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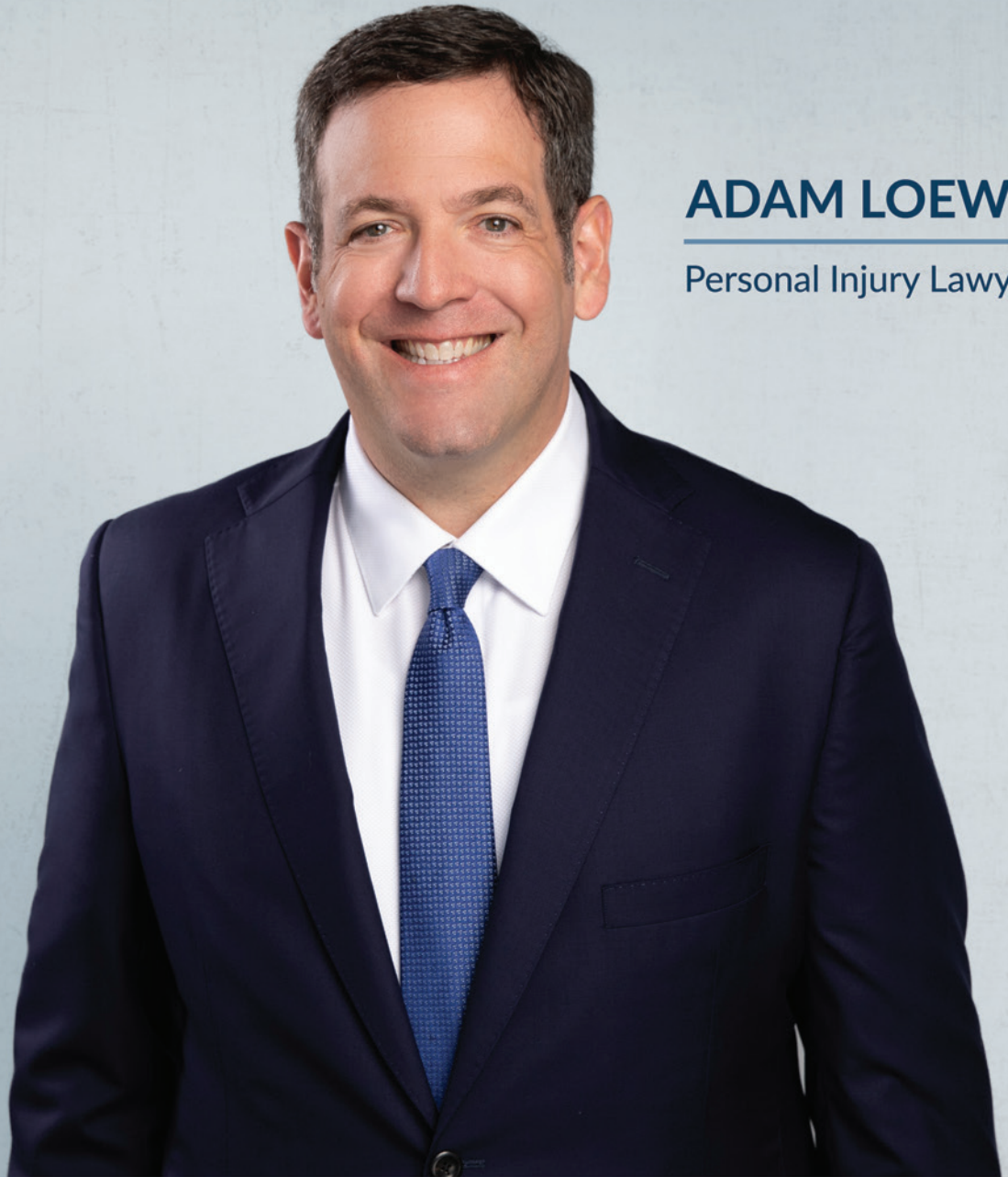
MERIDIAN *Community Monitor*

NEWS FOR THE RESIDENTS OF MERIDIAN



*Happy
Thanksgiving*

Bicycle Accidents | Boating Accidents | Car Accidents | Dog Bites | Drunk Driving Accidents
Injuries to Children | Motorcycle Accidents | Slip and Falls | Truck Accidents | Wrongful Death



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WELCOME

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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MEXICAN HONEY WASPS



The Mexican honey wasp, *Brachygastra mellifica*, is a neotropical wasp that can be found in North and South America. Within North America, it can be found in Arizona and Texas.

Honey wasps are small, about 1/4 – 1/3 of an inch. These social wasps have teardrop-shaped abdomens striped in yellow and black, rusty wings, and a dark head and thorax. Like other wasps, female honey wasps are capable of stinging and will do so to protect the colony or if they are provoked.

Mexican honey wasps create a small, about 18 inches in size, basketball to football shaped nest out of a paper-like material. These nests are typically located in trees or shrubs, often higher up where they won't be disturbed. Nests can be home to 3,000-18,000 wasps. Unlike honey bees, Mexican honey wasps can have multiple queens in each colony. Clusters of colonies can be common in some areas and nests last about 3 years before they are abandoned.

These wasps are pollinators and collect nectar and pollen to feed larvae in the colony. Adult wasps feed on fluids and, sometimes, exoskeletons of other insects, especially Asian citrus psyllids when they are available.

If you need to manage these wasps, then you should contact a professional that has proper protective equipment, such as a bee suit.

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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NATURE WATCH

GONE TO SEED

by Jim and Lynne Weber



Flame acanthus seed

Often used as an informal figure of speech meaning to deteriorate or go downhill, 'gone to seed' can have a negative connotation. But each seed contains a new beginning: a tiny plant just waiting for the right conditions such as water, warmth, and a good location, to germinate and grow. Seeds and seed heads form fascinating shapes, varying sizes, and intricate patterns, often adorning the fall and winter landscape.

Plants have many ways of dispersing their seeds, and most have evolved over millions of years. While many of the methods are tried and true, certain seeds have developed in very particular ways to take advantage of such methods, and some plants only release their seeds in response to specific triggers.

Wind helps seeds float or flutter away, often aided by seed structures such as thin wing extensions or long, feathery tails like those on the endemic Scarlet Clematis (*Clematis texensis*). Texas Bluebonnets (*Lupinus* sp.) employ the expulsion or explosion method, where the small, pebble-like seeds are forcibly expelled when the dried pods twist open in the warm sun. Similarly, Flame Acanthus (*Anisacanthus quadrifidus* var. *wrightii*) has hood-shaped capsules enclosing seeds attached to a hooked stalk, and ejects the seed from the capsule when it dries and breaks open.

Gravity plays a part in many plants seed dispersals, where weighty seeds fall off the plant and roll to a new location. The best example of this are the round, heavy fruits that simply fall off a plant when ripe, such as those on Mexican Plum (*Prunus*

mexicana) or Texas Persimmon (*Diospyros texana*). If the fruits have a tough outer shell, they may travel some distance from the parent plant, and if they have a soft skin, they may break open where they fall and scatter the seed or seeds within.

Some plants produce very light seeds, seeds with buoyant fluff, or seeds with air trapped in them, so they can float away from the parent plant that grows in or around water, like Common Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) or Black Willow (*Salix nigra*) or Eastern Cottonwood (*Populus deltoides*). Others employ the assistance of animals, which can come in the form of seed or fruit eating (where the seed can pass undigested through the animal), seed caching or burying, or seed transportation. Common examples of seed and fruit eating include Cedar Waxwings and American Robins consuming juniper and yaupon berries, and seed burying is a common practice of both ground and tree squirrels, who eat and cache acorns. Often unbeknownst to the animal, some seeds can be covered with tiny hooks or spines that catch on a passing animal's fur, eventually transported to and rubbed off in another location.

This fall and winter, let the seeds linger, at least until early spring. Not only do they provide much needed food for wildlife, but leaving them allows for some beautiful and mysterious patterns in your winter landscape, and the promise of renewing the cycle of life that begins again each spring!

Send your nature-related questions to naturewatch@austin.rr.com and we'll do our best to answer them. If you enjoy reading these articles, check out our books, Nature Watch Austin, Nature Watch Big Bend, and Native Host Plants for Texas Butterflies (all published by Texas A&M University Press), and our blog at naturewatchaustin.blogspot.com.



Scarlet clematis seed

THE MONITOR

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(Culinary.net) While apple pie is a traditional seasonal dish, you can add unique flavor with this skillet version. Simply toss Honeycrisp apples with brown sugar, cinnamon and lemon juice then spoon between two pie crusts simmering in a thin layer of brown sugar and cinnamon then drizzle with caramel sauce for a deliciously gooey evening treat.

Find more dessert recipes at Culinary.net.

Skillet Apple Pie with Caramel Sauce

4 large Honeycrisp apples, peeled, cored and sliced
1/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons cinnamon, divided
1 tablespoon lemon juice
6 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup, plus 2 teaspoons, brown sugar
2 refrigerated pie crusts
2 teaspoons whipping cream caramel sauce

Heat oven to 350 F.

In large bowl, combine apples, sugar, 1 tablespoon cinnamon and lemon juice until apples are covered. Set aside.

In oven-safe, 10-inch nonstick skillet, melt butter. Add 1/4 cup brown sugar and remaining cinnamon; mix until combined. Boil 5–8 minutes.

In same skillet, place one pie crust over brown sugar mixture. Pour apples over pie crust. Cover apples with second pie crust. Cut slits in top to release steam.

Brush whipping cream over crust. Sprinkle with remaining brown sugar.

Bake 35–45 minutes until crust is golden brown.

Drizzle with caramel sauce.



Nicholas Madsen

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LETTUCE RECYCLE!

by Dena Houston

IS THIS MY RECYCLING WEEK???



In these crazy times of “working at home” and “interesting school schedules”, it is often challenging to remember if a particular week is your **RECYCLING WEEK**, let alone what day it is. Because I am a recycling block leader, my neighbors often look at the cans at my curb to see if it is a recycling week. Therefore, there is a great deal of pressure on me to “get it right”. My secret is that every week at 11 AM, the day

before trash pick-up day, I get a friendly reminder from the City notifying me of what will be picked up the next day. Here is the website to use so you too can get this helpful reminder: <https://www.austintexas.gov/page/my-collection-schedule>. Just enter your address, click “Search”, and then click “Get a reminder!”. The website will then prompt you what to do.

HARD PLASTICS

Austin Resource Recovery recycles hard plastics. Some hard plastics do not have a recycling symbol but are recyclable. All metal must be removed from any hard plastic. Hard plastics can go into the blue recycling bin provided the lid can close. Below are examples of hard plastics that can be recycled:

- Cat carriers – all metal removed
- Laundry baskets
- Dish pans
- Buckets (including cat litter buckets) – metal handle removed

Hard plastic items that cannot fit into the blue bin can go to the Recycle & Reuse Drop-Off Center. These items include the following:

- Plastic lawn chairs
- Plastic kiddie swimming pools
- Large toys like plastic playground equipment

Special note: PVC pipe cannot be placed in the blue recycling bin. It is however, accepted at the Habitat for Humanity Restore.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

HOW DO I RECYCLE POST-IT NOTES?

These can go into your blue curbside recycling bin (as long as they are at least the size of a credit card).

I HAVE A BUNCH OF 3-RING BINDERS. WHAT DO I DO WITH THEM?

The Austin Creative Reuse Center will usually take them. Please call ahead to make sure they have room for them. Here is their website: <https://www.austincreativereuse.org/>. These would also be great to donate to a local charity.

WHAT DO I DO WITH MY SHREDDED PAPER?

Shredded paper cannot go into your blue recycling bin, even if it is in a paper bag. These bags tend to come apart and leave a mess of shredded paper in their wake. Please put shredded paper into your green compost cart. Be sure it is in a paper bag or compostable bag. Please do not include shredded plastic credit cards in your compost.

Here is a very informative City of Austin recycling website that offers help in finding out how to recycle specific items: <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 me at this address: recycling@hpwbana.org.



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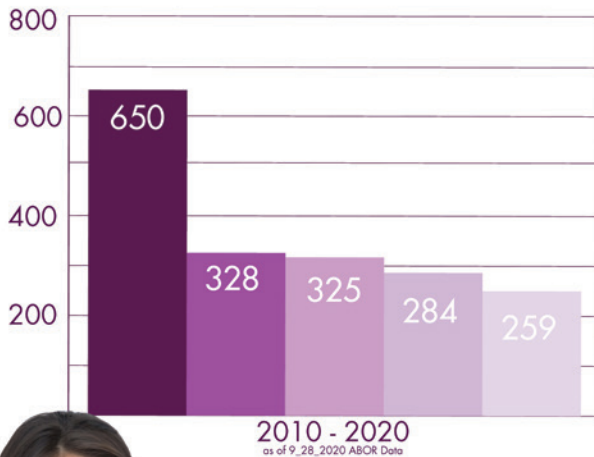
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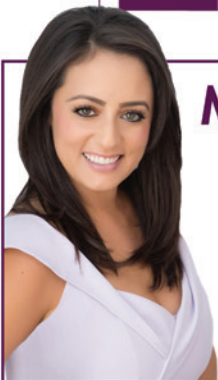
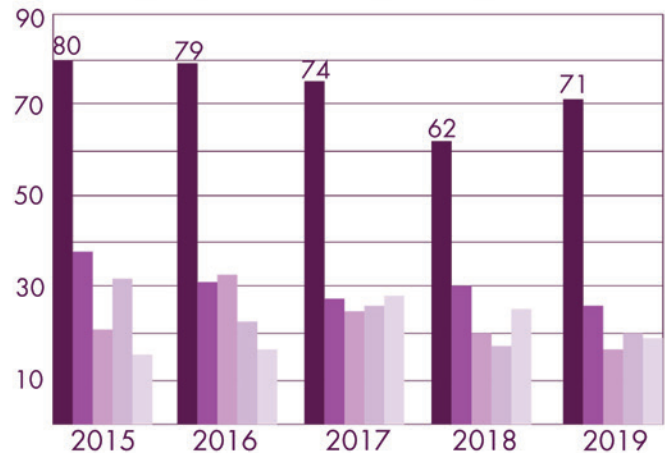
MER



The number of homes I've personally represented for my neighbors in Southwest Austin compared to the next closest agents, results. Notice the AAH difference?



Listed below is the number of homes I've represented for my sellers & buyers in Southwest Austin since 2015, compared to the other known agents you'll see advertising in our neighborhood.



MY NEIGHBORS

deserve the best. No other agent comes close to buying & selling as many homes in Southwest Austin, year after year, than me. Backed by years of proven experience in this market, I continue to buy & sell more homes for my neighbors & friends than any other agent in the area, including agents in some of the largest national brokerages fighting to be the best. 2020 is on pace to be no different, even with anticipated shifts in the Austin market.