

Saxony

Official Newsletter of the Saxony Homeowners Association

November 2007

Important Information

Saxony Pool Is Officially Closed For The Winter !

As of the last SHOA quarterly meeting, the officers, at the suggestion of the pool chair (Mary Nyland), agreed to close the pool for the winter. The purpose for this is to conserve SHOA's financial resources [since no one uses the pool during this time]. The pool gate will not be chained or otherwise locked however minimal chemicals will be used posing a health risk to potential swimmers. Please do not use the pool until it is reopened in March '08. Please contact Mary Nyland (pool chair) at 251-1245 for more information.

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Saxony Officers, etc.

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SHOA Mail: 100 Elm Drive, Pflugerville, TX 78660
SHOA Voicemail/Comment Line: 436-0362

Saxony Yard Of The Month

The Saxony Yards of the month for the last four months are:

Aug Ron and Paula Mayfield, 1006 Maplewood
Sep David Garza 502 Split Oak
Oct Rene and Eva Maldonado 702 Sage Court
Nov Windell and Marlene Culp, 1013 Pecan Creek

Congratulations!

Advertisers Welcome

Advertisers: SHOA welcomes and supports you. Please consider placing your ad with us.

Article Submissions

If you would like to submit an article or any information for the Saxony Newsletter, you may do so by sending the information to cruiz@texas-ec.org. This information should include your name. All information should be received **no later than the 10th of the month** and is subject to editorial approval as well as space limitations.

Around Saxony

SHOA Meetings

Meetings are held quarterly (Feb, May, Aug, Nov), the first Sunday of the month, from 7-8:30PM at the Justice Center. Normally meeting notices are posted around Saxony at least 1 week before the meeting.

Minutes from the last meeting, held Nov 4th:

1. Reviewed financials
2. Mentioned new 4-way stop at Applewood and Split Oak Dr.
3. Voted to close pool for this season.
4. Discussed status of news letter

SHOA Financials

As of 11/4 the pool fund contained a surplus of \$4607.03, the non-pool fund contained a deficit of \$793.52 for a total of \$3813.51. (Note: the non-pool fund deficit is the result of insurance costs that are spread over both pool and non-pool funds). Currently there are 50 pool members and 37 non-pool members.

Members Needed !!!!!

SHOA needs your membership. Non-pool membership is only \$30. Pool membership (which includes non-pool membership) ranges from \$175-\$230 depending on when you join.

Around Saxony (cont.)

Local Developments

City Forester, April Rose, has filed for a Communitrees Grant Application. She feels that the existing trees along Hickory Ridge Trail have a limited lifespan and that we need to begin planting new trees to take their place which will allow for a canopy-type trail like other trails have. The current homeowners are mixed on whether they want a canopy but do wish for lighting to be placed on the trail and are not necessarily in favor of benches. If the grant is approved we will be needing volunteers to help plant the trees (Feb 08.)

Local Events

Old Town Holiday Stroll & Christmas Parade

Saturday, December 8th, 10AM-8PM (downtown)

Events include:

Pflugerville Grand Prix CycloCross Race
(8:30 AM-2:30 PM)

Sidewalk Sale/Booths (10 AM to 8 PM)

Children Activities/Santa Pics/Entertainment
(10 AM – 8 PM)

Car & Cycle Show (12 PM – 4 PM)

Lighted Christmas Parade (Dusk)

30' Christmas Tree Lighting (after parade)

(Cont. on page 4)



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Saxony Resident Helps Provide Libraries For African Schools

What began as a school project to provide a library for a poor school in Uganda, Africa, has grown into a nonprofit group dedicated to providing fully stocked libraries for African schools each year.

Under the motto "Books build bridges to a brighter future," Saxony resident Trudy Marshall challenged her school and local communities in 2004 to provide a library for a school she had visited in Kampala, Uganda. The success of what became the Library of Love project for Namirembe Primary School led Mrs. Marshall to start the nonprofit organization, Libraries of Love, to help more Ugandan students.

"It is a wonderful way to show our children that they can make a difference in the world," Mrs. Marshall said. Supported by parents, civic clubs, churches and other schools, the 2007 Libraries of Love team, consisting of 19 volunteers from Texas, Illinois, and Kansas, recently returned from Uganda where they provided libraries for over 5,000 students in four schools.

Local volunteers prepare books for checkout in a library using pockets and cards. Books and computers are then shipped in January. Volunteers travel to Uganda in June to build bookshelves and arrange and place books in Dewey order on the shelves. They also decorate the library with reading posters and library signage. Last, the students and staff are taught to be effective/efficient users of their library.

There are now six Libraries of Love in Uganda providing reading material and computers for over 9,000 students. Plans are already in place to provide libraries in June 2008 for a primary and secondary school with a total student population of 7,000.

"The children's eyes absolutely light up with awe as they look at the thousands of books for their use. We are reminded after the completion of each library what a privilege it is to serve these students who have so little, but deserve so much," Mrs. Marshall said.

Donations of children's books (for ages 5 – 15 yrs.), as well as funding, are always welcome. If you would like Mrs. Marshall to speak and share video with your civic organization or church group, she can be contacted at 251.4025.

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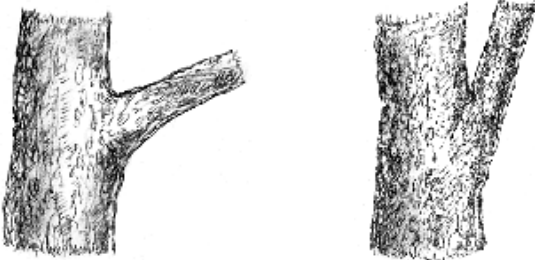
Pruning Guidance

Kim Coder, an extension forester in Georgia and pruning guru said "Pruning can be one of the most beneficial or one of the most detrimental maintenance practices for a tree. If done correctly, pruning can lengthen a tree's life, increase its value to the landscape, and minimize liability problems for its owner. Improper pruning can cause structural and biological problems leading to decreased tree life, pest and decay problems, liability problems and a number of other significant problems that decrease tree values."

The pruning and planting season is approaching. Below are several factors to consider when pruning in order to maximize the potential of your landscape tree:

1. Species- What is the normal branching pattern for a given species? Live oaks grow very broad and may not form distinctive central leaders (main stems). Shumard oaks and most other hardwood, deciduous species have a distinctive central leader that can be identified at a very young age and favored during early branch training.
2. Time of Year- Generally the best time of year to prune is when the tree is dormant (late fall to late winter). Oaks susceptible to the oak wilt fungus (Spanish, red, Shumard, chinkapin and others) should never be pruned when the beetle that carries the oak wilt fungus is active: generally between Valentine's Day and Father's Day. Ornamental trees valued for their flowers that bloom in the early spring on previous season's growth (such as redbud) should be pruned just after flowering. Trees that flower on the current season's growth (crepe myrtle) should be pruned when the tree is dormant.
3. Training- Usually a little selective training will help a tree develop its best form. When you decide to wield your pruners, remember that with pruning: less is more. Take your time, pruning should be done a little at a time so as not to stress the tree.
 - a. Remove dead, broken, diseased limbs first
 - b. Identify a central leader (the main stem that appears the most upright and vigorous) then don't touch it! Cutting the top to promote lateral branching is not recommended. Reduce (cut back) any limbs that appear to be competing with the central leader.
 - c. Identify the lowest permanent branch. Consider how much clearance you will need. Look for a branch roughly 1/3 the size of the main stem, with a wide angle of attachment.

Good angle of attachment: Angle of attachment too narrow:



(continued on page 5)

Local Events (cont.)

Holidays At Heritage Park

Friday, December 14th, 6 PM – 9PM

Events Include:

Children's Arts/Crafts (6 PM – 9 PM)

School Choirs Concert (6 PM – 8 PM)

Free Pictures with Santa (8 PM – 9 PM)

Old Fashion Christmas Village Display

(at Heritage House Museum)

November 24/25, December 1/2, 8/9.

Saturday 10 AM – 3PM, Sun 1 PM – 4 PM,

Free - \$3.

For more information go to
www.cityofpflugerville.com



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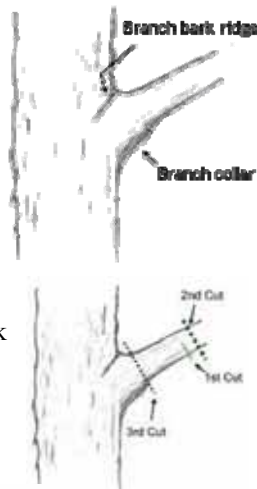
True Value

Pruning Guidance (cont.)

- d. Identify scaffold branches. These are your main lateral limbs. Ideally these should be spaced about 1 foot apart, spaced radially around the trunk, and about 1/3 the size of the main stem with a wide angle of attachment
- e. Identify temporary branches to leave in place for a year or two that will contribute to growth, developing trunk taper and carbohydrate reserves.

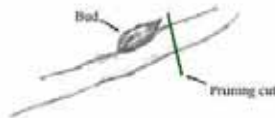
4. Make proper pruning cuts:
don't make flush cuts or leave stubs.

Cut outside the branch collar (the area of slightly raised trunk tissue that surrounds a branch where it attaches to the main stem). The branch collar forms the "donut" like callus tissue around a wound that help seal it off from insects, fungus, and decay organisms.



5. When pruning limbs with a saw, use the 3 step method to prevent bark from peeling down the trunk:

6. When pruning small twigs, cut just beyond a bud:



7. Tools: use bypass pruners, not anvil type. The anvil type crushes tissue.
8. Wound dressings are not recommended. A healthy young tree has its own defense mechanisms. Chemicals come to the surface to plug the exposed vascular tissue. Applying a wound dressing could impede that process or trap moisture beneath that could promote the growth of fungus and decay organisms. I only apply a wound dressing if I have to prune an oak wilt susceptible species between Valentine's Day and Father's Day.
9. Never top or hedge trees (as often seen on crepe myrtles). It destroys the natural architecture and is very stressful to the tree because it completely removes its food factory (leaves) requiring it to depend solely on stored carbohydrates which are normally reserved for defense. Also, new growth is weakly attached sprouts.

There are a host of great resources on the internet that provide guidance. The International Society of Arboriculture has a consumer tree care website: www.treesaregood.org. There you will find literature, photos, and references for certified arborists in your area. I encourage every homeowner to develop a relationship with a certified arborist. Your landscape trees are an investment in your quality of life and property. A certified arborist will help you maximize that investment.



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Contact Chris Ruiz or any officer listed on page 1 for more information.

Microchips Make Great Gifts!

Did you know that 1 out of every 3 pets will become separated from its owners at some point?

Pets can be at greater risk during the holiday season – they may get out while you're out of town; visitors to your home may accidentally let your pet out; New Year's fireworks may scare him, causing him to run off.

If your pet becomes lost, how will you find him? Having him microchipped with greatly increase the chance of a happy reunion. Most Veterinary clinics and shelters scan *every* 'stray' pet that comes through their doors.

How does it work? A tiny chip that has a unique identification number is injected just below your pet's skin (like most vaccines.) You send your registration to the microchip company, making sure to update it if you move or change phone numbers. Animal control officers have been educated and informed about microchip identification and how it works. So, when a microchipped pet is scanned, (using a handheld scanner – a pain-free procedure), a registration number will appear on the scanner. The animal control worker can then call the 24-hour hotline to get information about the pet's owners. The lost pet can be reunited with its owners quickly.

A microchip can literally save your pet's life. So, consider putting a microchip on your pet's wish list.

(this message brought to you by Central Texas Animal Hospital --- 512-251-BARK)

Adjusting of Water Softeners Needed In Pflugerville

The Problem: High TDS Levels

High Total Dissolved Solid levels (TDS) have been detected in our City's wastewater, and this has been Attributed to the overuse of water softeners in our rapidly growing community.

Pflugerville's Water Supply

The City of Pflugerville used to rely on ground water from the Edwards Aquifer as its sole water supply. Ground water naturally has a higher mineral content and is harder than surface water. With the explosive growth of the region, the Edwards Aquifer could no longer be considered an adequate water supply source for Central Texas. As a result, Pflugerville implemented the Colorado River Water Supply Project, which transformed the City's primary water supply source from groundwater to surface water.

What Do Water Softeners Have To Do With The TDS Problem?

Most often, high levels of TDS are caused by the presence of potassium, chlorides and sodium in the water. Water softeners remove water hardness by using salt to initiate an ion exchange. If the water softener is operating properly, it's usually not a significant problem. Unfortunately, many older water softeners tend to cycle more frequently than necessary and can significantly overload a system. The backwash flushes pounds of used salt into your wastewater, which comes directly to the City's plant. Many citizens' water softeners are still treating their water with the same levels of salt that were required for treating ground water. These excess salts can be harmful to the helpful bacteria that help remove the harmful organic matter from wastewater at the treatment plant. This salty water ends up in our creeks, rivers and lakes, where high TDS levels can have a negative impact on aquatic wildlife.

Overuse Could Cost City Millions

If TDS levels are not decreased quickly, the City will have to take alternative action. Because salt is already dissolved in the waste water when it arrives at the treatment plant, it is not removed in the current wastewater cleansing process. Therefore, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) will require the City to purchase an additional **\$15 million** treatment system to remove the excess salt, and citizens will likely **experience a rate increase** to cover the cost.

Set Your Water Softener Properly, Save Money!

The solution is simple and straightforward. Citizens can do their part to reduce the excessive salt levels in the wastewater by adjusting water softener settings to the correct dosage levels. Reducing the salt dosages will in turn decrease the amount of total dissolved solids that end up in the wastewater at our treatment facility, and will also decrease the hardness of the water that comes out of your faucets. Therefore, you as a citizen can see money saved on softener salt per month and the electricity and water you are conserving by not operating your water softener as frequently, plus a savings associated with lower maintenance costs to your faucets, pipes, filters and softeners. You may even decide upon further consideration that a water softener is no longer necessary in your household. If the community works together to solve this problem and TDS levels are lowered to meet TCEQ standards, the City will no longer be required to purchase a \$15 million treatment system. Please help the community and avoid a possible rate increase. **Check and adjust the salt dosages on your water softener today!**

If you have questions or need help adjusting your softener dosage level, contact the City of Pflugerville Utility Billing Office.

(512) 251-3076