INFO

PUBLISHER

Peel, Inc. www.PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181
Advertising advertising@PEELinc.com, 512-263-9181



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LETTUCE RECYCLE!

by Dena Houston

QUESTIONS FROM OUR READERS – PART 2

Here is part 2 of the fabulous recycling questions I have received from the readers of "Lettuce Recycle."

I STILL DON'T HAVE CURBSIDE COMPOST COLLECTION. WHEN WILL IT START IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD? The last rollout for curbside compost collection was originally scheduled for September 2020. Here is an update from Austin Resource Recovery: *Due to the impact of COVID-19 and a delay in the delivery of essential equipment, the final phase of the Curbside Composting expansion is tentatively scheduled for late 2020. All customers will be notified of their first service date via mailed postcard as soon as the date is confirmed.*

WHAT DO I DO WITH AN OLD BARBEQUE GRILL? CAN I PLACE PARTS OF IT INTO MY CURBSIDE RECYCLING BIN?

Metal grill parts cannot go into the blue curbside bin. You can take the grill to the Recycle & Reuse Drop Off Center where the steel components will be recycled OR wait till the next bulk item collection date when the entrepreneurs will pick it up.

ARE TETRA PAKS RECYCLABLE? No, they are not recyclable in Austin. Tetra paks, as well as cardboard milk and juice containers, must be placed in the trash carts. They are made of multiple layers of materials that cannot be separated for recycling.

IS ALL ALUMINUM FOIL RECYCLABLE? No, aluminum foil must be totally clean and dry (no paint or food product) in order to be recyclable. It needs to be wadded up into at least a two-inch ball. Foil tops on cream cheese, sour cream, and yogurt can be recycled if clean and dry. Some wrappers and toppers look like foil but are not. If you wad it up and it stays wadded up, it is foil. If it does not stay wadded up, it has a plastic coating on it and is not recyclable.

IS THERE ANY ADVANTAGE TO PUTTING FOOD INTO CURBSIDE COMPOSTING INSTEAD OF INTO THE GARBAGE DISPOSAL? Not really. Everything that goes into your curbside compost becomes soil. Everything that goes into your garbage disposal goes into the wastewater stream. In Austin, the sludge from the wastewater treatment plant is processed into Dillo Dirt (a type of fertilizer unique to Austin).

ARE DISPOSABLE PAPER VACUUM CLEANER BAGS ALLOWED IN THE GREEN CURBSIDE COMPOST BIN? No, they are not. A vacuum cleaner bag could contain contaminated materials such as glass and cat litter. There is no way to open each bag to check the contents at the compost facility. Also, some bags have metal or plastic parts that make them non-compostable.

Here is a very informative City of Austin recycling website:

<http://www.austintexas.gov/what-do-i-do>

Stay tuned for future tips that will include creative ways to recycle or reuse. If you have any questions or recycling ideas, please send them to: recycling@hpwbana.org.

GRACKLES *They'll eat anything*

By Cheryl Conley, TWRC Wildlife Center

We've all been in parking lots where we feel we're being stalked by big black birds just waiting for us to drop a morsel of food. What are they? Ravens, Crows, Grackles? If you said Grackles, you'd be correct.

So how do you tell the difference? Ravens are very large and have a long wedge-shaped tail. They have a thick bill. Their throat looks a little shaggy if you're ever able to get close to one. Their call is deep. Crows are about the size of a chicken. They have smaller beaks and shorter tails that are squared off at the ends. They have a higher-pitched call than Ravens. Grackles are about the size of Robins. They are easily identifiable by their iridescent feathers mostly seen on their heads. They have golden eyes and their call has been compared to the sound of a rusty gate.

There are actually three types of Grackles—Great-tailed Grackle, Common Grackle and the Boat-tailed Grackle. The Common Grackle is found throughout North America, the Boat-tailed Grackle can be found in the southeastern states and the Great-tailed bird is found along the Texas border and into Mexico. What you are seeing in parking lots are mainly Common Grackles.

Grackles are not picky eaters. They'll eat bugs, berries, seeds and just

about anything else they can find. They'll wade in water in search of small fish and will even eat leeches off of the legs of turtles. They steal worms from robins, raid the nests of other birds and will even kill and eat other birds. Of course, we all know that they love French fries, cookies and anything else that is dropped in a parking lot or in a trash bin.

Grackles practice a strange behavior known as anting. This involves rubbing ants on their bodies. No one knows exactly why they do this but some scientists believe the ants secrete an acid that kills feather mites. Others believe it has something to do with shedding feathers or molting.

Just like their eating habits, grackles are not very particular when it comes to where they build their nests. Some live and nest in colonies as large as 200 breeding pairs. A female can lay from 4 to 7 eggs in a single season.

Right now, we're in baby bird season. Some birds that are brought to us for care should have been left where they were. If you find a baby bird, please give us a call and let us help you determine if the bird needs help or not. Our website also has some great information on a number of topics. www.twrcwildlifecenter.org 713.468.8972

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Mealybugs

Mealybugs are pests of landscape plants and houseplants. Outdoors, they are often active during times of warm, dry weather, but can be a problem indoors at any time of year. Infestations usually start at the base of stems and then spread from there as populations increase.

Mealybugs are a type of unarmored scale insect. They are sexually dimorphic, with males and females looking different. Males have wings and can fly while females remain wingless throughout their life. Immature (nymphs) and female mealybugs are oval, soft-bodied and covered with a white waxy powder.

These insects have piercing-sucking mouthparts which is used to penetrate plant tissue to suck out juices. Feeding by mealybugs can lead to yellowing or wilting of the plant and distortion of the leaves. With larger infestations, the insects may cause stunted growth, premature leaf drop or plant death. Mealybugs excrete honeydew, which is a sweet, sticky substance on which a fungus called sooty mold can grow. Sooty mold can indirectly harm plants by blocking sunlight from reaching plant surfaces and reducing photosynthesis.

Tips for mealybug management:

- Conserve beneficial insects; there are many insects that feed on or parasitize mealybugs
 - o To help conserve beneficial insects, use other methods to manage pests before choosing a pesticide.
- **Use high pressure water sprays to dislodge the insects from the plant
- **Insecticidal soap
- **Horticultural oils
- **Other insecticides labeled for mealybug control (look for active ingredients such as azadirachtin, pyrethrum, pyrethrins). Read and follow all label instructions.
- For severely infested plants, it may be best to throw the plant away and buy a new one
- **If treating houseplants, move plants outside during treatment then move back inside once treatment has dried.

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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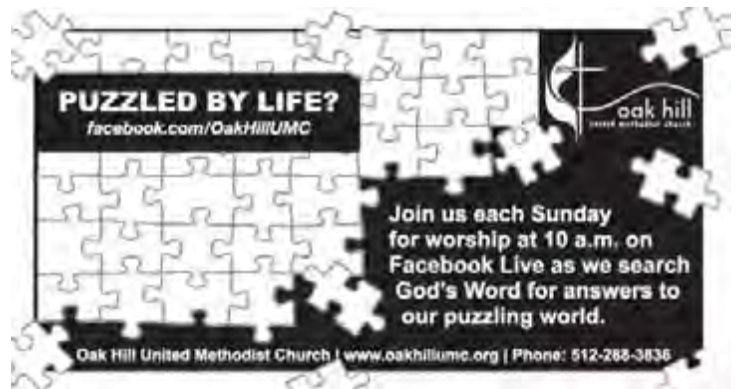


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Fire Up the Grill with Smoked Fruit



(Family Features) As summer grilling season sets in, Americans grab their tongs to take advantage of backyard barbecue opportunities.

In addition to classic cookout fare like ribs, steak, chicken, burgers and hot dogs, the experts at Dole recommend giving fruits and vegetables a shot on the grill to bring out new tastes and ways to enjoy everyday favorites. For example, many barbecue enthusiasts know about grilling corn, asparagus, Brussels sprouts, onions, zucchini and artichokes, but consider trying cauliflower, portobello mushrooms, yellow-black plantains and even pineapple on the grill this summer.

In fact, this recipe for Smoked Hasselback Pineapple with Spiced Turkey Chorizo and Onion provides an easy way to make grilled fruit a fun addition to your backyard barbecue.

For other flavorful ideas, try grilled Romaine lettuce for a delightfully smoky salad or side dish, or skewer peeled and sliced bananas, chicken, shrimp and veggies for a tropical kebab. You can even throw an unpeeled banana on the grill for a uniquely caramelized dessert.

Visit dole.com for more summer grilling recipes featuring fresh fruits and vegetables.

Smoked Hasselback Pineapple with Spiced Turkey Chorizo and Onion

Total time: 2 hours

Servings: 4

4 cups favorite wood chips
water

1 pound 93% lean ground turkey breast

1 small DOLE® Red Onion, diced

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

1 teaspoon ancho chile powder

1 teaspoon ground cumin

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1 large Dole Pineapple, top on, peeled and halved lengthwise
chopped fresh cilantro, for garnish (optional)

In large bowl, cover wood chips with water; soak as label directs. Prepare outdoor grill for indirect grilling over medium heat.

In medium bowl, stir turkey, onion, oil, thyme, paprika, chile powder, cumin and salt.

Drain wood chips; place 2 cups in foil boat or pie tin and place on hot grill rack over lit side of grill (place chips directly on coals for charcoal grill). Place pineapple halves, flat side down, on cutting board; cut crosswise slices into pineapple halves, about 1/2 inch apart, cutting only 3/4 of the way through. Place medium bowl upside down; one at a time, place pineapple halves, flat side down, over bowl to separate slits. Fill slits with turkey mixture.

Place pineapple halves, flat side down, on hot grill rack over unlit side of grill; cover and cook 1 hour, 45 minutes, or until turkey mixture is golden brown and internal temperature reaches 170 F, rotating once and adding remaining chips halfway through cooking.

Transfer pineapple halves to cutting board; cut crosswise in half. Serve pineapple garnished with cilantro, if desired.



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